

Public Document Pack



Neuadd y Sir / County Hall, Llandrindod, Powys, LD1 5LG

Os yn galw gofynnwch am - If calling please ask for

Jeremy Patterson

Stephen Boyd

Chief Executive

Ffôn / Tel: 01597 826374

Ffôn Symudol / Mobile:

Llythyru Electronig / E-mail: steve.boyd@powys.gov.uk

COUNTY COUNCIL
Wednesday, 21st October, 2015

SUPPLEMENTARY PACK

1.1. **Question to the Portfolio Holder for Education from County Councillor John Morris**

In January and March of this year we were informed that the cabinet were introducing a secondary school's modernisation policy for Powys that would address the overspend in schools delegated budgets in the immediate future and offer a good range of educational opportunities to all our secondary school aged pupils.

Following the recent debate at cabinet it now appears that there have been fundamental changes to this policy approach that may put at risk the whole future direction of all secondary schools in Powys.

It now appears that there is no perceivable direction, timescale or costings and no identifiable secondary modernisation policy in existence in Powys. This has caused a great deal of concern for schools and parents alike.

Please can you inform us of the present status and timescale of the secondary schools modernisation policy with particular reference to how you intend to finance the present model in the interim and how you intend to safeguard and improve levels of performance of our secondary school pupils in the light of the severe cuts to school budgets proposed?

(Pages 3 - 6)

1.2. **Question to the Portfolio Holder for Highways from County Councillor Matthew Dorrance**

Can the Cabinet Member provide a statement on the Council's plans for Brecon Market?

(Pages 7 - 8)

1.3. **Question to the Portfolio Holder for Children's Services from County Councillor Matthew Dorrance**

How is the Council working to tackle child poverty in St John Ward?

(Pages 9 - 12)

CYNGOR SIR POWYS COUNTY COUNCIL

County Council
21st October 2015

REPORT AUTHOR: County Councillor Arwel Jones, Portfolio Holder for Education

SUBJECT: Question from County Councillor John Morris

In January and March of this year we were informed that the cabinet were introducing a secondary school's modernisation policy for Powys that would address the overspend in schools delegated budgets in the immediate future and offer a good range of educational opportunities to all our secondary school aged pupils.

Following the recent debate at cabinet it now appears that there have been fundamental changes to this policy approach that may put at risk the whole future direction of all secondary schools in Powys.

It now appears that there is no perceivable direction, timescale or costings and no identifiable secondary modernisation policy in existence in Powys. This has caused a great deal of concern for schools and parents alike.

Please can you inform us of the present status and timescale of the secondary schools modernisation policy with particular reference to how you intend to finance the present model in the interim and how you intend to safeguard and improve levels of performance of our secondary school pupils in the light of the severe cuts to school budgets proposed?

I can assure you that there is clear Programme Plan for the Secondary Reorganisation Programme. Whilst I acknowledge that there has been some slippage in the Programme's timescales for consideration of the outcome of reviews by Cabinet, these do not affect the overall timescales that would be required for any structural change to take place. You will also be aware that this a very legally complex area of work, and the Authority needs to take the appropriate time to ensure due process is followed at the early stages, to avoid further delays at a later stage.

An update for each of the priorities is outlined below:

Priority 1: Beacons Learning Campus. The strategic outline case was approved by Welsh Government in May 2015 and the Authority has been requested to develop an outline business case, the next stage of the process under 21st Schools Programme. However, in order to be completely policy compliant and avoid future legal challenges, the project is currently at a 'pause and review' stage. The original proposal to close Gwernyfed and Brecon High Schools by September 2017 is currently being reviewed alongside a range of other options, in accordance with Stage 2 of the School Review Process in the School Transformation Policy 2014.

This stage will be completed over the next few months, and a new recommendation will be put before Cabinet at the end of the year. Formal consultation (dependent on the recommendation agreed) will take place in Spring Term 2016 with a final decision to be made by July 2016. The earliest any structural/organisational change could happen will be September 2017 – this is exactly the same timescale as originally proposed.

Following completion of this stage of the process, an outline business case will be submitted to Welsh Government, reflecting the new recommendation, without prejudice to the outcome of any formal consultation, so that we are able to secure the much-needed capital funding.

Priority 2: Mid Powys Review. All options for Llandrindod and Builth High Schools are currently being reviewed, in accordance with Stage 2 of the School Review Process in the School Transformation Policy 2014. This stage will be completed over the next few months, and a new recommendation will be put before Cabinet at the end of the year. Formal consultation (dependent on the recommendation agreed) will take place in Spring Term 2016, with a final decision to be made by July 2016. The earliest any structural/organisational change could happen will be September 2017.

Welsh Medium Brecon High School – formal consultation to remove Welsh Medium from Brecon from September 2016 has concluded, and a consultation report has been published. This will be now be considered alongside the current reviews of Priority 1 and 2.

Priority 3 – Review of Sixth Form Maesydderwen – completed.

Priority 4 – Review of secondary education in North Powys, with a focus on Welsh Medium/dual-stream provision. First stage of the review – to assess the feasibility of establishing a Category 2a school or schools has been completed by September, as originally agreed. The next stage will be to develop a detailed business case for consideration in the Spring which will not be prejudicial towards a Category 2a school, but will state all the facts and costs of such a school, within the overall funding available to Powys. Dependent on the outcome of this business case, a further review of secondary school configuration in the North will commence. We have always stated that this review, being on a larger and more complex scale than the Mid and South, will take longer to achieve.

It is important that this Programme is taken forward in a manageable way, with realistic timescales. I am confident that my officers will achieve these deadlines.

In terms of Post-16, whilst there are no structural changes yet to sixth forms, the Authority recommends that the collaborative model continues as this offers all learners the widest range of opportunities. I recognise that the model is not ideal, and that we are facing further reductions in funding from Welsh Government – I will ask my officers to give further consideration to the current situation in light of the financial/curricular challenges that we are facing.

The medium term financial plan being considered by the authority for the three years commencing April 2016 provides an element of protection to the Schools delegated budget, with no across the board cut being applied, but with school having to absorb pay and price increases from the current level of overall funding. As members will be aware Post 16 funding is provided to schools via the authority through a Grant provided by the Welsh Government, early indications for this grant suggests that there will be a reduction in the level of Grant available to the authority and this combined with the pay and price increases will place further pressure on this area of the schools budget. The authority has successfully operated for the last few years, two joint curriculum planning and delivery groups in the North and South of the county and the current funding methodology is currently being reviewed by a joint Officer and Schools working group. Any proposed changes will form part of proposals on the authority's fair funding formula, that will be consulted upon prior to Christmas.

This page is intentionally left blank

CYNGOR SIR POWYS COUNTY COUNCIL

County Council
21st October 2015

REPORT AUTHOR: County Councillor John Brunt, Portfolio Holder for Highways

SUBJECT: Question from County Councillor Matthew Dorrance

Can the Cabinet Member provide a statement on the Council's plans for Brecon Market?

There are a number of options that need to be discussed in relation to the future of Brecon Market Hall. It is clear that the Market Hall requires significant investment to ensure its long term future. In addition the regeneration of Brecon has been a topic of discussion for many years and as the Local Asset Back Vehicle project reaches a critical stage in the next few weeks, possibilities for the regeneration of property in Brecon will become clearer. This matter is included within the Portfolio for the Cabinet Member for Regeneration, and the work of the LABV cuts across many other Portfolio's including Highways. As Councillor Dorrance is aware, a meeting has been scheduled for Tuesday 3 November with Local Members, appropriate Portfolio Holders and Senior Officers to discuss options for the future and how these can be taken forward. I look forward to the meeting on 3 November, and will engage with Local Members to explain these opportunities and how they might be brought to fruition given the financial challenges the Council faces.

This page is intentionally left blank

CYNGOR SIR POWYS COUNTY COUNCIL

County Council
21st October 2015

REPORT AUTHOR: County Councillor Graham Brown, Portfolio Holder for Procurement, Commissioning and Children's Services

SUBJECT: Question from County Councillor Matthew Dorrance

How is the Council working to tackle child poverty in St John Ward?

Our Strategic Approach

The Council (and its partners) strategically addresses its anti-poverty responsibilities through the Powys One Plan as opposed to having a distinct and separate Anti-Poverty Strategy. The 2014 – 17 One Plan has poverty as a cross cutting issue for all partners in Powys for citizens of all ages. This allows for the impacts of poverty to be considered and addressed in a collaborative and strategic way rather than in isolation.

The Anti-Poverty Champion and the cross party Anti-Poverty Social Research Group

As recommended through the Tackling Poverty Action Plan, part of Welsh Government's Programme for Government the Leader appointed Councillor Joy Jones as the council's Anti-Poverty Champion.

To support the work of Cllr Jones, the former 'Anti-Poverty Strategy Group' has re-visited its remit to place a greater emphasis on engagement and gathering evidence of poverty and the impact of poverty within our communities.

In measuring delivery of the anti-poverty agenda implicit within the *One Powys Plan 2014-17* together with Welsh Government's requirement for reporting against its Poverty Action Plan, it is recognised that further work is required to capture, more effectively, the various actions and improvements undertaken by the council across its services, in meeting the anti-poverty agenda across the County.

To help achieve this, a 'Tackling Poverty Accountability Framework' is in development and will provide a co-ordinated work-plan for the Anti-Poverty Social Research Group to evaluate and challenge the effectiveness of the council's activities, and providing assurance to members.

Child Poverty

Interventions specifically aimed at reducing the impacts of child poverty are planned and delivered through the Children and Young Peoples Partnership.

The Families First Plan sets out our priorities for tackling disadvantage and poverty for children and their families until 2017. It includes a range of commissioned services/projects that provide support and early intervention for children, young people and families for whom poverty is likely to be a key factor affecting their lives.

These include services for Mental Health and Well-being, Family and Behaviour support and Disability. The plan also outlines the key infrastructure building blocks we are putting in place to ensure families' needs are identified and assessed as at early a stage as possible and that they get access to services at the right level, at the right time for them.

Powys also has the Flying Start Service in the most deprived wards in Ystradgynlais, Brecon (including the St Johns Ward), Llandrindod, Newtown and Welshpool. This service offers additional support and free childcare for families in these areas with children under the age of 4 years.

The Children & Young People's Partnership (CYPP) monitors its performance on a quarterly basis via its work plans and its Results Based Accountability (RBA) report card.

This report card contains key indicators in relation to poverty in Powys including;

- Proportion of children living in poverty
- Low Birth weights
- Numbers of Year 11 leavers Not in Education, Employment or Training (NEET)
- Key stage performance of Free School Meal (FSM) eligible pupils against their peers
- School Attendance of Free School Meal eligible pupils
- Numbers of 18-24 Year olds on Job seekers Allowance

The CYPP commissions a range of services and interventions to address the impacts of child poverty across the whole County. The include;

- The Flying Start programme in Ystradgynlais, Brecon, Llandrindod, Newtown and Welshpool – our most deprived areas
- The NOVUS project (replacing Genesis 2) which provides support for individuals, particularly single parents and those Not in Education, Employment or Training to get closer to the labour market.
- The Youth Intervention Service supporting young people at risk of homelessness and with other disadvantages.
- The Childcare Strategy and action plan to ensure that we have sufficient high quality, affordable and accessible childcare available to support parents to work and train and provide high quality experiences for children.

- An assisted places scheme to provide financial assistance to support families in poverty with the high costs of childcare.
- The Team Around the Family programme (TAF) including the Common Assessment Framework (CAF), Local Resource Solution Panel's (LRSP's), which provides early intervention and preventative solutions for disadvantaged children and their families. This also includes the step up and step down of families between the TAF and Social Services to ensure they get support at the most appropriate level when they need it
- A Family Information service providing free information and advice to Young People and families.
- An integrated and holistic response to supporting families with a disabled child through the Integrated Disability Service (IDS). This Service provides improved co-ordination of support for children and young people with disabilities and their families who are more likely to experience poverty.
- The Referral Scheme to support access to childcare and leisure activities for Children and Young People with additional needs.
- Services to provide support, information and advice, respite and social opportunities for young carers who are at a greater risk of experiencing poverty.
- Where obesity and dental caries can be indicators of deprivation, the Mind Exercise Nutrition Do it! (MEND) or Fresh / Ffres programme aims to try and improve the health and emotional well-being outcomes of children and families who are or at risk of being obese.

Wider Council Delivery

The Council's Leisure services have historically offered the following interventions;

- Free Swim initiatives for Children and Young People and Over 60's
- Access to Fitness Schemes for Individuals on low income
- Free swimming for carers when caring for individuals with a disability in the pool
- iCare Card scheme – free access to swim and Gym for carers for their own leisure
- Cardio Rehab and GP Referral Scheme – subsidised access for the first 16 weeks

The Schools Services Offer the following Interventions;

- Free school Meals to low income families
- The Pupil Deprivation Grant – 100% devolved to Schools to help improve the literacy, numeracy and attendance of Free School Meal eligible Pupils
- The Pre School Pupil Deprivation Grant (new in 2015/16)
- The School Uniform Grant (via Revenues and Benefits dept)

- The Educational Maintenance Allowance (EMA) for post 16 learners

The Council also has a range of services and projects under the Regeneration agenda to build employment and economic activity as well as community development and sustainability.

Delivery in the St Johns Ward.

Families in the St Johns ward are able to access any of the above services dependant on meeting any pre-set eligibility criteria (which is not required for every service).

For those families with Children under the age of 4 years they are also able to access additional support through the Flying start service in the Brecon area.