

**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE CABINET HELD AT COUNCIL CHAMBER -
COUNTY HALL, LLANDRINDOD WELLS, POWYS ON TUESDAY, 15 DECEMBER
2015**

PRESENT

County Councillor W B Thomas (Chair)

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

In attendance: County Councillors AW Davies, DO Evans, JG Morris, and GD Price.

1.	APOLOGIES	C250- 2015
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Apologies for absence were received from County Councillor SC Davies.

2.	DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST	C251- 2015
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County Councillor WJT Powell declared a personal and prejudicial interest in item C252 – 2015 as a member of the Board of Finance for the Diocese of Swansea and Brecon. County Councillor DR Jones declared an interest in C254 – 2015 Powys Local Development Plan in respect of land in his ownership adjoining the Montgomeryshire Canal and his membership of the Welshpool and Llanfair Light Railway. County Councillor John Morris declared a personal non prejudicial interest in C257 – 2015 Crickhowell Specialist Centre as an LEA appointed Governor of the school.

3.	NANTMEL CHURCH IN WALES SCHOOL	C252- 2015
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County Councillor WJT Powell left the meeting during consideration of this item having declared a personal and prejudicial interest.

The Portfolio Holder for Education advised that he had received both an online petition and a written petition which between them contained 841 signatures calling for Nantmel Church in Wales School to be kept open. Members were advised that the school met a number of the criteria for review outlined in the Schools Transformation Policy in terms of pupil numbers, surplus places, buildings condition and cost per pupil. The Schools Organisation Review Panel (SORP) had therefore recommended to the Cabinet that it consider the commencement of formal consultation on the closure of Nantmel C. in W. School from the 31st December 2016, with Rhayader C. in W. School to be named as the receiving school. The school's governors preferred option was federation with Rhayader C. in W. School. However, following consideration of the data agreed with the school and the feedback received from the Governing Body, the SORP's view was that federation would not address the issues relating to pupil numbers, capacity and cost per pupil. Therefore, the SORP's draft recommendation in respect of Nantmel C. in W. School was closure of the school from the 31st December 2016.

County Councillor David Evans spoke as the local Member to oppose the closure. He argued that that the decision was being made on solely financial grounds as there were no concerns over educational standards at the school. He questioned the budget savings quoted in the report as the figures had changed in various drafts of the report he had seen and argued that the Cabinet should defer a decision until it could be sure that the figures were accurate. He noted that the school was the only building available for community events in Nantmel. Councillor Evans said that he feared wholesale closure of rural schools in the county and he called on the Cabinet to support federation with Rhayader C. in W. School.

Officers confirmed that the savings figures quoted in the report were correct. They also confirmed that there were sufficient surplus places in Rhayader C. in W. school and that educational standards in the two schools were comparable. It was further confirmed that there was capacity in Crossgates Primary School for parents who preferred to send their children there. Officers also advised that they did not believe that the Council owned the school building or land.

The Chair of the People Scrutiny Committee asked for the Committee to have sight of the results of the consultation before it came back to Cabinet and the Portfolio Holder for Education confirmed that this would be done. He also asked about arrangements for transporting children and their siblings to their nearest school. It was confirmed that children and siblings would be transported to their nearest school if they qualified for home to school transport.

County Councillors Aled Davies and John Morris speaking as leaders of the Conservative Group and Liberal Democrat groups respectively supported a deferral of the decision. The Portfolio Holder for education reminded Members that the Cabinet was not being asked to decide on the closure of Nantmel C. in W. School at this meeting but to approve the commencement of formal consultation.

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

County Councillor WJT Powell returned to the meeting.

Cabinet considered

- (a) The representations on the Deposit Plan and the recommended Council responses to the representations (Appendix 1 to the report);
- (b) The Proposed Addendum of Focussed Changes for public consultation purposes (Appendix 2 to the report);
- (c) A summary report on the remaining focussed changes in the LDP. This had been circulated by email to the Cabinet before the meeting and replaced Appendices 3, 4 & 5 referred to in the covering report. Members confirmed that they had received and had read the summary report.

Cabinet noted with disappointment that Welsh Government had insisted on the removal of the policy on enabled exception sites because it did not comply with their policy. The Professional Lead – Planning Policy confirmed that the policy for the targets for affordable housing contributions started at developments of 5 and more houses. He also confirmed that a site in Machynlleth had been allocated for a Gypsy family and that work was ongoing to demonstrate deliverability.

County Councillor DR Jones, speaking as a local member, raised an issue over a site in Guilsfield that had planning permission but had been left out of the LDP allocated sites because it lay in the floodplain. Members noted this, but agreed no further amendment to the Focussed Changes (Appendix 2).

RESOLVED	Reason for Decision:
<p>1. To approve the :</p> <p>(a) The Council’s responses to the representations on the deposit LDP 2015. (Appendix 1)</p> <p>(b) The proposed Focussed Changes (Appendix 2) and supporting Assessments (summary report) for public consultation.</p> <p>(c) Any outstanding matters or matters arising from Cabinet in relation to the above, are delegated to the Portfolio Holder in consultation with the Professional Lead – Planning Policy.</p>	<p>To comply with:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Town & Country Planning (Local Development Plan) (Wales) Regulations, 2005 as amended in 2015 • Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes (Wales) Regulations 2004. • The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010. • The LDP Delivery Agreement.
<p>2. To submit the LDP to the National Assembly for Examination</p>	<p>To comply with The Town & Country Planning (Local Development Plan) (Wales) Regulations, 2005 as amended in 2015.</p>

County Councillor Stephen Hayes, who had been on other Council business and who had arrived in the meeting during the debate, abstained from voting.

The Leader and Members put on record their thanks to the Professional Lead – Planning Policy and his team for their work on the LDP to this point.

5.	BUDGET TIMETABLE UPDATE AND SPENDING REVIEW SUMMARY	C254- 2015
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Cabinet considered a timetable for setting the budget and council tax. The Portfolio Holder for Finance advised that the date of 26 January for the Cabinet to consider the budget may be subject to change. He also drew Members’ attention to the “apprenticeship tax” announced by the Chancellor of the Exchequer that from April 2017 would be paid by any business or organisation with a payroll of over £3m. This would cost the Council approximately £600k per annum and would have to be built into the Medium Term Financial Strategy. Members welcomed the news that the WLGA were funding a study into local government funding as rural authorities were badly disadvantaged by the current formula, with Powys once again receiving the worst settlement.

RESOLVED	Reason for Decision:
To approve the timetable to set the budget and council tax.	To ensure council tax is set by the statutory deadline that requires council tax to be set before 11th March

6.	FINANCIAL OVERVIEW AND FORECAST AS AT 31 OCTOBER 2015	C255- 2015
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The Portfolio Holder for Finance urged his colleagues to press their services on what they were doing to meet their savings targets, including those savings that had been carried over from the last financial year. The consequence of not delivering the agreed budget savings would be the depletion of reserves. The Portfolio Holder for Finance also drew Members attention to the capital virements that required Council approval. The Strategic Director – Resources advised that to ensure more realistic capital budget projections, from 2015/16 owners of capital projects would have to sign off on those projects

RESOLVED	Reason for Decision:
That: <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. the Capital virements under £1,000,000 as set out in paragraph 5.3 be approved. 	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.

RECOMMENDED to Council	Reason for Decision
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That the virements over £1,000,000 listed in paragraph 5.3 of the report be approved.	In accordance with Financial Standing Orders
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7.	WELSH MEDIUM STREAM AT YSGOL DOLAFON	C256- 2015
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Cabinet considered a report proposing the start of consultation on the closure of the Welsh-medium stream at Ysgol Dolafon and the re-categorisation of the school as an English-medium school.

The Chair of the People Scrutiny Committee asked for the Committee to have sight of the results of the consultation before it came back to Cabinet and the Portfolio Holder for Education confirmed that this would be done.

The Leader of the Conservative group was disappointed to note the closure of the Welsh-medium stream at the school. He was advised that children from the Welsh-medium stream would be moving to Builth Primary School where over a third of the children were educated in the medium of Welsh.

RESOLVED	Reason for Decision:
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. To receive the SORP's draft recommendation in respect of the Welsh-medium stream at Ysgol Dolafon, Llanwrtyd Wells. 2. To approve the commencement of formal consultation with stakeholders in accordance with the School Organisation Code on the closure of the Welsh-medium stream at Ysgol Dolafon from the 31st August 2016, with Builth Wells CP School to be named as the receiving school for Welsh-medium pupils. 	To ensure future sustainability of primary education.

8.	CRICKHOWELL SPECIALIST CENTRE	C257- 2015
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Cabinet considered responses to the consultation on the proposed closure of Crickhowell Specialist Centre. There were currently no children attending the centre. County Councillor John Morris speaking as the local member and as a governor of the school confirmed that the school felt that with the right support children could be accommodated in mainstream classes.

The Chair of the People Scrutiny Committee noted that it would have been helpful if his committee had been given the chance to scrutinise the report before it had come to Cabinet.

The Head of Schools was asked if this arrangement could be applied in the rest of the county and he advised that the level of need varied from area to area and that he could not advocate closing all specialist centres.

RESOLVED	Reason for Decision:
To approve the publication of Statutory Notices for the closure of the Specialist Centre at Crickhowell CP School with effect from 31st March 2016	To ensure that support to children with additional learning needs is provided in an efficient way.

County Councillor Graham Brown abstained having been out of the room for the start of the debate.

9.	SCHOOLS REORGANISATION POLICY 2015	C258- 2015
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Cabinet considered a new Schools Reorganisation Policy to replace all previous policies for the reorganisation of schools held by the Council. The Portfolio Holder for Education agreed to amend the wording in the policy so it was clear what the criteria were that would trigger a review.

RESOLVED	Reason for Decision:
That the Portfolio Holder be authorised to agree an amendment to the wording to clarify the criteria that would trigger a review and that, subject to that, to approve the Schools Reorganisation Policy 2015 for implementation from 31st December 2015.	To provide a robust but flexible framework when undertaking school reorganisation reviews.

10.	INVESTMENT PROPOSAL TO TAKE FORWARD INTEGRATION AT PACE	C259- 2015
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The Leader welcomed Julia Toy, Programme Manager for Powys Teaching Health Board and joint author of the report, to the meeting. The report and accompanying appendix set out proposals for accelerating the programme of integration already underway between Powys County Council and Powys Teaching Health Board. The report also contained proposals for strengthening the governance of the integration process by extending the membership of the Joint Partnership Board by the inclusion of the Portfolio Holders for Adult Social Care and Finance and 2 members from the Health Board. The Portfolio Holder for Adult Social Care asked Cabinet to note that the reference to “independent” members of the PTHB being nominated to the JPB should be deleted as he did think the PTHB should be restricted in who they nominated. The report had been unanimously approved by the PTHB on 9th December. Members welcomed the report and asked the Chief Executive to contact Welsh Government with a request for financial support to take forward integration.

RESOLVED	Reason for Decision:
<p>that Cabinet:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Note the content of the detailed report (appendix 1); b) Powys County Council and Powys Teaching Health Board will jointly undertake a detailed assessment of the potential to integrate health and social care in accordance with the 'preferred option' above. c) Approves the strengthening of the Joint Partnership Board as described in the report, to oversee and direct the integration programme, receive and consider reports arising out of the detailed assessment work, and make recommendations to Cabinet and PTHB Board accordingly. 	<p>To explore integration of health and social care as a mechanism to deliver a sustainable services in Powys.</p>

11.	CORRESPONDENCE	C260- 2015
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There were no items of correspondence.

County Councillor W B Thomas (Chair)