

**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE COUNTY COUNCIL HELD AT COUNCIL
CHAMBER - COUNTY HALL, LLANDRINDOD WELLS ON THURSDAY, 12 JULY
2018**

PRESENT

County Councillor DW Meredith (Chair)

County Councillors MC Alexander, B Baynham, J Charlton, L V Corfield, K W Curry, B Davies, D E Davies, P Davies, S C Davies, M J Dorrance, E Durrant, D O Evans, J Evans, L Fitzpatrick, L George, J Gibson-Watt, M R Harris, S M Hayes, H Hulme, A Jenner, E A Jones, D R Jones, E Jones, E M Jones, M J Jones, D Jones-Poston, F H Jump, K Laurie-Parry, H Lewis, K Lewis, P E Lewis, S Lewis, MC Mackenzie, I McIntosh, S McNicholas, C Mills, JG Morris, R Powell, WD Powell, D R Price, GD Price, G Pugh, J Pugh, G W Ratcliffe, L Roberts, P Roberts, K M Roberts-Jones, E Roderick, D Rowlands, D Selby, K S Silk, D A Thomas, T J Van-Rees, E Vaughan, M Weale, A Williams, G I S Williams, D H Williams, J M Williams and R Williams

1. APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from County Councillors G Breeze, A W Davies, G Jones, J R Jones, N Morrison, P C Pritchard, R G Thomas, J Wilkinson, J Williams and S L Williams

2. MINUTES

The Chair was authorised to sign the minutes of the meetings held on 22nd February, 8th March, 17th April, 8th May and 17th May as correct records.

3. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

All members present declared personal interests in item 12 Members Allowance and Expenses 2017-18.

County Councillors B Baynham, L Corfield, B Davies, D Davies, D Evans, J Evans, A Jones, K Laurie-Parry, H Lewis, S McNicholas, C Mills, D Price, G Pugh, K Roberts-Jones, R Powell, G Ratcliffe, E Roderick, D Rowlands, T Van-Rees, E Vaughan and G Williams declared personal and prejudicial interests on the notice of motion on blue badge holders.

County Councillors M Alexander, D Evans, J Evans, R. Harris, E Jones, K Laurie-Parry, I McIntosh, D Price and R Williams declared personal interests in the question on the YFC.

County Councillor R Harris declared a personal and prejudicial interest in the question on Sennybridge primary school.

County Councillor G Price declared a personal and prejudicial interest in the item request for leave of absence.

4. QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC

4.1. Question to the Portfolio Holder for Finance, Countryside and Transport from Graham Taylor

The survey undertaken as part of the review of the Rights of Way Delivery Plan (ROWIP) revealed that the main problem encountered by users of footpaths and bridleways was the lack of signposting and waymarking. No other issue was raised more often; 75% of residents in the survey raised it. This is supported by many of the complaints the Council receives about problems with the rights of way network.

The Council is very keen to promote health and well-being through the use of the countryside and to stimulate the local economy by attracting visitors to walk and cycle in Powys. The clear lack of signage and waymarking is a major barrier to residents and visitors wishing to do this.

Can the Cabinet Member please ensure that the new ROWIP, that is currently being prepared, accords the highest priority to a programme of works designed to address this major issue raised by residents?

Response

Thank you for your question Mr Taylor and I apologise that I cannot be at full Council.

The Rights of Way Improvement Plan although being a statutory document, also supports the goals of key national and local strategies; particularly those relating to:

- Supporting the local economy
- Improving the nations' and residents health and well-being, and
- Creating a more sustainable environment

The Plan also sets out how it will contribute towards key objectives in the County Council's Cabinet Vision 2025 and the Public Service Board's 2040 Vision. Working with internal and external partners will be crucial to achieving these aims and goals.

As part of the ROWIP Review process, a number of surveys and consultations were undertaken. The results for Question 8 of the general public survey showed that 75% of respondents had encountered issues with *signage and way-marking*. This was closely followed by *surface issues* at 70%, *stile/gates* at 68% and *obstructions* at 56%. Question 12 asked what discouraged use of the public rights of way network. The highest response was *obstructions* at 23%, followed by the *surface* at 18%, and then *crossing private land* at 13%. The results indicate that although *signage and waymarking* is a commonly encountered issue, other issues are more important when it comes to discouraging use of the public rights of way network

The Council is of the opinion that as obstructions discourage people from using public rights of way, it would not be helpful or advisable to sign and waymark a route that is obstructed. Once a public right of way is cleared of obstructions,

then waymarking is undertaken, providing confidence to the public that the path is open and available.

The draft ROWIP to be consulted on, outlines a move to prioritise working with Communities showing an interest in working on their local public rights of way network. The Council would assist and facilitate the Community in undertaking work in their area.

The BBNPA are currently putting a draft ROWIP together, having completed the assessment stage. Issues with signage also came out strongly in their questionnaire. Along with vegetation, this was the most highlighted issue. Although they are not yet at the stage to draft actions, they have indicated the intention to include actions to deal with signage.

Mr Taylor's supplementary question was to ask that the Portfolio Holder ensured that the new ROWIP accorded the highest priority to a programme of works designed to make sure that open routes are properly signposted and waymarked. The Portfolio Holder was absent and a response would be sent to Mr Taylor, copied to all members of Council.

Response to Supplementary Question

Thank you for your supplementary question.

The draft ROWIP was approved at Cabinet on Tuesday 10th July 2018, and it will shortly be available for a 3 month consultation. Your comments and request will be analysed and assessed as part of the review process following that consultation period.

The results for Question 8 of the general public survey, as you correctly state showed that 75% of respondents had encountered issues with signage and way-marking. This was closely followed by surface issues at 70%, stiles/gates at 68% and obstructions at 56%. Question 12 asked what discouraged use of the public rights of way network. The highest response was obstructions at 23.1%, followed by the surface at 18.5%, and then crossing private land at 13.3%. A further option under Q.12 on what discourages users was titled "don't know route" which came in at fourth place with 8% of responses, and "getting lost" as another option with 3.6%. The results indicate that although signage and way-marking is a commonly encountered problem, there are other issues that may be more important when it comes to discouraging use of the public rights of way network.

The Council is aware of the socio-economic benefits that public rights of way can provide, and it is a question of ensuring that the potential of the public rights of way network is maximised with the resources that are available.

4.2. Question to the Portfolio Holder for Finance, Countryside and Transport from Peter Newman

In 1968 the Countryside Act was published and came into law, this laid a duty on Highway Authorities to signpost all public paths where they leave a metalled road.

I understand that only 69 signposts were erected in the last financial year which equates to 23 each for the old Counties of Brecknock, Radnor and Montgomery.

Could the walking public, my organisation and other interested parties be given an estimate as to how many signposts are needed to complete the requirements under the Act, and the timescale please?

Response

Thank you for your question Mr Newman and I apologise that I cannot be at full Council.

In the last three years, 325 fingerposts have been installed across Powys outside of the National Park. At the current time, Countryside Services does not hold any data outlining how many fingerposts are required to complete the requirements of the Act. The Service is currently unable to produce reliable statistics on how many public rights of way are, or are not signposted at roadside. Therefore it is not possible to estimate the timescale and resources that are required.

The BBNPA have installed or replaced more than 320 fingerposts throughout the Park since mid-2013. According to the BBNPA's 5% survey from 2016/17, an estimated 70% of fingerposts were in place throughout the Park. This data is for the whole of the National Park, however officers have indicated that they believe it to be an accurate reflection of the Powys public rights of way within the National Park area.

The BBNPA have no estimate as to the timescale to complete the requirement of the Act and have said that the existence of signposts at roadside is dynamic and fluid. Fingerposts are prone to damage or theft.

Mr Newman's supplementary question was to ask the Portfolio Holder to look at this again in light of information available. The Portfolio Holder was absent and a response would be sent to Mr Newman, copied to all members of Council.

Response to Supplementary Question

I am sorry that my response to your question didn't have enough detail.

Countryside Services are looking to interrogate the Rights of Way Improvement Plan 5% condition survey of the public rights of way network to ascertain if further information can be extrapolated. However, it has not been possible to complete this work for today's meeting.

Should additional data be available from the survey, officers will work on putting together an estimated figure for the entire public rights of way network (excluding the National Park). Once this has been completed, I have asked Countryside Services to provide you with those figures that you have request.

I am sorry that I wasn't able to be at the Council meeting today as I had to be at a meeting to discuss the council's finance, so my apologies for not answering you in person.

5. CHAIR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Chair welcomed a number of pupils from Crickhowell High School who were observing the meeting. He congratulated Nigel Brinn on his appointment as Director of Environment.

Details of the Chair's engagements had been circulated to all members.

Members congratulated members of the Trading Standards Consumer Fraud team headed by Nikki Davies Wheeler who had been highly commended by the Anti -Counterfeiting Group for its work in protecting Powys consumers from counterfeit goods.

6. LEADER'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Leader referred to the proposal to develop a rail test track on the site of the former Nant Helen opencast mine which would bring major investment to the area. She also referred to receptions she had held at the Spring Fair and the Urdd Eisteddfod and advised that she had held discussions with the Urdd with a view to the Eisteddfod returning in the near future. She had also been involved in the launch of the Wales 360 Mountain Bike Challenge which would have 2 stops in Powys. She had chaired a debate at the WLGA conference on rural issues and been a guest speaker at the Royal Institute of Town Planning on the subject of rural development.

7. CHIEF EXECUTIVE'S BRIEFING

The Deputy Chief Executive gave an update on the Improvement and Assurance Board whose remit had been extended to include Adult Services and corporate issues.

He advised that interviews for the Head of Children's Services had taken place the previous day and an appointment made. He also advised that Adrian Jervis was Acting Head of Highways. Finally, he noted that nominations had opened for the staff awards and he reminded members that they were able to nominate staff.

8. VIREMENTS TO CARRY FORWARD UNALLOCATED BUDGETS FROM 2017/18 TO 2018/19 FINANCIAL YEAR

Council was asked to approve the roll forward of virements from 2017/18 to 2018/19 for ongoing capital schemes that were not completed at the end of the financial year 2017/18.

One of the virements was for HRA housing projects delayed by invoicing from HOWPS and members sought assurances that there was scrutiny of HOWPS

and that their processes had improved. The Deputy Chief Executive advised that the Council had worked closely with HOWPS who had put considerable resources into improving their processes and there were signs that performance was improving. He also advised that there were no issues of funding shortfalls as a result of budgets being rolled forward.

By 50 votes to 1 with 1 abstention it was

RESOLVED	Reason for Decision
To approve the virements as set out in the report filed with the signed minutes.	To ensure appropriate virements are carried out that reflect the forecasted capital spend.

9. ANNUAL REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF SOCIAL SERVICES

The Director of Social Services presented the report for 2017/18 noting that she had not been Director during this time and acknowledging the contributions of her predecessors. The report recognised that it had been a very challenging year for social services but also noted that thanks to the hard work of staff, corporate colleagues, partner organisations and political support some significant improvements were beginning to be delivered. The report also set out the priorities for 2018/19. The Director advised that her next report would be co-designed with service users and partner organisations.

The Director answered questions from Members. She acknowledged that more needed to be done to support looked after children and that the recruitment and retention of staff was a major challenge as highlighted in the Corporate Risk Register. The Chair of the Audit Committee offered to work with the Director on addressing this. She advised that she was having regular meetings with front line staff and getting useful feedback from them. She also advised that the service was developing a signs of safety model designed to prevent children becoming looked after. Members were also advised that a paper would be coming to Cabinet on Council Tax relief for care leavers.

RESOLVED	Reason for decision
That the Director of Social Services Annual Report be received.	Statutory requirement.

10. RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE DEMOCRATIC SERVICES COMMITTEE

10.1. Review of the role of Chair of Council and review of Civic Roles

Council considered the recommendations of the Democratic Services Committee.

County Councillor Elwyn Vaughan proposed amendments, seconded by County Councillor Bryn Davies, that "Council should have a Chair & Vice-chair elected annually at the full Council meeting at the AGM.

The Chair's car, as described in the report, should actually be a pool car for the wider benefit of the authority."

The first amendment was lost by 3 votes to 44 with 3 abstentions. The second amendment was passed by 17 votes to 2 with 5 abstentions.

RESOLVED	Reason for Decision
That the Chair's car, as described in the report, should actually be a pool car for the wider benefit of the authority.	For the wider benefit of the authority.

The recommendations of the Democratic Services Committee were moved by County Councillor Matthew Dorrance and seconded by County Councillor Linda Corfield.

Recommendation 1: by 31 votes to 9 with 1 abstention

RESOLVED	Reason for Decision
That the civic roles are valued and should be retained.	Response to the resolution passed at Council on 13 July 2017.

Recommendation 2: by 37 votes to 8 with 2 abstentions

RESOLVED	Reason for Decision
That the roles of Chair, Vice-Chair and Assistant Vice-Chair will be more important now as they absorb the Shire Chair roles as from May.	Response to the resolution passed at Council on 13 July 2017.

Recommendation 3: By 37 votes to 5 with 2 abstentions

RESOLVED	Reason for Decision
That the current rotation for Chair of Council between areas be retained.	Response to the resolution passed at Council on 13 July 2017.

Recommendation 4: By 37 votes to 8 with 1 abstention

RESOLVED	Reason for Decision
That there is no benefit in moving to a Presiding Member in place of a Chair of Council.	Response to the resolution passed at Council on 13 July 2017.

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Recommendation 5: By 39 votes to 5 with 4 abstentions

RESOLVED	Reason for Decision
That there is limited scope for reducing the level of civic salary paid as it does not provide significant savings	Response to the resolution passed at Council on 13 July 2017.

Recommendation 6: By 36 votes to 7 with 2 abstentions

RESOLVED	Reason for Decision
That the current budget allocation for the Chair's use should be retained.	Response to the resolution passed at Council on 13 July 2017.

Recommendation 7: By 44 votes to 6

RESOLVED	Reason for Decision
That the Chair's role needs to be appropriately supported and resourced subject to a robust business case being approved by the Democratic Services Committee for expenditure outside of the Chair's allowance.	Response to the resolution passed at Council on 13 July 2017.

10.2. Timing of Meetings Survey Results

The Chair of the Democratic Services Committee, County Councillor Matthew Dorrance, moved the recommendation noting the issues raised by members in the survey over travel times and care responsibilities. County Councillor Jackie Charlton seconded the recommendation. By 50 votes to 0 it was

RESOLVED	Reason for Decision
That the general timing of meetings of the Council, Cabinet and Committees remain unchanged for the current term of the Council with the provision that Chairs of Committees can vary the times of meetings as needs dictate.	To complete the Members' Survey as required under Section 6 of the Local Government (Wales) Measure 2011.

10.3. Social Media Guide for Councillors

County Councillor Matthew Dorrance moved the recommendation and thanked members of the working group that had developed the social media guide for Councillors. He was seconded by County Councillor Susan McNicholas. By 52 votes to 0 with 3 abstentions it was

RESOLVED	Reason for Decision
That the Council adopt the Social Media Guide for Members.	To approve the revised Guide.

10.4. Revision to Section 13 of the Constitution - Responsibility for Functions

County Councillor Matthew Dorrance moved the recommendation seconded by County Councillor Emry Jones. By 52 votes to 0 it was

RESOLVED	Reason for Decision
that the Monitoring Officer be given delegated authority to change the details of Portfolio Holder's responsibilities, contained in the Constitution, when amendments are made by the Leader.	To ensure that the Constitution is kept up to date.

10.5. Member Development Strategy

County Councillor Matthew Dorrance moved the recommendation seconded by County Councillor Linda Corfield. By 51 votes to 0 it was

RESOLVED	Reason for Decision
That the Draft Member Development Strategy and Action Plan 2018-22 as set out in the Appendix to the report be approved.	To update the Council's Member Development Strategy for the period 2018 - 2022.

10.6. Amendments to the Constitution

County Councillor Matthew Dorrance moved the recommendation seconded by County Councillor Roger Williams. By 52 votes to 0 it was

RESOLVED	Reason for Decision
That Sections 4 and 7 of the Constitution as set out in the Appendix to the report be approved.	To update Sections of the Constitution arising from the decision of Council in May 2018.

11. APPOINTMENT OF THE CHAIR OF THE LEARNING, SKILLS AND ECONOMY SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

It was moved by County Councillor Roger Williams and seconded by County Councillor Michael Williams and

RESOLVED to note the appointment by the Liberal Democrats of County Councillor Pete Roberts as the Chair of the Learning, Skills and Economy Scrutiny Committee.

12. MEMBERS ALLOWANCES AND EXPENSES 2017-18

All Members present declared personal interests in this item. The Solicitor to the Council advised that Members did not have prejudicial interests because the business concerned related to the functions of the Authority in relation to Members' Allowances pursuant to paragraph 12(2)(b)(iv) of the Code of Conduct.

Council received for information details of the amounts paid to members in salaries and allowances in 2017/18. Council was required to publish the information by 30 September 2018.

RESOLVED	Reason for Decision:
That the report is noted.	Ensuring this information is available in the public domain within the required timescale

13. APPOINTMENTS TO COMMITTEES AND OUTSIDE BODIES

Council noted the following appointments to Committees made by political groups and approved by the Monitoring Officer under the general power of delegation granted by Council on 16th May 2013:

County Councillor Graham Breeze appointed to the Mid and West Wales Fire and Rescue Authority in place of County Councillor Karen Laurie-Parry.

County Councillor Jon Williams to Health, Care and Housing Committee in place of County Councillor Joy Jones.

County Councillor Linda Corfield to Audit Committee in place of County Councillor Liam Fitzpatrick.

14. NOTICES OF MOTION**14.1. Linguistic Planning for Powys**

Council debated the following notice of motion proposed by County Councillor Elwyn Vaughan and seconded by County Councillor Bryn Davies:

As the Welsh Government develops a vision of a Million Welsh speakers by 2050 with the policy enjoying the support of opposition parties in Cardiff Bay we in Powys need to consider how we can contribute to this. Powys will need to aim to increase the percentage of Welsh speakers from 19% from the 2011 Census to 33% - a challenge.

It means we need to look at the situation in its entirety, to understand the challenges, to be progressive and act on a number of levels, and to be ambitious in our vision.

There is an opportunity for Powys to lead and be progressive by considering the Welsh language a key part of this old County's heritage, but also as a social and economic resource for the future. If we harness and implement this toolkit, we believe Powys would contribute positively

towards the sustainability of the Welsh language, and towards the Welsh Government's vision.

The Council therefore:

1. Recognises clearly the importance of the Welsh language as an integral part of the historical heritage of Powys
2. Confirms that the language belongs to every part of the County
3. Believes the language to be a matter of sustainability which intertwines with
4. community, economic and social sustainability principles
5. Believes the language is a skill and a key resource for future citizens
6. Is concerned at the reduction of Welsh speakers seen in the Census of 2011 and accepts the need for comprehensive action to resist this trend
7. Thereby calls on the Council to draw up a strategic plan which will reflect these principles and which is consistent with the Welsh Language Act of 2011 and the Welsh Language Standards, will set clear action points so that Powys can contribute to the aim of ensuring a million Welsh speakers.

The mover and seconder argued that the Council had to take action to arrest the decline of the Welsh language in its heartlands and extend its use throughout the county. The Portfolio Holder for Learning and the Welsh Language welcomed the motion and noted that much work was already taking place with the Welsh Language in Education Strategic Plan and the Welsh Language promotion strategy. By 51 votes to 1 it was

RESOLVED to

1. **Recognise clearly the importance of the Welsh language as an integral part of the historical heritage of Powys**
2. **Confirm that the language belongs to every part of the County**
3. **Believe the language to be a matter of sustainability which intertwines with community, economic and social sustainability principles**
4. **Believe the language is a skill and a key resource for future citizens**
5. **Is concerned at the reduction of Welsh speakers seen in the Census of 2011 and accepts the need for comprehensive action to resist this trend**
6. **Thereby calls on the Council to draw up a strategic plan which will reflect these principles and which is consistent with the Welsh Language Act of 2011 and the Welsh Language Standards, will set clear action points so that Powys can contribute to the aim of ensuring a million Welsh speakers.**

14.2. Entitlement of Blue Badge Holders in Council owned Car Parks

County Councillors B Baynham, L Corfield, B Davies, D Davies, D Evans, J Evans, A Jones, K Laurie-Parry, H Lewis, S McNicholas, C Mills, D Price, G Pugh, K Roberts-Jones, R Powell, G Ratcliffe, E Roderick, D Rowlands, T Van-Rees, E Vaughan and G Williams left the meeting whilst this item was being considered having declared personal and prejudicial interests.

The Solicitor to the Council confirmed that as decision makers the Cabinet would listen to the debate but would not be voting.

Council considered the following motion proposed by County Councillor Pete Roberts and seconded by County Councillor James Gibson-Watt:

Council notes the consultation launched at the end of May in respect of possible charges for Blue badge holders in Council car parks.

Council further notes that the preferred option of the executive groups is to introduce charges for the use of Council owned car parks.

Council believes that those in receipt of blue badges, including the blind, military veterans with a disability and residents in receipt of the most severe levels of disability benefit, face extreme levels of hardship and should not be disadvantaged further.

Council therefore urges the portfolio holder for highways to rule out any option that requires blue badge holders to pay when using a Council car park.

A number of members were critical of the consultation saying that it was not available in audio, large print or braille and that there had been no impact assessment carried out. Others questioned the amount of revenue charging blue badge holders would bring in saying that enforcement action against those abusing the system would raise more money. Other members criticised the motion being brought whilst the consultation was still running.

By 20 votes to 7 with 6 abstentions it was

RESOLVED to urge the portfolio holder for highways to rule out any option that requires blue badge holders to pay when using a Council car park.

Council adjourned for lunch at 13.38 and reconvened at 14.05.

PRESENT

County Councillor DW Meredith (Chair)

County Councillors MC Alexander, B Baynham, J Charlton, L V Corfield, K W Curry, B Davies, D E Davies, P Davies, S C Davies, M J Dorrance, E Durrant, D O Evans, J Evans, L Fitzpatrick, L George, J Gibson-Watt, M R Harris, S M Hayes, H Hulme, A Jenner, E A Jones, D R Jones, E Jones, E M Jones, M J Jones, D Jones-Poston, F H Jump, K Laurie-Parry, H Lewis, K Lewis, P E Lewis, S Lewis, MC Mackenzie, I McIntosh, S McNicholas, C Mills, JG Morris, R Powell, WD Powell, D R Price, GD Price, G Pugh, J Pugh, G W Ratcliffe, L Roberts, P Roberts, K M Roberts-Jones, E Roderick, D Rowlands, D Selby, K S Silk, D A Thomas, T J Van-Rees, E Vaughan, M Weale, A Williams, G I S Williams, D H Williams, J M Williams and R Williams

15. EXEMPT ITEMS

RESOLVED to exclude the public for the following item of business on the grounds that there would be disclosure to them of exempt information under category 1 of The Local Authorities (Access to Information) (Variation) (Wales) Order 2007.

16. CONFIDENTIAL REPORT - PRIVATE PERSONNEL MATTER

Steve Thomas, Chief Executive of the WLGA briefed Council and a report from the Leader was circulated.

Council adjourned for members to consider the report in their political groups and reconvened at 14.45.

County Councillor Baynham left the meeting at 15.36.

The recommendations in the report were proposed by the Leader and seconded by County Councillor DR Jones and by 43 votes to 3 with 4 abstentions

RESOLVED	Reason for Decision:
<p>1) That the terms of settlement set out in section 3 of the business case attached as appendix A of this report are approved.</p> <p>2) That the Solicitor to Council is instructed to put in place a formal Settlement Agreement to put into effect the agreed terms of settlement at the earliest opportunity.</p> <p>3) That the report, business case and outcome remain confidential.</p>	To allow the Council to move on in the interests of the efficiency of the Council

Council went back into open session. County Councillors E Durrant and J Pugh left the meeting at 16.00.

17. NOTICE OF MOTION - NEWTOWN BYPASS

Council considered the following motion proposed by County Councillor David Selby, seconded by County Councillor Karl Lewis:

This Council This Council recognizes that the construction of the Newtown By Pass creates a major transportation link comparable in importance to the connection of the town to canal and railway links in the 19th century. The By Pass is of major national and local importance.

This Council therefore urges the Welsh Government to name the By-Pass Ffordd Robert Owen Way in recognition of Robert Owen's international, national and local significance as a social reformer and the inspiration for the foundation of the co-operative movement.

By 33 votes to 1 it was

RESOLVED to urge the Welsh Government to name the By-Pass Ffordd Robert Owen Way in recognition of Robert Owen's international, national and local significance as a social reformer and the inspiration for the foundation of the co-operative movement.

17.1. Notice of Motion - School Transport Policy

This notice of motion was withdrawn by the proposer and seconder.

18. QUESTIONS IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE CONSTITUTION

18.1. Question to the Portfolio Holder for Corporate Governance, Housing and Public Protection from County Councillor Gwilym Williams

Can the portfolio holder inform me and Members the total honorarium payments paid by Powys County Council to employees in the last two financial years; giving a total figure for each year?

Response

The total honorarium payments in each of the following financial years is as follows:

	Count of employees	Total Cash Value
2016/17	8	£6,687.00
2017/18	2	£4,174.00

The total acting up payments made in each of the following financial years is as follows:

	Count of employees	Total Cash Value
2016/17	33	£79,619.40
2017/18	84	£184,054.75

Honoraria is defined in the Council's Terms and Conditions of Service as a discretionary payment awarded by the Head of Service when employees undertake additional responsibilities for a limited period of time.

There was no supplementary question.

18.2. Question to the Portfolio Holder for Corporate Governance, Housing and Public Protection from County Councillor Gwilym Williams

Can the portfolio holder inform me how many interims are currently employed by Powys Council and how many interims were employed by Powys County Council 12 months previously?

Response

Interims are contractors who supply the temporary provision of management resources and skills. Interim management is a short term assignment of a proven interim executive leader / manager to lead / manage a period of transition, crisis or change within an organisation. In this situation, a permanent role may be unnecessary or impossible to fill at short notice. Additionally, there may be nobody internally who is suitable or available to take up the position in question.

Date	Number Interims contracted
28/06/2018	27
28/06/2017	18

Councillor Williams' supplementary question regarding an interim Head of Service would involve the disclosure of confidential information and would therefore be dealt with outside the meeting.

18.3. Question to the Portfolio Holder for Learning and the Welsh Language from County Councillor Edwin Roderick

County Councillor R Harris declared a personal and prejudicial interest in this item and left the meeting while it was being discussed.

Given that there have been five new primary schools built in Powys, when would it seem practical to assume that a new school could be built at Sennybridge, bearing in mind that I believe it is one of the oldest schools in Powys, originally designed as a high school built in 1939 and now is constantly in need of repairs etc. There is a serious sewage issue and other major problems with floor tiles rising throughout. Also, all pupils have to walk across the school yard to the school canteen, where there aren't any toilet facilities.

The school at present has 130 children including a vibrant WELSH stream of 44. It is now struggling with very poor facilities, even so, at the recent URDD eisteddfod at Brecon, Sennybridge I believe had the most children taking part, with many going on to represent Breconshire.

At one time Sennybridge also had a very popular and well used swimming pool, but sadly that had to go due to lack of maintenance. With pupil numbers projected to rise even more with planning permission for 50 new houses granted, it's a priority for Sennybridge to have a bigger school with better and more modern and up to date facilities.

Will the Portfolio holder commit to providing a new primary school at Sennybridge?

Response:

One of the key priorities within the Council's new School Organisation Policy is to improve the condition of the Powys schools' estate, and the authority is delivering this through the 21st C Schools Programme and the Major Improvement Programme. The authority is, jointly with the Welsh Government, investing £80m to improve the schools infrastructure in Powys, as part of Band A of the 21st C Schools Programme, which runs from 2014 – 2019. We have also received approval of our Band B Strategic Outline Programme for capital investment from 2019 – 2024/5, which is based on the following WG priorities for 21st C Schools Programme Band B:

1. To provide efficient and effective educational infrastructure that will meet current and future demand for places by 2024.
 - Backlog maintenance costs for the schools and colleges selected for Band B are reduced by at least 50% (based on the assumption that approximately 50% of the projects in the Programme will be replacements for existing assets).
 - No category D buildings in the estate.
 - c25% of Category C condition buildings are improved to Category A or B.
2. Optimise the use of infrastructure and resources, to deliver public services for our communities by 2024. This will include flexibility of our assets so that space and facilities available for our stakeholders are maximised.
 - Our aspiration is for all facilities that receive investment commit to making assets available for community use if local demand exists.
 - 10% of schools / colleges that receive funding from the Programme have co-located public services on site if local demand exists.

We are currently finalising the funding priorities as part of Band B, looking at condition, suitability and sustainability of all the schools estate, and will confirm these once finalised.

In answer to Councillor Roderick's supplementary question as to when the large amount of remedial work needed at the school would be undertaken, the Portfolio Holder for Learning and the Welsh Language advised that she expected the schools service to finalise its funding priorities after the summer.

County Councillor Rosemarie Harris returned to the meeting.

County Councillor Linda Corfield left the meeting at 16.13.

18.4. Question to the Portfolio Holder for Young People and Culture from County Councillor Huw Williams

How many full-time, part-time and temporary agency staff, of all grades, are currently employed in the Authority's Children's Services department, and how do the figures compare with the number employed at the time of the Care Inspectorate Wales inspection, in July 2017? How many posts are vacant?

Response

Children's Services Establishment

	3 rd July 2017	28 th May 2018
Full time posts	142	149
Part time posts	99	97
Agency Workers	23	30
Contractor	10	8

*May 2018 – Agency numbers include contractors (BK/CH) that are covering additional capacity for Senior Manager

3rd July 2017 there were 86 vacant posts in Children's Services (this includes relief and shadow posts and S/W posts that are open for NQSW etc.)

28th May 2018 there were 72 vacant posts in Children's Services (this includes relief and shadow posts and S/W posts that are open for NQSW etc.)

4th July 2018 there were 65 vacant posts in Children's Services (this includes relief and shadow posts and S/W posts that are open for NQSW etc.)

This data is directly from BI Dashboard – further analysis can be provided if required

In reality there are approx. 37 vacant posts if you remove shadow, open posts for NQSW etc.

As at 28/5/18, of the 30 agency workers - 8.5 were covering vacancies and 21.5 were over establishment.

In July 2017, there was no recruitment drive as such as posts were only advertised on the PCC website and other limited places.

Work continues to address recruitment and retention issues as part of the implementation of the Children's Improvement Plan

- Recruitment Campaign live within Community Care Guardian, Indeed, Facebook, LinkedIn etc. for both Adults and Children Services
- A number of Recruitment Events have taken place throughout Powys during 2018.
- Recruitment Open Day for Carers Wales held in March 2018 – this has proved to be successful as a number of applications have been received for Social Care posts and Golwg y Bannau
- Corporate 'Work, Live, Play in Powys' video has gone live and are pinned on Social Media accounts.
- Social work specific recruitment videos developed.
- Social Care web page development finalised and launched to target specific recruitment areas
- Role profiles are being developed to attract people to specific job roles.
- Communications continue to share posts relating to Children's Services recruitment
- HoS permanent post has been advertised with a good response
- Fostering TM recruitment campaign has been finalised
- Recruited four newly qualified social workers in the last few months
- 6 in house social work training places made available this year across adults and children's
- Staff benefit scheme launched this month
- Induction package developed
- Exit interviews offered to all leavers
- Staff questionnaire to better understand issues important to frontline staff.

In response to Councillor Williams' supplementary question about whether recruitment and retention problems were impacting on children and what steps the service were taking to address the issue, the Portfolio Holder advised that the service was working on a recruitment package to help attract and retain staff and she said she had received assurances on the workforce in post were conducive to protecting children.

18.5. Question to the Leader from County Councillor James Gibson-Watt

Can the Leader confirm the number of Judicial Reviews that Powys County Council was subject to in the years 2015/16, 2016/17 and 2017/18; how many of those Judicial Review judgements found for the Council and how many found against it; and the total cost to the Council of those Judicial Reviews, including those that the Council decided not to defend?

Response

I thank Councillor James Gibson-Watt for this question and the information requested is as follows:

2015 2 Judicial Review Cases that were lost at a cost of £ 90,000 (ie £ £52,000 & £ 38,000)
1 Judicial Review Case that was won by the Council

2016 1 Judicial Review Case that was lost but at no cost to the Council as the case was underwritten by the Department for Business Energy and Industrial Strategy.

1 Judicial Review Case that was won by the Council

2017 1 Judicial Review Case that was lost at a cost of £ 60,000

2018 1 Judicial Review Case that was lost at a cost of £ 20,739.36
1 Judicial Review Case that was won by the Council with costs awarded to the Council of £45,000

There was no supplementary question.

18.6. Question to the Portfolio Holder for Corporate Governance, Housing and Public Protection from County Councillor Matthew Dorrance

Data published by Powys County Council shows it pays women 10.7% less per hour than men.

What action will the administration take to ensure women workers are paid the same rate of pay as men?

Response

The Council has a mean gender pay gap of 10.72% (average) and a median (middle) gender pay gap of 10.22%. In response to this finding, a report entitled "Gender Pay Gap Reporting" was presented to Informal Cabinet dated 8 May 2018.

It is important to note that our Gender Pay Gap is not the result of the Council failing to pay men and women equally. In 2013, the Council finalised the completion of its Single Status terms and conditions that codified employee terms and conditions to ensure equality for all employees covered by the agreement. In accordance with Single Status, all job roles in the Council were

evaluated using HAY or NJC methodology, which in turn means that each job role has a job grade, with an established starting salary. This goes a considerable way to achieving equality in relation to pay.

What is of considerable importance is the fact that we have more women in lower paid jobs than we do men and this is mostly due to the distribution of male and female employees across the organisation – this of course means that female average pay is lower than men. This is quite typical of the UK local government workforce. Further to this, according to the Office for National Statistics, Wales as a country has the biggest gender pay gap in the UK.

As an Authority, we will need to analyse our data carefully to determine which grade or level has the biggest gender pay gap as well as analysing gender composition and retention at different levels and in different occupations. We have a number of policies in place to work to achieving a balanced and representative workforce across the organisation although the Council will need to develop and publish a gender pay action plan and it is submitted that the following areas should be addressed in the action plan:

- Actively encouraging the recruitment and retention of female employees into senior and chief officer roles
- Attracting more diverse candidates by ensuring that job adverts have gender-neutral language and that jobs are advertised as flexible (e.g. suitable for part-time working, job-sharing, agile, etc.), as far as reasonably possible
- Provide appropriate support to staff with caring responsibilities (it is estimated by the Chartered Institute of Personnel & Development that there are currently two million people in the UK who are not working because they have caring responsibilities – 89% of the two million are women).

In response to Councillor Dorrance's supplementary question as to whether the Cabinet would commit to reinstating the real living wage, the Portfolio Holder said that this would be a matter to be considered in the 2019/20 budget.

18.7. Question to the Portfolio Holder for Learning and Welsh Language from County Councillor Matthew Dorrance

Will the Cabinet publish the full costs of renting the former St Joseph's Roman Catholic Primary School including:

- 1. Rent costs**
- 2. Utility Costs**
- 3. Insurance Costs**
- 4. Repair and Maintenance Costs**
- 5. Legal Costs**
- 6. Any Other Costs?**

Response:

1. Rent costs – this is commercially sensitive information due to third party ownership
2. Utility Costs – costs for gas and £5,433.13 from June 2016 to June 2018 and electric £2,423.68 from 2016 to 2018

3. Insurance Costs – for the breakdown of costs see spreadsheet ‘St. Joseph’s Costs 2017-18’ attached with the agenda which total £39,385-24.
4. Repair and Maintenance Costs – for the breakdown of costs see spreadsheet ‘St. Joseph’s Costs 2017-18’ which total £39,385-24.
5. Legal Costs – Each party were responsible for their own Legal costs associated with completing the lease.
6. Any Other Costs – for the breakdown of costs see spreadsheet ‘St. Joseph’s Costs 2017-18’ which total £39,385-24.

In response to Councillor Dorrance’s supplementary question as to whether savings expected were being made the portfolio holder said that they were looking at the most cost effective way of running the service.

18.8. Question to the Portfolio Holder for Corporate Governance, Housing and Public Protection from County Councillor John Morris

You will be aware that the Brecon Beacons National Park have chosen to retain any commuted sums for affordable housing collected within the park boundary and decide where it is to be spent despite Powys being the housing authority in the park area. They have done this after seeking legal advice but will not release the legal advice to PCC or even to their own members.

I am informed that the amount of money either already held by them or pending payment from present and future developments runs to around £2million. As 80% of the National Park falls within Powys a large proportion of that money would be raised in the Powys part of the park.

To date despite the BBNPA holding on to money collected in Powys for over 2 years they have refused to release any of it for an affordable housing project in Powys. They also earn interest from this retained money and use it to fund the budget of the BBNPA and not add it to the affordable housing pot.

Do you support the stance taken by the BBNPA and if not, what measures have you taken since replacing the previous portfolio holder who went to press to condemn the refusal to release the money and promised action to resolve the situation?

Response

Councillor Morris will be aware that the Leader, Councillor Rosemarie Harris, is on record as having objected to the holding of these funds by the BBNPA at a formal Powys CC/BBNPA Liaison meeting on 2nd September 2017.

As Portfolio Holder I fully endorse that stance and will continue to argue for the funding to be controlled by the Strategic Housing Authority, i.e. Powys County Council. I believe that the process established by BBNPA to distribute the commuted sums raised in the National Park is bureaucratic and leads to

duplication of effort for this and other local authorities and our housing association partners.

Last Autumn a bid was submitted to the value of £94,262, the amount at that time held by the BBNPA that had been raised in the Powys area of their planning jurisdiction. The figure of £2million mentioned by Councillor Morris is the sum that may be expected to be raised should all schemes granted planning permission by the BBNPA be developed. It is therefore only a "potential amount".

Information from the BBNPA on 20th June 2018 is that the figure for Powys remains the same. We are also informed that there is no longer a system of "windows" for bidding and bids can be entertained whenever opportunity arises.

The bid submitted was rejected on the grounds that the scheme provided no substantive gain in the number of affordable homes as the planning permission had been granted for 100% affordable provision by Melin Homes and we were purchasing 6 of the homes from them. In planning terms we therefore had no reasonable argument against this decision.

As soon as a suitable scheme is identified that complies with the BBNPA Local Development Plan and Supplementary Planning Guidance, a further bid will be submitted which will have my full support.

Councillor Morris will be pleased to note that I will be attending a meeting in the coming weeks, to which the Leader and he have also been invited, with representatives of the National Park to put forward the case for the commuted sums to be handed to the Strategic Housing Authority.

In answer to Councillor Morris' supplementary question as to whether the Council should launch a legal challenge to recover the commuted sums, the Portfolio holder advised that he was arranging a meeting with Welsh Government ministers to discuss the issue.

18.9. Question to the Portfolio Holder for Finance, Countryside and Transport from County Councillor Kelvyn Curry

To ask the Portfolio Holder to confirm whether or not Powys County Council submitted a response to the UK Government's consultation on proposed changes to the issuing of Section 19 and 22 Minibus permits to community transport providers and:-

- a) if the Council did produce a response to provide a copy of that response to all members, and**
- b) if the Council did not produce a response to explain why it did not do so?**

Response

The Council does recognise the value of the community transport sector and Members may be aware be aware of the steps we are currently taking in order to try and protect the sector.

However, in discussion with officers, we formed the view that it would not be appropriate for PCC to respond to consultation on Section 19 and 22 Minibus permits.

The reason for this is that Powys County Council is currently a body that issues Section 19 permits to the community transport sector. These permits currently enable community transport schemes to operate in the way that has caused the concern with the regulators and the commercial sector. As Powys County Council also spends a significant amount of money locally with the commercial sector, officers were of the view that responding to the consultation may suggest to either sector that the Council favours one not the other.

The supplementary question was whether by not responding to the consultation the Council was sending the message that it did not value community transport. The Portfolio Holder was absent so a response would be drafted and circulated to all members.

Response to Supplementary Question

The Council has shown clear commitment to the Community Transport service, which can be seen by its actions. The Council has provided grant funding to the community transport sector (via PAVO) to the sum of £153k per annum. The council has recently brought the administration back in house to deliver even better value.

18.10. Question to the Leader from County Councillor James Gibson-Watt

Could the Leader of Council please provide the Council with the cost to the Council of procuring Counsel's advice on whether the votes that took place at the Council's AGM on the 17th May 2018 to 'approve' the political groups' appointment of the Chairs of the Council's Health, Care & Housing and Learning, Skills and Economy Committees conformed to the Local Government (Wales) Measure 2011?

Response

I thank Councillor James Gibson-Watt for this question and can advise him and Council that the cost of the advice from Mr James Goudie QC was £ 2615 plus VAT.

There was no supplementary question.

18.11. Question to the Portfolio Holder for Learning and the Welsh Language from County Councillor John Morris

I am sure you will agree that Crickhowell High School is a high achieving successful school despite it being the lowest financed school per pupil in Powys.

At your recent visit to Crickhowell Town Council, I note from the approved minutes of the council that when questioned about the capital funding for Crickhowell High School compared to other High Schools in the area you stated that:

Powys's responsibility is to provide infrastructure for Powys' children not out of county children.

Does Powys discriminate against schools who take out of county pupils when considering its capital spend, which schools take out of county pupils across Powys and does the Welsh government support your stance on this issue?

Response:

Capital funding for schools in Powys is prioritised on the basis of condition, suitability and sustainability which align with the Welsh Government's priorities for capital investment. The issue in Crickhowell HS is one of suitability in terms of space to accommodate all pupils. Officers are currently working with Crickhowell High School to find build solutions to meet the needs of the school and the authority is investing a £1m to address these needs.

Responding to Councillor Morris' supplementary question asking if she would apologise for her comments to Crickhowell Town Council that the Council could not provide infrastructure for out of county children, the Portfolio Holder said the schools service could only project on the basis of Powys pupils and it could not know how many out of county pupils might come in.

18.12. Question to the Portfolio Holder for Learning and the Welsh Language from County Councillor Jackie Charlton

At Llangattock Church in Wales Primary School governors meeting on 26 June an urgent issue was bought to the attention of the Governors regarding the planned and funded expansion and upgrade of the building for existing pupils and +3 provision due to start in May this year.

The school was encouraged to deliver the +3 provision as there is a lack of support for this age group in South Powys. They have been delivering this provision for the past academic year which Powys received funding for from the Welsh Government.

The Church in Wales and Llangattock Education Fund have supported the cost of this extension and improvement by providing £120,000 towards the total cost.

The work, which had already been delayed from last autumn, should have started three weeks ago with promises ensuring the return after the summer break could be properly planned. The container to take classroom equipment should have arrived on Monday 25 June 2108. When it didn't arrive the Head Teacher contacted the contractor to be told that Powys County Council had not authorised yet. When she contacted Powys it would seem that the financial sign off had not yet been completed. The phrase used to the Head was the project was in 'jeopardy' which not only angered her but greatly concerned her too.

QUESTION

Can the portfolio holder assure me and the school that the build project will be on time and will be completed as planned to ensure that educating the children in Llangattock Church in Wales school is able to begin in September. Can she also assure me that full financial support is given to the school for the increase in provision which up to date has not been forthcoming? The school has covered the +3 costs to date because of the promised extension and classroom improvements.

Response

The authority apologises for the delay in the progress of the capital building works agreed for Llangattock CiW School.

The project was intended to be completed by early September 2018. A contractor has been engaged to complete the work, starting on site on the 23rd July 2018 and completing on the 12th October 2018.

There has been agreement reached with the Llangattock Community Hall which will allow the use of the hall for the 3+ setting during the works. In terms of maintaining educational delivery for the school, we are putting a plan in place to enable internal alteration works to be completed during the school summer holidays.

Supporting any moves will be the provision of a steel storage container and this will be in place next week for the duration of the work and to allow decanting of classrooms. There are alterations and extensions to provide additional toilet facilities and if required then temporary toilets will be put in place for the pupils to ensure welfare facilities are maintained.

In response to Councillor Charlton's supplementary question the Portfolio Holder gave an assurance that the department would deal with parents' complaints and would respond on the issue of funding the 3 plus service.

18.13. Question to the Leader from County Councillor Emily Durrant

The Mid Wales Growth Deal presents us with a timely opportunity to bring great investment to our County. Given the vast sums of money available and the potential impact on the economic and social landscape of Powys, what measures are in place to ensure an equitable and open approach to the selection of projects and their development? Will the Leader please set out timelines, decision-making and consultation processes to prioritise which projects Powys County Council will recommend for inclusion in the Deal and the scrutiny arrangements that will apply?

Response

A potential Growth Deal for Mid Wales is a major opportunity to help drive economic growth across the region. The deal will focus on bringing investment to the region as well as increasing economic activity that will benefit local business. The Council will be working with the Growing Mid Wales Partnership, local stakeholders and the Welsh Government to identify the best way to strengthen the region's economy, and the engagement and support of the private sector will be central to this process.

On behalf of the Growing Mid Wales Partnership, the Council has appointed AECOM consultants to prepare an Economic Action Plan for Mid Wales. Work is underway to identify the issues and opportunities facing the economy and on developing a clear vision and priorities for the region. The aim of the Action Plan will be to develop a programme of strategic interventions to help transform the Mid Wales economy that can be delivered through a range of funding sourcing including a Growth Deal. An email will shortly be circulated to all members on the Economic Action Plan which will include an online survey to feed into the process which Members are encouraged to participate in. The Economic Action Plan is scheduled to be completed in the Autumn and where possible will include early stage business cases for key investments.

The Growth Deal will be a negotiation between UK Government, Welsh Government and the Mid Wales Region, the latter being led by Powys and Ceredigion County Councils. The details of the process are to be confirmed, however, it is envisaged that governance structures will be set up over the next 12 months and business cases for prioritised interventions will need to be ready for discussion by Summer 2019. Members will be kept updated on the proposed consultation and decision making process as they develop.

In response to the supplementary question the Leader confirmed that she would be happy to meet to discuss the Mid Wales Growth Deal.

18.14. Question to the Portfolio Holder for Learning and Welsh Language from County Councillor David Jones

The Cabinet put out the following press release on 11 April:

"More than £5m will be spent on Powys schools in coming three financial years as part of a major improvement plan, following a decision by Powys County Council's cabinet.

Meeting in Llandrindod Wells today (April 10) the cabinet approved an annual improvement fund of more than £2m for primary and secondary school improvement projects for the next two financial years with a further £1m earmarked for 2020/2021.

Cabinet Member for Schools, Councillor Myfanwy Alexander said: "We are investing in schools right across the county, in primary, secondary and special schools to improve the learning environment for learners and staff.

"I am particularly pleased to see investment to improve access for those with physical disabilities. It is important that pupils with disabilities can attend mainstream schools if they so-choose."

The planned works will include £374,000 for major refurbishment at Llangattock Primary School, replacing unsuitable teaching areas, new toilets facilities and additional early years space, a £290,000 investment over three phases to Improve pedestrian access, car park expansion and re-surfacing surface work at Rhayader Church in Wales School, and £100,000 each for Brynllwarch and Crickhowell schools for new boundary fences to improve security at the premises.

Roof and window improvement work, along with improvement work to a science block at Newtown High School will require investment of more than £330,000 over the next three financial years, Caereinion High School will see £300,000 spend over three years to improve toilet facilities and improve disabled access.

Llandrindod High School will see roof and internal improvements cost more than £500,000 during a three phased programme and the town's Trefonnen School will have a £133,000 extension for early years' provision.

A full list of the improvement programme can be found at:
<http://powys.moderngov.co.uk/mgCommitteeDetails.aspx?ID=137>"

Who authorised the press release to go out?

Response

The press release was authorised by the Portfolio Holder for Learning and the Welsh Language, Cllr Myfanwy Alexander.

In answer to Councillor Jones' supplementary question as to why given the confusion in the school service over the press release it had not been withdrawn or a correction issued, the Portfolio Holder explained that the intention had been to issue it with an appended explanation but that this had not been done.

18.15. Question to the Portfolio Holder for Finance, Countryside and Transport from County Councillor William Powell

It is widely accepted that a No Deal Brexit presents an existential threat to the future of Welsh livestock farming

- **90% of all Welsh meat exports are currently exported into the EU Single Market**
- **EU Farm Payments currently represent 80% of total farm incomes in Wales**
- **There is currently no clarity in terms of agricultural support regimes post 2022**

In this context, and since Powys is more exposed to turbulence within the livestock sector than any other Welsh local authority area, what is Powys County Council currently doing to build resilience and develop capacity, in order to safeguard the future of our local economy?

Response

The UK Government has pledged to continue to commit the same cash total in funds for farm support for the duration of this Parliament (until 2022).

This includes all EU and Exchequer funding provided for farm support under both Pillar I and Pillar II. In each UK administration, the UK Government funding under this commitment will reflect the EU's contribution towards farm support. It will clearly be for each administration to decide whether to continue to commit the same element of its existing block grant.

This pledge delivers a greater level of security and certainty for farmers and landowners than anywhere else in the EU - where funding is guaranteed only to 2020.

We need to be focused on opportunities outside the EU. Farmers will be free to grow, sell and produce more while protecting our environment, underpinned by the greatest possible tariff-free and barrier-free trade with our European neighbours and the rest of the world.

Powys County Council under the leadership of Cllr Rosemarie Harris is working closely with the UK and Welsh Government to grow the Powys economy and is determined to create the environment where all rural business can thrive and increase their resilience to challenges in the market place. Delivering the Growth Deal will be a key element in our Vision.

The UK Government is also proactive in supporting the Welsh rural economy. The Secretary of State for Wales, Rt Hon Alun Cairns MP recently (7th June) hosted a joint Agricultural and environmental roundtable with the Welsh Government Minister, Lesley Griffiths. This meeting was to discuss issues relating to EU exit in Wales, to hear how stakeholders in Wales are preparing for exit and to understand more about stakeholders' key issues. It is clear that the two governments are working together on these important issues.

There was no supplementary question.

18.16. Question to the Portfolio Holder for Young People and Culture from County Councillor Gareth Jones

This question was withdrawn and would be put on the agenda for the next meeting.

19. REQUEST FOR LEAVE OF ABSENCE

County Councillor G Price had declared a personal and prejudicial interest in this item and left the meeting.

Council received requests for leave of absence from County Councillors G Price and J Wilkinson. By 36 votes to 0 with 1 abstention it was

RESOLVED to grant County Councillors G Price and J Wilkinson six months leave of absence each.

County Councillor DW Meredith (Chair)