

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE COUNTY COUNCIL HELD AT COUNCIL CHAMBER - COUNTY HALL, LLANDRINDOD WELLS ON THURSDAY, 18 OCTOBER 2018

PRESENT

County Councillor DW Meredith (Chair)

County Councillors MC Alexander, M Barnes, B Baynham, J Charlton, L V Corfield, K W Curry, A W Davies, 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, H Hulme, A Jenner, D R Jones, E Jones, G Jones, J R Jones, E M Jones, M J Jones, D Jones-Poston, F H Jump, K Laurie-Parry, K Lewis, P E Lewis, MC Mackenzie, I McIntosh, S McNicholas, C Mills, G Morgan, N Morrison, R Powell, WD Powell, D R Price, GD Price, P C Pritchard, 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, R G Thomas, T J Van-Rees, E Vaughan, M Weale, A Williams, D H Williams, J Williams, R Williams and S L Williams

1.	APOLOGIES
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Apologies for absence were received from County Councillors G Breeze, S M Hayes, E A Jones, H Lewis, S Lewis, JG Morris, J Wilkinson, G I S Williams and J M Williams

2.	MINUTES
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The Chair was authorised to sign the minutes of the last meeting held on 12th July 2018 as a correct record.

3.	DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST
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County Councillors M Alexander, J Evans and T Van-Rees declared personal and prejudicial interests in item 8.3 on the agenda. County Councillor R Williams declared a personal interest in this item as a Trustee of Brecon Mind.
County Councillors D Davies, P Pritchard and K Roberts-Jones declared personal interests in item 15.4 on the agenda.

4.	CHAIR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS
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The Chair presented members of the Powys Trading Standards and Legal teams with commendations from the Crown Court Judge who had presided over the Operation Gleam case. The following commendations were received:
Nikki Davies Wheeler as the senior investigating officer in the case
Desmond Fitzpatrick for the financial investigation work
Robert Brown for his support from Powys Legal Services.
A general commendation for the Trading Standards team was received by Christine Micah Meredith, Lisa Woods, Joanne Davies, Grace Doran and Nicola Croose.

Mr Peter Jones, Principal Consultant with Eunomia, presented Councillor Phyl Davies with an award in recognition of Powys having the most effective recycling collection service in reducing CO₂ emissions in Wales, England and Northern Ireland. In accepting the award the Portfolio Holder for Highways Assets and Recycling thanked staff and Powys residents for their contribution.

5. LEADER'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Leader referred to the many events held in the county over the summer, noting that the Green Man Festival had been awarded the BBC Best Festival of the Year award and she suggested that a letter of congratulations be sent. She also referred to ongoing improvement work in Children's Services noting that the CIW were currently inspecting the service. She advised that the fifth and final new primary school in the Gwernyfed catchment had opened completing a £25m investment in the area and that work was underway on the new English medium school in Welshpool. Work was starting on a review of education in Newtown which could bring a £50m investment. She had spoken on behalf of the Council at the memorial service for Mr John Brunt, the former Chair of Council. The Leader also updated Council on the WLGA where she had made the case for the extra costs of delivering services in a rural area to be acknowledged in the settlement from Welsh Government.

6. CHIEF EXECUTIVE'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Deputy Chief Executive advised Council that a £1.7m reduction in funding had been announced in the provisional settlement from Welsh Government. The final settlement would be announced in December. The reduced funding available was driving a change to how services were delivered with a smaller more agile council. The Deputy Chief Executive also advised that over 100 nominations had been received for the staff awards and that the finalists would be announced shortly.

7. PUBLIC QUESTIONS - MAXIMUM OF 20 MINUTES

7.1. Question to the Portfolio Holder for Young People and Culture from Richard Spanswick

Given that Welshpool has an excellent, purpose-built, easily accessible, and well used library at its Brook Street site, would the Council please confirm that it will prioritise the needs of the community above the desire to relocate council office accommodation from Neuadd Maldwyn to the library building at the same time as reducing library stock and amenities, and safeguard this facility for future public use?

Response

I understand and appreciate the concerns raised with regard to any possible change to the excellent service which is provided at both Welshpool Library and Powysland Museum.

Members will appreciate that all councils across the country are currently facing very severe financial restrictions, with Powys no exception – and this situation is going to continue for the foreseeable future. As a council, we have to seek to make the very best and cost effective use of our buildings and our staff, for the benefits of our residents.

We are committed to delivering a sustainable long-term future for library and museum services in Welshpool; we appreciate that the library lends the second highest number of books in the authority, and that the computers are also well used and invaluable to those without their own devices.

The library and museum staff will work very hard to ensure that the co-location is successful; that as many books and artefacts are available as possible, through a carefully planned layout, including digital connectivity for the public. The current services will continue to be delivered, with trained staff on hand to help visitors with choosing from the shelves, borrowing e-books or ordering books from elsewhere in the authority if needed, and to explain about the various exhibits and local culture and heritage of Welshpool.

In other parts of the county, we have found that visitor numbers have gone up, and members of the public enjoy being able to use more than one service in one location, for example in Llandrindod, Llanidloes, Builth and Knighton libraries. We hope that this co-location will also enable visitors to continue to enjoy an interesting range of stock, exhibitions and activities in a lovely canal side setting.

Mr Spanswick's supplementary question was "Given that the cost of adapting the library and museum buildings to their proposed new uses will likely be at least a short-term burden on public finances, what are the results of any cost-benefit analysis undertaken to show that the downgrading of a major public asset from community library to council offices is a worthwhile long-term step to take?" The Portfolio Holder for Young People and Culture said she would ask colleagues from other services to respond on the wider point of the cost-benefit analysis.

7.2. Question to the Portfolio Holder for Learning and Welsh Language from Buddug Bates

Can the Member with responsibility for the Education portfolio please confirm when it is likely that a new North Powys category 2a high school is likely to open?

The Council's Welsh in Education Strategic Plan for 2017-20 includes a commitment 'to continue with work to establish one or more category 2A schools in north Powys'.

Since the publication of the WESP, the Council has had its Strategic Outline Programme (SOP) for Band B of the 21st Century Schools capital programme approved by Cabinet and the Welsh Government - the SOP includes a significant investment in education in Newtown: this includes replacement buildings for Ysgol Cedewain and Brynllwarch Hall School, investment in the town's primary schools and the development of secondary Welsh medium provision.

The work in Newtown is at early feasibility stage, and once this has been completed, it will be possible to work out a more detailed timeline for the planned Welsh-medium secondary provision. However, the Council is currently working to the current indicative timescales:

2018-19:	Initial feasibility work Cabinet approval to proceed with any land purchase, statutory process
2019-20:	Statutory process Develop initial business cases
2020-21:	Develop detailed designs, appoint contractor
2022:	Building commences

Based on this, it is anticipated that it would be approximately 2023/2024 before any new Welsh medium provision were to open. However, there are examples in other authorities where temporary arrangements have been put in place to establish 'seedling' provision whilst waiting for building work to be completed. This happened recently at Ysgol Gyfun Gwent Is Coed in Newport, which was established in temporary accommodation in September 2016, before moving to permanent accommodation in 2018. Should this be possible, it could be possible to establish new provision sooner. However, any move to establish Welsh-medium secondary provision would be dependent on the statutory process as outlined in the School Organisation Code, and on Cabinet approval as required throughout the process.

It is hoped that further clarity can be provided over the coming months. There will be numerous opportunities for stakeholders to contribute to the plans as they are developed.

Mrs Bates supplementary question was "What precisely are the seedling provision you propose before the new bilingual school is established, in order to stem the flow of pupils who leave the benefits of their bilingual education when they reach 11 years old?" The Portfolio Holder replied that as well as the intention to create a 2a category school, consideration was being given to whether there was any possibility of creating some of the provision before the new building is finished. Such a big plan was complex and may be subject to delay but everyone was working to ensure 2a provision in Newtown as soon as possible.

7.3. Question to the Portfolio Holder for Learning and Welsh Language from Heidi Wilson

In light of the recent re-tendering exercise of all Home-to-School transport arrangements, can the council please reassure me and other parents whose children use the x48 local bus (route BW61 Llanddewi to Builth Wells) that a full risk assessment has been carried out and that the council are satisfied that in the event of a road traffic incident sufficient safety measures are in place to protect our children as far as is possible on this dangerous stretch of road? I ask this particularly in relation to those pupils who have to stand whilst using this service.

Response

The authority has received a small number of communications from parents regarding this bus route, which carries pupils from North of Llandrindod to Builth

Wells campus of Ysgol Calon Cymru for Welsh-medium provision; these pupils are eligible to free transport in-line with our published criteria.

Following a re-tendering exercise undertaken by the authority, transport for this route is now provided a public bus (as is the case in many local authorities and in, and some parents have been concerned about pupils having to stand for the journey.

In order to assess the risk, a local authority officer travelled the return journey himself and noted that some pupils chose to stand as opposed to sit and the authority is confident that the service provided and route is safe .

Service buses such as the ones provided on the service between Builth and Llandrindod are structurally designed to accommodate passengers in seats, wheelchairs and for those who stand. The bus which is used on this service was first registered in 2018 and is a brand new vehicle which has had to meet very strict European safety standards. The vehicle has a seating capacity of 41, with a further standing capacity of 43 (which is reduced by 1 if there is a wheelchair on board the bus) giving a total of 84 passengers. Our records show that there are 26 learners who attend the Builth campus who are taught through the medium of Welsh. Therefore, the Council has specified a bus with sufficient capacity to accommodate those learners who qualify for statutory home to school transport.

To further mitigate any risks, the Council specifies seatbelts on the majority of service buses we provide, including this particular bus, but there is no legal requirement to have them fitted to a service bus. In addition, the bus company are in the process of fitting CCTV with a 'live feed' to this bus which will enable the bus company to identify any anti-social behaviour on the bus by any passengers (members of the public or school learners) and other road users. There is a regular driver on this particular service and the feedback from the officer who travelled on the vehicle was that all the learners who used the bus were extremely well behaved, polite, very co-operative and responded well to any instructions given by the driver.

Furthermore, Cllr Aled Davies and senior officers from Powys County Council have met with and continue to maintain ongoing communication with the headteacher and Chair of Governors to ensure any issues that are raised are responded to. Cllr Aled Davies and Cllr Myfanwy Alexander have this week sent a letter to all parents and carers of children who use this route and will continue to work in partnership with the school, with the safety and wellbeing of our young people an absolute priority for the Council.

Ms Wilson asked for a copy of the Council's measures being taken to reduce the risks to pupils travelling on home to school transport including boarding and alighting and waiting at pick-up points and asked what monitoring procedures the Council had in place for compliance of contract and compliance of procedures to safeguard pupils. The risk assessment had been received and once assessed a report would be provided to the Council for action.

The Portfolio Holder gave a categorical assurance that no changes were made to school transport tenders without pupil safety being a priority. Over 50% of learners were transported on service buses and there were no safety issues arising. She was happy to provide any further details required and welcomed any additional information that was available.

7.4. Question to the Portfolio Holder for Highways, Recycling and Assets from Trudy Stedman

During a recent "meet the council" event in Hay-on-Wye several residents asked about issues in relation to the transfer of assets from Powys County Council to Hay Town Council as this has been under discussion for over 3 years. I would be grateful if the cabinet member could please advise on when the cabinet discussions in relation to asset transfers in Hay are likely to take place and a potential timescale for completion so that this information can be made available to Hay residents.

Response

The Cabinet will consider these matters at its meeting on 28th November 2018 with any actions required being completed as soon as possible thereafter, but within a maximum further 3 or 4 month period.

There was no supplementary question.

7.5. Question to the Portfolio Holder for Highways, Recycling and Assets from Jane Rees

Given reports confirm that over 300 fires a year occur in recycling plants throughout the UK how satisfied are Powys County Council that in the event of a major incident at the planned recycling plant in Abermule the economy of Mid Wales will not be paralysed by the closure of the A483 trunk road and Cambrian Rail Line? Such a fire in a building wedged between two main arterial routes and with a cubic capacity of over 18545m³, will be left to burn out over several days. This will have a catastrophic effect on this sensitive environment and result in a long period of disruption. The noxious gasses known to issue from burning plastic will require the urgent evacuation of residents in the nearby village. In view of the above the Council should be considering other more suitable locations?

Response

The proposed building will only store material collected at the kerbside for a short amount of time before being regularly removed for onward transfer and will not be used for processing any forms of recycling. Therefore, there will be limited amounts of materials stored within the building to combust and given the low risk nature of the materials there are limited ignition sources to enable a fire to start.

The site will be managed by Powys operatives in accordance with a Natural Resources Wales Environmental Permit which will strictly govern operations at the site to minimise any environmental risks. An automatic fire alarm system with flame detectors will be installed within the building to alert staff and emergency services if there is any sign of fire emerging. Firefighting equipment will be available on site and will be regularly inspected.

Councillor Rees' supplementary question was to ask given the concerns of residents if the Cabinet would consider deferring the construction for 4 months

while funding was sought from Welsh Government for a more suitable brownfield site away from residential areas. The Portfolio Holder said that given the cost pressures on the Council it would not be possible to postpone the development.

8. NOTICES OF MOTION

8.1. Notice of Motion - Engaging the Electorate

Council debated the following motion proposed by County Councillor Gareth Pugh and seconded by County Councillor Elwyn Vaughan:

This council believes that local authorities too often lose the confidence of the electorate because they can appear detached and unaccountable. More needs to be done to engage and enthuse the electorate to make local government a more vibrant and relevant part of our communities.

In speaking to the motion Councillor Pugh argued that the Council did not listen the views of local people and he gave the example of the siting of the recycling facility in Abermule. He recognised that the Council would sometimes have to take difficult and unpopular decisions but people were left with the impression that the Council did what it wanted without listening to local people. He asked the Leader to listen to the people of Abermule and re-site the recycling facility in a more appropriate place. He urged the Council to open a constructive dialogue with the people of Abermule in keeping with the essence of the motion.

A number of Members speaking in favour of the motion asked for the views of Abermule residents to be taken into account. Other members supported the sentiment behind the motion acknowledging the need for good engagement with communities so they could understand why decisions were made, citing the example of school modernisation projects.

By 63 votes to 0 it was

RESOLVED that this council believes that local authorities too often lose the confidence of the electorate because they can appear detached and unaccountable. More needs to be done to engage and enthuse the electorate to make local government a more vibrant and relevant part of our communities.

8.2. Notice of Motion proposing the banning of the use of wild animals in circuses in Powys

Council debated the following motion proposed by County Councillor Amanda Jenner and seconded by County Councillor Lucy Roberts:

This council proposes that the relevant steps are taken to prohibit any Circuses using non domestic and/or wild animals, from hiring any Powys County Council owned land.

This council further proposes that Powys Council's properties and services (including Schools, Libraries, Community/Youth Areas) do not advertise circuses using non-domestic and/ or wild animals.

This council urges the Welsh Government to commit to banning the use of wild animals in circuses in Wales, by bringing forward the proposed legislative ban at its earliest opportunity.

In moving the motion Councillor Jenner noted that whilst Welsh Government was consulting on legislation to ban the use of wild animals in circuses, these were immediate steps that the Council could take.

By 56 votes to 1 with 2 abstentions it was

RESOLVED that

This council proposes that the relevant steps are taken to prohibit any Circuses using non domestic and/or wild animals, from hiring any Powys County Council owned land.

This council further proposes that Powys Council's properties and services (including Schools, Libraries, Community/Youth Areas) do not advertise circuses using non-domestic and/ or wild animals.

This council urges the Welsh Government to commit to banning the use of wild animals in circuses in Wales, by bringing forward the proposed legislative ban at its earliest opportunity.

8.3. Notice of Motion - Supporting our Young People

County Councillors Myfanwy Alexander, James Evans and Timothy Van-Rees declared interests in this item and left the meeting while it was being discussed.

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

Our young people face considerable pressures and challenges.

We therefore call on the Council to:

- Acknowledge the challenge, dangers and pressures on our young people
- To prepare a support strategy for 16 – 25 year old's in Powys bridging from children's social services including:
- Ensure Wellbeing project in our junior and secondary schools
- Ensure that Social services and Housing co-operate to avoid silos in the authority
- Co-operate with Young Farmers to raise awareness about loneliness in rural communities, mental health issues, sexuality and drugs
- To acknowledge the work of local charities and third sector providers and work with them to ensure the sustainability of their support services for the future

- Co-operate with Shelter Cymru to promote housing rights
- Co-operate with Cais
- Develop work experience opportunities
- Develop one of the Council's small holdings to provide experience of working on the land, horticulture and the open air as part of the process of strengthening and getting stronger for individuals.

Councillor Vaughan argued there was an urgent need for an easily accessible programme of support for young people particularly those leaving care. The Portfolio Holder for Youth and Culture updated Members on work being undertaken in support of young people and advised that a 16 plus team was being established to address gaps in provision. The Portfolio Holder for Finance advised that the Council would be introducing discretionary relief from Council Tax for young people leaving care from April 2019.

An amendment was submitted by the Labour Group. Following an adjournment from 12.06 to 12.26 Council considered a revised amendment and by 49 votes to 6

RESOLVED to

- **Acknowledge the challenge, dangers and pressures on our young people**
- **To prepare a support strategy for 16 – 25 year old's in Powys bridging from children's social services including:**
- **Ensure Wellbeing project in our junior and secondary schools**
- **Ensure that all young people in Powys are provided with equal access to good quality housing and care services and exempt care leavers from paying Council Tax up to the age of 25**
- **Co-operate with Youth Service providers to raise awareness about loneliness in all communities, mental health issues, good sexual health, sexuality, gender identity, drugs and alcohol**
- **To acknowledge the work of local charities and third sector providers and work with them to ensure the sustainability of their support services for the future**
- **To Co-operate with Shelter Cymru and similar housing charities to promote housing rights**
- **To Co-operate with Cais and other mental health charities and providers**
- **Develop meaningful work experience and apprenticeship opportunities**
- **To explore the possibilities of developing one of the Council's small holdings to provide opportunities for young people in Powys to learn about horticulture and farming and broaden access to the countryside.**

8.4. Notice of Motion - Impact of Brexit

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

Council requests Powys County Council's Cabinet to implement the following:-

Using as a basis the all-Wales analyses carried out by Welsh Government and the WLGA in to the impact of various Brexit scenarios on Wales as a whole, commission a comprehensive analysis of the impact the same scenarios will have on:-

- a) The Powys economy, including the impact on individual business sectors and at shire and district levels.
- b) The consequential impact on Powys's communities at local level, including likely demographic and household income changes; and to include the impacts on local cultural and recreational opportunities.
- c) The impact on the Powys environment in the short, medium and long-term.
- d) The impact on the Welsh language in Powys.
- e) Powys County Council's ability to deliver its statutory and non-statutory services, including the potential impact of Brexit on the council's workforce and budgets.
- f) Ensure all the impacts identified in a) to e) are included on the Council's Risk Register.

and further calls for a Special Meeting of Council to debate the issues when the impact analyses are completed.

In speaking to the motion Councillor Gibson-Watt said there would be significant implications for the Council in the event of a no deal Brexit. He acknowledged that a seminar had been arranged on 7th November to brief members but he wanted the issues to be debated at a special meeting of Council. The Leader advised that the officer leading on Brexit for the WLGA had been invited to the seminar. She didn't support holding a special Council meeting at this time. The motion was lost by 26 votes to 29.

8.5. Notice of Motion - People's Vote

Council debated the following motion proposed by County Councillor Matthew Dorrance and seconded by County Councillor Susan McNicholas:

This Council resolves to:

- a) Formally add its voice to those calling for a public 'People's Vote' on the final Brexit deal;
- b) Liaise with the official 'People's Vote' campaign on ways in which it can help promote its petition;
- c) Write to its MPs, AMs, the Secretary of State and the Prime Minister expressing its views and asking them to support a People's Vote; and
- d) Asks the Leader to make representations and write to this effect.

In moving the motion Councillor Dorrance argued that a no deal Brexit or a bad deal would be damaging for Powys, given the EU's support for farming in Powys, and the number of jobs depending on exports to the EU. Other members spoke

against the motion noting that the result of the referendum in Powys and Wales had been to support leave. The motion was lost by 23 votes to 35.

Council adjourned from 13.15 to 14.02.

PRESENT

County Councillor DW Meredith (Chair)

County Councillors MC Alexander, M Barnes, B Baynham, J Charlton, L V Corfield, K W Curry, A W Davies, 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, H Hulme, A Jenner, D R Jones, E Jones, G Jones, J R Jones, E M Jones, M J Jones, D Jones-Poston, F H Jump, K Laurie-Parry, K Lewis, P E Lewis, MC Mackenzie, I McIntosh, S McNicholas, C Mills, G Morgan, N Morrison, R Powell, WD Powell, D R Price, GD Price, P C Pritchard, 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, R G Thomas, T J Van-Rees, E Vaughan, M Weale, A Williams, D H Williams, J Williams, R Williams and S L Williams

9.	DRAFT ANNUAL PERFORMANCE REPORT 2017 - 18
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The Leader presented the draft Annual Performance Report for 2017-18. Responding to calls to apologise for the fall in performance of 42.9% of indicators and the finding of Wales Audit Office that the Council was not meeting its statutory requirements in relation to continuous improvement, the Leader said that the report was a balanced assessment of the Council's position. The Leader acknowledged the areas that needed to be improved while also noting that the Council was ranked 6 out of 22 councils in Wales in terms of meeting performance assessment measures. The Leader noted that the report covered the period following the inspection of Children's Services which took place 5 weeks after the Cabinet was formed. The Cabinet had responded by putting performance measures in place and working closely with Welsh Government and the Improvement and Assurance Board and had invested over £6m in Children's Services. The Cabinet had also put measures in place to deliver a balanced budget and the Portfolio Holder for Finance expected to see these take effect in the next budget outturn reports to Cabinet.

The Vice-Chair of the Scrutiny Committee acknowledged that that the points raised by Scrutiny had been taken on board in the report. She suggested that representations should be made to Welsh Government to shorten the report to make it easier for the public to read and cheaper to produce. The Leader agreed to look at the possibility of producing an executive summary.

By 51 votes to 1 with 2 abstentions it was

RESOLVED	Reason for Decision:
To approve the DRAFT Annual Performance Report 2017 – 2018 in Appendix A to the report.	To ensure the report gives a balanced and open account of Powys County Council's performance during the 2017-18 financial year, against its CIP priorities / well-being objectives.

	To ensure the Council meets its statutory obligations as outlined in the Local Government (Wales) Measure 2009 and Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015.
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10.	VIREMENT FOR HOUSING REVENUE ACCOUNT: WELSH HOUSING QUALITY STANDARDS, OLDER PERSON ACCOMMODATION
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Council considered two virements in respect of the Welsh Housing Quality Standards (WHQS) of £6.790m to be transferred from 2018/19 to 2019/20. It was moved by County Councillor Aled Davies and seconded by County Councillor Rosemarie Harris and by 54 votes to 0 it was

RESOLVED	Reason for Decision:
<p>To approve the following virements;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • £1,790k Welsh Housing Quality Standards • £5m HRA Newbuilds <p>as detailed above in paras. 1.2 and 1.3</p>	<p>To ensure appropriate virements are carried out that reflect the forecasted capital spend.</p>

11.	DRAFT STATEMENT OF PRINCIPLES, GAMBLING ACT 2005
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Council considered the recommendation of the Licensing Committee on amendments to the draft statement of principles of the Licensing Policy. It was moved by County Councillor Francesca Jump and seconded by County Councillor Kath Roberts-Jones and by 55 votes to 0 it was

RESOLVED	Reason for Decision:
<p>To agree the amendments to the policy as set out in the report following the consultation period and that the Statement of Principles made in accordance with The Gambling Act for implementation on 1st January 2019.</p>	<p>In accordance with the Gambling Act 2005 to prepare and publish a Licensing Policy to come into effect January 2019</p>

12.	APPOINTMENT TO COMMUNITY HEALTH COUNCIL
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RESOLVED that County Councillor Beverley Baynham be nominated to serve on Powys Community Health Council.

13.	ARRANGEMENTS TO FILL A VACANCY ON THE STANDARDS COMMITTEE
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Council considered arrangements to fill a vacancy on the Standards Committee when the term of office of the Chair ended in May 2019.

RESOLVED	Reason for Decision
To approve the arrangements to make an appointment to the Standards Committee.	To fill a vacancy arising in May 2019.

14.	APPOINTMENTS TO COMMITTEES AND OUTSIDE BODIES
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Council noted the following appointments:

County Councillor Sarah Lewis resigned from the Health, Care and Housing Scrutiny Committee

County Councillor Iain McIntosh appointed to the Brecon Beacons National Park Authority in place of County Councillor Sarah Lewis

County Councillor Gary Price resigned from the Audit Committee and Democratic Services Committee.

County Councillor Maureen Mackenzie resigned from the Health, Care and Housing Scrutiny Committee. Council was advised that County Councillor Roger Williams had been appointed by the Liberal Democrat group to fill this vacancy.

15.	QUESTIONS IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE CONSTITUTION
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15.1. Question to the Portfolio Holder for Young People and Culture from County Councillor Gareth Jones

To what extent does the YFC movement within Powys support the council's statutory Youth Service?

Response

The YFCs (Young Farmers Clubs) each operate under an agreed SLA (Service Level Agreement), which sets out their contribution to youth support in Powys. They are not statutory bodies but have been provided with grant aid support in recognition of their role in providing services to young people in rural Powys.

The YFC movement in Powys receive a total of £62,405k in funds. In addition, each YFC were provided with a £2k grant by the Council to support their transition in managing their own staff and affairs. In the case of Montgomeryshire, they also took the computers, monitors, printers and office chairs previously provided to them by the Council.

In return for the grant the YFC are expected to provide a quarterly report and basic contact figures. This is all set out in the agreed SLA. The figures from YFC are entered on the Welsh Government annual audit report for Youth Service but are clearly identified as being from YFC, as the Urdd figures are. The YFC

figures are used only to report the number of contacts for Powys, not to inflate the youth service figures or to access additional funding, other Youth Services across Wales also provide these figures.

There was no supplementary question.

15.2. Question to the Portfolio Holder for Highways, Recycling and Assets from County Councillor Huw Williams

We rightly celebrate the high level of household waste recycled by Powys residents, but what is the path taken, and final destination of each kerbside recyclate gathered by the Authority's Waste Services? What is the current destination of our residual waste?

Response

The destination of residual waste was set out in a diagram.

In response to Councillor Williams' supplementary question on what were those without transport expected to do with their green waste, the Portfolio Holder advised that a kerbside collection would be introduced from April 2019.

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

In October 2017, the Council agreed to support the following motion:

RESOLVED

- 1. That Council believes that it must do as much as it can to help residents in fuel poverty to mitigate this situation;**
 - a) Residents of Powys would benefit greatly from reduced energy bills through a Powys County Council run collective energy switch scheme;**
 - b) The authority can join in with other authorities and organisations in Wales through the Cyd Cymru scheme;**
 - c) The Ceredigion run schemes provide a best practice model for the running of such fuel clubs;**
 - d) The authority can exert its power of collective bargaining for both dual fuel and oil purchasing schemes**
- 2. To ask the Anti-Poverty Champion and the Anti-Poverty Group to explore the feasibility of implementing its own or joining the Cyd Cymru scheme.**
- 3. To ask the Anti-Poverty Champion and the Anti-Poverty Group to explore the feasibility of implementing an oil purchasing scheme across Powys.**
- 4. To work with local housing associations, Powys Teaching Health Board, voluntary groups, care homes and households across Powys to increase awareness and encourage them to sign up to these schemes.**

Can we be provided with a current situation report and a progress update regarding these matters?

Response

Please find the following update relating to the work the Housing Service has undertaken to support households in fuel poverty across Powys during the last twelve months:

Welsh Government's Warm Homes Nest Scheme

Welsh Government Warm Homes, which includes the Nest schemes, provides funding for energy efficiency improvements to low income households and those living in deprived communities across Wales. The [Nest scheme](#) provides householders living in Wales with access to free advice and support to help them reduce their energy bills. Those meeting Nest's eligibility criteria can access a free package of energy efficiency measures.

During 2017/2018, 11% of Nest enquiries came from Powys residents, this was the joint highest in Wales (joint with Flintshire). To raise awareness of the scheme amongst Powys residents, we have carried out 'drop in' sessions across Powys, provided updated information about the scheme on the website, carried out homes visits and the Income and Awards team completed a direct mail campaign.

Welsh Governments Warm Homes ARBED Scheme

A new 'ARBED Am Byth' scheme started this year. We have met the scheme managers, and are currently developing a pipeline of projects to apply for funding for areas and estates.

Welsh Housing Quality Standard

The Housing Service continue to invest heavily in the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) stock by completing improvement works. In 2017/2018 the Housing Service installed 289 energy saving measures in HRA properties, such as new heating systems, loft insulation, external wall insulation and new doors and windows. In the first 6 months of 2018/19 the Housing Service has installed 346 energy saving measures in HRA properties.

In January 2018 the Housing Service established a new contract to complete Energy Performance Certificate surveys (EPCs) on HRA properties. 195 EPCs have been completed under the new contract this year, which assists the Housing Service to:

- Improve WHQS reporting information to Welsh Government;
- Identify and target improvement works to properties which don't achieve a SAP rating of 65;
- Meet the statutory obligations in accordance with the Energy Performance in Buildings Directive; and

- Provide income from the Renewable Heat Incentive where air source heating systems are installed.

ECO Flex

ECO Flex is a UK wide grant scheme allowing energy efficiency improvements for customers in fuel poverty (defined as using 10% of disposable income on heating). The scheme is **not** means tested, nor does it require people to be on benefits. It is not a council funded scheme (or available to Council tenants), funding is provided by energy companies via the Energy Company Obligation (ECO) and sourced directly by agents.

Provision of ECO Flex funding is dependent upon:

- fuel type and energy efficiency of individual properties - assessed by a qualified energy assessor
- client being in fuel poverty
- detailed property survey - undertaken by a qualified surveyor and/or heating engineer

To date, ECO Flex support has covered the following energy efficiency improvements:

- replacement of inefficient oil, LPG and gas boilers with more efficient models - higher levels of funding provided for off gas properties
- replacement of inefficient electric storage heaters with more efficient models
- provision of insulation to improve energy efficiency including measures such as cavity wall, external wall and loft insulation (where appropriate)

Since the scheme was launched in March 2018, the Council has issued thousands of declarations allowing households in Powys access to new energy efficient heating appliances and insulation measures. This has primarily centred on the replacement of inefficient oil boilers (as funding for this measure was very highly subsidised and ceased at the end of September 2018), with the introduction of ECO 3.

The scheme has resulted in;

- approval of over 3,700 grant applications for boilers and insulation (install rate of roughly 50%)
- investment of approximately £9 million into the economy in energy efficiency improvements to the homes of Powys residents, saving on purchase cost of new installations
- reduced average annual household fuel bills of successful applicants by approximately £200, enabling greater expenditure in the local economy
- achieved over £200,000 of income for the authority in fees

ECO 3

The ECOFLEX scheme ended at the end of September 2018, with the end of ECO2 funding. The utility companies have launched the successor scheme (ECO3). Powys County Council intends to issue a revised 'Statement of Intent' to

embrace and encourage installation of new 'greener' heating measures set to receive funding. A draft statement of intent is currently in the process of development and will be subject to consultation prior to adoption by the Cabinet.

In an attempt to boost work given to local contractors it is also proposed the revised 'Statement of Intent' will limit the number of agents operating within Powys. It will insist agents make use of local contractors (where possible) when providing installations, whilst ensuring the delivery rate is maintained.

ECO 3 will provide:

- funding for ground source heat pumps
- funding for air source heat pumps
- more attractive funding rates for gas properties
- more attractive funding rates for insulation measures

To compliment this funding stream, we are working in partnership with the **Robert Owen Community Banking Fund** on an offer to provide supplementary measures such as solar PV and battery systems associated with air source heat pumps, to drastically reduce client's energy bills. This will involve use of local solar installers who would otherwise not receive any subsidy under ECO 3. We are also looking to deliver greater levels of External Wall Insulation (EWI) in conjunction with interest free loans, making this potentially costly measure more affordable for Powys residents.

Switching

The energy market has changed drastically over the last few years with vastly increased numbers of energy suppliers. We understand that the following issues should be considered for switching to deliver the maximum benefits to the consumer:

- An impartial Ofgem Approved full market comparison should be undertaken;
- The Risk Profile of the consumer/ Energy Companies track record of customer service should be considered (e.g. has the Ofgem Customer complaints per 100,000 customers been considered);
- Is the consumer eligible for Warm Homes Discount (£140 off their electricity bill), and which energy companies offer it, based on the householders individual circumstances. £140 can significantly impact on which companies offer the greatest savings for the consumer;
- Are there other income maximisation opportunities or savings which can be identified? (e.g. benefit entitlement checks, warm homes discount, cheaper water tariffs etc)
- Would the householder benefit from a third party referral? (e.g. Priority Services Register, Care and Repair, Debt Advice, Money Advice, Fire Service)

Our discussions with other Authorities, third sector organisations and stakeholders in the Industry indicate that that full market comparison is generally the preferred option for switching to ensure that the householder is presented

with the best options. We understand that there are several routes for getting switching advice, such as Ofgem Approved websites, Citizens Advice Consumer Helpline, local Citizens Advice offices (when funding becomes available) and Care and Repair. We also recommend that other opportunities for maximising income and saving money are considered, as the issue of fuel poverty can be partly attributed to the limited income of the household. Our feedback from the experiences of other Local Authorities Energy Officers have found that whilst switching schemes (e.g. Cyd Cymru) can save money, Ofgem Accredited websites (e.g. U-switch) can sometimes yield greater savings, which is why we recommend exploring a range of options.

Oil buying syndicates

The Housing Service have had no involvement with the Ceredigion oil purchasing scheme, but we have heard very positive feedback about both of the schemes in Ceredigion and Carmarthenshire. We consider that if Powys County Council were to invest in this scheme, it has potential to yield significant savings for some rural households in Powys. Officers are currently meeting with colleagues in Regeneration to explore whether there is an opportunity to access ARWAIN to fund a post to promote and support the establishment of syndicates.

In response to Councillor Williams' supplementary question why the post supporting the oil buying scheme had been cut and if it could be reinstated, the Portfolio Holder advised that officers were looking to access funds to reinstate the post.

15.4. Question to the Portfolio Holder for Highways, Recycling and Assets from County Councillor Pete Roberts

County Councillors Dai Davies, Phil Pritchard and Kath Roberts-Jones declared personal interests in this item.

The consultation earlier this year into charging for the use of disabled spaces in council car parks has caused a significant level of distress and uncertainty for many users. Whilst I appreciate the welcome extension of the consultation it has now been over a month since it closed and there remains significant concerns about the plans the council now has on the issue.

Can I therefore ask the portfolio holder:

- 1. How many responses he received to the Blue Badge Consultation from affected groups and existing badge holders and is he confident that the consultation did reach the right people, i.e. those most affected?**
- 2. What level of support each of the options received and when he will be bringing forward formal proposals to Cabinet as a result of this consultation or will he be abandoning his plans to charge blue badge holders?**

Response

- Responses to the survey were received from 476 people who either have a blue badge or support someone with a blue badge. In market research terms and given the number of valid blue badges issued to residents of Powys, a response from 370 people would have provided a statistically reliable sample as that provides a confidence level of 95%. This means we are at least 95% sure the views of those responses do reflect those of the wider population of blue badge holders.

A detailed report into the consultation findings will be published along with the decision paper. This report and an Impact Assessment will be considered as part of the decision at the time it being made.

- The table below shows the way all respondents to the consultation supported each option presented. Those responding were asked to rank the options in order of preference.

A Portfolio Holder decision paper is currently being prepared and once completed I will consider the report with the survey results and Impact assessment. A balanced decision which will be best for this Authority will then be made.

Answer	Ranked 1 st	Ranked 2 nd	Ranked 3 rd	Ranked 4 th
Blue badge holders pay the same amount as anyone else and no concession applies	46	65	53	383
Blue badge holders who park in a disabled bay park for free. Those who cannot find a bay will have to pay to park with no additional concession. (first come, first serve basis)	25	205	265	55
Blue badge holders pay towards parking but get an extra hour free on top of the time chosen	86	253	206	14
Blue badge holders continue to park for free. The £100k saving is found elsewhere.	442	30	24	91

Councillor Roberts asked if the Portfolio Holder would abandon the proposal to introduce parking charges for blue badge holders and the Portfolio Holder advised that the paper on parking policy currently being worked on would set out the policy on the blue badges.

15.5. Question to the Portfolio Holder for Young People and Culture from County Councillor Roger Williams

What work has Powys County Council undertaken to understand better the large increase in Looked After Children in its care?

Response

Process

Over the last 15 months the Children's social care services have dealt with a large number of children newly referred to the service whose risks met the criteria to be looked after to ensure they were safe. This is not a decision which the local authority makes on its own except where there is a perceived immediate risk to a child and urgent steps have to be taken. This level of protection is time-limited and any emergency action is then considered by the Court to ensure we have met the appropriate threshold. Applications were made to Court who then heard the evidence of concern and agreed applications for Care Orders.

The Regional Safeguarding Board issued a Threshold Document in October 2017 as a tool to support all staff across all agencies to assess the risks to children and when they should refer to Children's services for assessment. This is being applied more consistently.

We have seen a number of large siblings groups of children who have needed to come into our care. Following review of the Care and Support Plans whilst some children were living at home had been living in circumstances which were not acceptable. They were considered to be at risk of harm or neglect. There is now a greater awareness of the impact on growing children and young adults of Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACE) and this increased sensitivity amongst our staff and staff in partner agencies has led to a greater awareness of the needs of our vulnerable population resulting in more speedy and appropriate action.

Action by Powys County Council

The Authority has developed the Children Looked After Strategic Framework. This will develop a number of themes and workstreams to safely reduce the numbers of children looked after over the coming years, through placing more children in Powys with our foster carers and local residential providers and bringing children closer to home to help support rehabilitation where that is appropriate.

Children's Services has also developed an Access to Resources Panel which consider packages of support for children on the edge of care or to support children in care to receive the best looked after service or to assist them to return home safely.

We will continue to support families to stay together through developing early help and edge of care services further in co-ordination with our partner agencies, including schools. The benefit of these initiatives will be to ensure that everything will be considered with a family before admitting children to care, (except where emergency action needs to be taken) to ensure that we provide the best possible community and family solutions and supports and ensuring all avenues are explored before children come into care. In this way, we will be sure that only the

right children are in care and we can commission the services they require to meet their needs on the short and long term.

A new practice Framework, named Signs of Safety (SOS) will be implemented as part of the future plans for practice here in Powys. This implementation journey has already begun during 2018. This approach is based on the ethos that every family has strengths and that children should remain where ever is possible within their own communities. This will require ongoing ambition, in that children can be cared for by their family networks. It is also about creating a learning organisation that will share and carry the risk with practitioners to enable these plans to be effective in practice.

Councillor Williams' supplementary question was to ask if given the increase in the numbers of looked after children the portfolio holder would agree that there should be a quick external review of the quality and soundness of decision making. In the absence of the portfolio holder a response would be sent to Councillor Williams, copied to all members of Council.

15.6. Question to the Portfolio Holder for Economy and Planning from County Councillor Elwyn Vaughan

In view of the motion this Council passed last year emphasising the need to increase the percentage of goods and services purchased from Powys, can we have an update report on the latest position?

Response

The portfolio holder advised that the amount spent with businesses in Powys had gone up by approximately by £10m. Councillor Vaughan asked that the figures be made available to all members.

15.7. Question to the Portfolio Holder for Learning and Welsh Language from County Councillor James Gibson-Watt

From the 1st October 2018 Powys County Council is withdrawing from the School Milk Subsidy Scheme and will no longer be making claims to the Rural Payments Agency (RPA) for the school milk subsidy on the county's primary schools' behalf. From that date the primary schools will have to administer the scheme and claim the subsidy themselves if they wish to remain in the scheme.

On the assumption that she was the decision-maker, could the Portfolio Holder confirm or otherwise whether she carried out a full Impact Assessment to determine the effect this change will have on the take up of the school milk subsidy and the provision of free milk to Powys primary school pupils before taking this decision?

Response

The decision to devolve the Free School Milk Subsidy administration to the individual primary schools was made by the Professional Lead for Catering & Cleaning, with a business case to the L & R Head of Service and the Interim Head of Learning.

There was no impact assessment completed for this as the business case details the rationale for this decision. The schools are already completing 70% of the process by submitting their weekly orders to the milk suppliers and returning their monthly claim figures to the catering service for consolidation. The additional tasks that will be devolved to the schools is to pay for the milk suppliers for any milk received and to submit claims to the Rural Payments Agency (RPA) and the Nursery Milk Reimbursement Unit (NMRU) also along with any administration costs to be claimed (admin time, refrigeration, electricity).

The Welsh Government have advised that, "milk is the recommended drink under the Healthy Eating in Schools Regulations 2013, but schools are not obliged to participate in the school milk scheme. The decision is down to the individual school." Therefore, it is not statutory to provide milk, however all schools have been advised that this is a Welsh Government subsidy and the health benefits milk has for growing children has been emphasised. This is the impact to the pupils if the schools decide not to take up the scheme.

Due to the changes in the processing of the claims by the agencies over the past 12 months, primary schools have had to register individually to the NMRU and submit their monthly claim numbers to the NMRU also. The catering service is not allowed visibility of these claim numbers, although the catering service pays the suppliers based on the orders. Invariably the claim numbers have not matched the quantity ordered and the claim figure paid back to the catering service has consistently been at a loss. Therefore, it has been raised as a risk due to financial loss and could be audited by the WAO.

The catering service has and will continue to support the schools throughout this transition and beyond, already providing guidance documentation with FAQ's and contact details. Also the deadline for schools to register has been extended to the 1st November 2018, to allow schools to understand the process.

In response to Councillor Gibson-Watt's supplementary question the portfolio holder confirmed that the numbers of schools participating in the scheme would be monitored.

15.8. Question to the Portfolio Holder for Finance, Countryside and Transport from County Councillor Jackie Charlton

Financial implications long term on existing projects which rely on European funding support and how the gaps will be bridged.

Can the portfolio holder give Council an indication of what projects are currently funded by direct match funding or other European funding links to localised, Powys wide projects such as Highways improvements, projects in Social Services (both Adult and Children's Services), capital projects and infrastructure projects?

What plans are in place to ensure continuity of service long term in the coming years?

Response

Powys County Council has no Capital programme funded with European grant. There are, however, two revenue projects that have European Grant Funding:

- Families First /Cynnydd - A new Integrated Youth Support Service with a funding of £834,448 of which £208,612 is from the European Union.
- Home Grown Homes Project (funded by RDF) – This is a Regional Development Fund of £1,511,144 for the Timber Supply Chain Study project.

The service areas concerned are aware of the potential risk of losing this funding and are considering their options should this happen. Discussions with funding organisations are being held to understand when the funding could potentially cease. Options, and including potential exit strategies, are being considered.

In response to Councillor Charlton's supplementary question the Portfolio Holder said he would double check whether the council was in receipt of any other European grants.

15.9. Question to the Portfolio Holder for Highways Recycling and Assets from County Councillor Elwyn Vaughan

Y Gaer

In view of the listing of this project as one of High Risk for the authority, can we have an update report about the project including any additional costs incurred?

Response

According to programme, it was anticipated that all Kier main contract works would be finished at y Gaer, originally by August, but now by the end of October 2018, with Fit Out to follow. It was hoped that PCC could take over the whole of the interior of the building and give Practical Completion but with an incomplete works element of the remaining part of the external cladding (around the picture frame part of the south elevation) being completed later – all contractually certified. This would have allowed fit out works to complete in time possibly for a Christmas opening. However, as the delay increased the time left for fit out and migration became too compressed and it was decided that to best manage the fit out contacts, migrations and start of service, the opening would have to be put off until the New Year. It is not the cladding delaying opening but the overall delay to the main works and the consequent effects which follow.

A briefing note was presented to the y Gaer Project Board on 20 August to report the delay and approval obtained to move the proposed completion date of Kier's works to 01 October with a consequent understating of the move of the opening date into the new year. A further briefing note was issued on 25 September 2018 to report the latest delay and estimate of completion of main works by the end of October 2018.

(Copies of these briefing notes can be provided if required).

None of this will affect the project cost, since the contract sum is fixed.

Councillor Vaughan asked for a copy of the update report.

15.10. **Question to the Portfolio Holder for Highways, Recycling and Assets from County Councillor Matthew Dorrance**

How is the Council ensuring young people receive healthy, nutritionally balanced meals in schools across Powys?

Response

1 Executive Summary

1.1 The Catering Service within Powys County Council provides an average of 8000 school meals per day across 96 schools within Powys, of which an average of 1200 free school meals (FSM) per day are served which is our statutory obligation to provide.

1.2 There is statutory guidance on the provision of school meals from the Welsh Government and should be adhered to by all local authority schools, governing bodies and school meal providers, this is laid out in the Healthy Eating in Schools (Wales) Measure 2009.

1.3 There is clear evidence that a poor diet and lack of moderate exercise has an impact on health and wellbeing and is a contributing factor to the overweight and obese demographic of today's society. A healthy school meal provides children and young people a balanced diet and promotes healthy eating habits and social interaction within the dining rooms. It is proven that school meals also promote higher concentration and attainment levels in the classroom in the afternoons.

1.4 Our Catering Service work with schools and Powys PtHB colleagues to promote healthy eating and support schools to achieve the Health Schools accreditation. The service promotes the whole school approach and involves the head teachers and staff to encourage and adopt healthy eating and healthy lifestyle within the schools. Attending healthy eating sessions with pupils, organising meetings with pupil school councils to discuss school menus and food choices and attending parent evenings providing school meals information and showing samples of the school dinners.

1.5 The current average cost of the food element of the meal is 85p with the highest cost of a meal within the 3 week menu being roast beef at £1.69 and the lowest food cost is 54p which is pasta. These averages are based on the hot meal including pudding and is not a true reflection of actual cost as uptake numbers vary daily.

2 Nutritional Analyses

2.1 Our Catering Service employs a monitoring and menu develop officer whose principal role is to develop our school meal menus. Within the legislation from the Welsh Government the guidance is quite strict and dictates what we can and cannot have on our school menus i.e. there is no confectionary, added salt, crisps or energy drinks on our menus. These food standards have been distributed to all schools and have been produced in a poster format which are displayed within school dining areas. [Healthy Eating in Schools Posters](#)

2.2 Part of the development of our school meals menus which are changed twice a year, generally at Easter time for spring and summer

and then October for winter. Our menu development officer discusses menu options with the catering managers and school cooks. From these discussions a 3 week menu cycle is drafted and then analysed using a piece of software called Saffron.

2.3 The Saffron software analyses a balance of 14 nutrients across the weekly menu, these weekly graphs must show (green) acceptable nutrient content within the dishes otherwise an alternative dish has to be found or created to achieve the correct nutrient levels. A good example to increase the iron content was to create a recipe for a chocolate sponge but added beetroot to the sponge mix which was high in iron.

2.4 Once the 3 week menu cycle is completed it is sent to the Food in Schools coordinator at the WLGA for compliance and certification, it can then be published and used within our schools.

3 Legislation

3.1 The Welsh Governments statutory guidance and regulations can be found at the following links: [The Healthy Eating in Schools \(Nutritional Standards and Requirements\) \(Wales\) Regulations 2013](#)
[Healthy Eating in Schools \(Wales\) Measure 2009](#)
[Healthy Eating in Maintained Schools - Statutory Guidance](#)

3.2 Governance for these regulations is monitored by the WLGA's Food in Schools Coordinator and usually conducts quarterly cross boundary meetings to discuss healthy eating topics and special diet provision etc. However generally it is the local authorities catering service that monitor and maintain the food standards.

4 Food Procurement

4.1 Powys County Council has agreed to use the National Procurement Service (NPS) for framework contracts, food delivery being one of these. Currently our main food distributor is Holdsworth Ltd. based in Crickhowell, who deliver frozen, chilled and dry ambient food produce to all of our schools in Powys. There is Powys produce based in Forden near Welshpool who deliver fruit, veg and milk to our north county schools and then Total produce based in Hereford who deliver the same to our mid and south schools. Radnor Hills a Powys supplier based in Knighton deliver water and fruit drinks to our high schools.

4.2 As much as possible we try to use Welsh produce like Radnor Hills and all of our sausages comes from Langford's based in Welshpool. All meat products are red tractor certified so British produce with all fish sustainably sourced with MSC certification. We would like to use Powys local suppliers, however we would need to find a source of suitable school compliant products that would have to apply to go onto the NPS framework and have to be capable to distribute to all of our schools in the county or supply Holdsworth our distributor. This would come at a cost which will in turn increase school meal prices.

5 Monitoring

5.1 Part of our internal audit processes, regular school kitchen monitoring is conducted by our catering support staff not only to check correct procedures are being carried out in line with environmental health checks, but also correct ingredients, recipes and portions are being used as per our school menu.

Councillor Dorrance's supplementary question was what more could the service do to encourage children to make healthier choices. The Portfolio Holder said that the cashless system gave good information on the choices being made. More engagement work was needed with schools to make further improvements.

15.11. Question to the Leader from County Councillor Matthew Dorrance

It's more than a year since the Council's regulators inspected Children's Services and found serious failings. The latest Children's Services performance report (August 2018) shows the Council is failing to deliver against the top five performance indicators.

Will the Leader explain to Council why, a year later, her administration is still failing children, young people and families in Powys?

Response

Since the disappointing outcome of last year's Inspection report the authority has prioritised its efforts to meet the challenge to improve the services to vulnerable children.

In this time, we have seen a steady and significant increase in compliance from a low of 12% of Children Looked After (CLA) statutory visits completed on time in March last year and 28% in April 2017 to improving our performance to over 80 per cent on time over the summer.

We have implemented the CYSUR (Regional) Threshold document issued in October last year and rolled out training and awareness raising with partners to ensure we have common thresholds for supporting and intervening where necessary to promote and protect the wellbeing of children.

The authority's children service has a Quality Assurance framework in place and this engages managers across the service undertaking regular audits to consider the impact of our interventions.

The authority had little accurate performance data for children's services in 2017 and this is no longer the case. The information we had during the previous year was shown to be unreliable but the work across children's services and Business Intelligence has very significantly improved this.

Actions taken to strengthen the service.

Appointment of a permanent Director of Social Services

Appointment of a permanent Head of Children's Services

Appointed a Quality Assurance Manager

Establishment of the pilot Assessment team both in the North and South to provide timely, focused assessments for children and their families.

External audits by (DfE assured) auditors earlier this year.

Multi agency audits are undertaken in a number of cases.

Assembly Members are reporting fewer cases of concern are coming to their attention.

We have a programme of regular auditing by our managers and senior managers.

Staff supervision is in place

We have had 3 monitoring visits by the Care Inspectorate for Wales (CIW) showing on each occasion improvements to aspects of the service accepting that we have much to do yet as we are on this journey of improvement.

Stronger working partnerships with Health, Police colleagues and schools and Education colleagues to provide more planned and co-ordinated approaches and plans for children.

We have established an access to resources Panel which carefully considers the packages of care high need children require and through our Multi Agency Partnerships (MAAP) agree placements where children have multiple and complex needs.

We have developed our multi agency early help offer under Start Well and developed a model for support to young people and are developing more sophisticated services to children on the edge of care.

A training programme for staff,

Increased recruitment of foster carers with a plan to recruit more and develop some specialist foster care provision.

Developed a Strategic Framework for CLA to provide a plan for delivering more and improved services to CLA over the coming years.

We are ambitious for our CLA and the re-establishment of the Corporate Parenting Group is building on this as we want to see them thrive.

Outcomes for Children

We continue to safeguard more children through the Children Looked After service.

Our working arrangements through the Safeguarding services with partners has been strengthened.

We have re-established the multi-agency safeguarding arrangements through the Powys Local Operating Group.

We have re-established the working relationship with the Regional Safeguarding Board (CYSUR).

We have strengthened the workforce to meet the demands of the service and needs of children.

Albeit that we did not reach the targets we have set to undertake visits to all CLA and children on the Child Protection Register in August, I can confirm that all children who required a visit in September received a visit, with a small number of exceptions where it was agreed not to visit the family due to significant issue regarding illness and bereavement for example. These visits were all re-scheduled within a short timeframe.

We know that with the co-ordinated support across the Council from Policy and Performance teams, HR, IT, Finance and Adult Services we have created the foundations and some significant improvements for children and their families and accept we are on a journey to continue to improve and make Powys a great place to grow up in and a great place for staff to work and be proud of.

Sustainable improvements will continue to be made and we continue to have high expectations for the whole council to do all we can to improve the lives of children and their families.

The current CIW inspection will in the next few months give us a new, independent assessment of our improvement journey to deliver quality services to children and we welcome this opportunity to reflect on our next steps for all members and officers to take to build on the work done to date.

In response to Councillor Dorrance's supplementary question asking if she would resign the Leader said she was proud of the way the council had responded to the inspection of Children's Services and noted that Children's Services was the responsibility of all Councillors.

15.12. Question to the Portfolio Holder for Highways, Recycling and Assets from County Councillor Susan McNicholas

It has been brought to our attention in Ystradgynlais that Bring Sites in other areas are still in use. We were told that in order for our Recycling site to remain open we had to agree to close our sites.

We don't want other sites to close but we want to be treated equally. Can the Portfolio Holder tell us what the position actually is?

Response

Community Recycling (Bring) Sites were originally introduced many years ago to give residents somewhere to take their recyclable material. This was before the introduction of the kerbside recycling scheme which has provided a much more convenient option for most residents. All of these bring sites have been under review as they have essentially been simply duplicating a service that is now provided in a different way. The number of sites has been reduced from over 80 to less than 40 with the remaining sites now being considered so that the Council can provide the most cost effective convenient service to residents whilst maximising the amount of material collected for recycling.

The reason that the sites have been removed in Ystradgynlais is because there is now a conveniently located Household Waste Recycling Centre (HWRC) in the area which will take all of the material previously collected at the bring sites along with many other waste streams for recycling. Maintaining the HWRC at Lower Cwmtwrch was not dependant on the removal of the bring sites, but it is essential that we maximise our limited resources to continue to provide these services.

All of the bring sites in Powys are considered individually, taking into account factors such as proximity to HWRCs, level of flytipping and contamination, as well as where the materials are now collected at the kerbside. The sites in Ystradgynlais were unfortunately prone to contamination which did result in much of this material being landfilled rather than recycled. Along with the close proximity of the HWRC, this is why these facilities were removed. In Welshpool, where there was a problem with flytipping at the bring site, residents are similarly required to use their HWRC for materials that cannot be recycled at the kerbside.

In response to Councillor McNicholas' supplementary question as to why the bring site taken away without consultation when there had been consultation in other areas, the Portfolio Holder said that Ystradgynlais had the benefit of a Household Waste Recycling Centre and that the green waste collection scheme would be introduced from April 2019.

15.13. Question to the Portfolio Holder for Highways, Recycling and Assets from County Councillor Gareth Ratcliffe

Earlier this year the then portfolio holder for highways lifted the moratorium

on traffic orders across the county. Whilst the community of Hay understands there are severe financial implication on Powys County Council's budget due to cuts in funding and increase cost across council service hitting budget like highways harder as it's a non-statutory service. Over the next couple of years there are major developments in the community that will involve traffic orders being raised to their works. Will the portfolio holder support Hay Town Council and the local community in engaging with them prior to any orders being raised to support the town plan retaining to speed reduction within town and traffic orders to support safe transport around the town?

Response

As a point of reference, as the Highway Authority Powys County Council do indeed have a statutory duty to maintain the highway.

Developers are encouraged, and generally do, discuss proposals including traffic issues with the council prior to submitting planning applications or applications for traffic regulatory orders and in this case the views of local members and the community would be taken into account and supported where possible.

As part of the planning permission process, highways issues are formally considered and the issues effecting town and communities are fundamental to these considerations along with; in respect of traffic matters etc, the Welsh Government criteria and guidelines. During this process maximum benefit to the highway within reason would be sought and the local member would generally be party to the considerations.

Where traffic regulation orders form part of the process, officers will consult with the local member[s] and also if appropriate the Town or Community Council. In this way we aim to ensure the proposals will be generally accepted by the community prior to the public consultation being undertaken. Any objections would also give rise to further discussions with the Local Member to assist in formulating the final recommendation for my decision.

Whilst the local Member can help shape the TRO, the decision on whether a TRO can actually be made a condition of a planning approval is a matter for the Highway Authority to determine based on what is required for the development following best practice, published guidelines and legislation. This part of the process does not allow for consultation but the planning application process would allow anyone to make comments on the development as part of the planning process.

There was no supplementary question.

15.14. Question to the Portfolio Holder for Highways, Recycling and Assets from County Councillor Gareth Ratcliffe

Hay-on-Wye residents welcomes the moving forward of replacement rails on Hay bridge it is something the Town council and myself have been pushing for many years to make safe and update one of the entrances in to our community over the river Wye. Can the portfolio holder confirm that the council plans to start works in this financial year?

Response

A scheme to address the condition of the parapets on Hay Bridge has been included in the Capital programme for 2017/2018. It was originally proposed to refurbish the existing parapets, however, following a more detailed investigation it has been decided that it is more beneficial to replace them with new ones. Works to replace the parapets are scheduled to be completed in this financial year with an anticipated start early in the new year.

There was no supplementary question.

15.15. Question to the Portfolio Holder for Corporate Governance, Housing and Public Protection from County Councillor Mark Barnes

Powys has had a lot of recent successes in prosecuting rogue traders in Powys and credit must go to the officers who are helping to keep our streets safe. Can the Portfolio Holder comment how much money has been raised from Proceeds of Crime?

Response

Proceeds of crime work means taking the assets off criminals that have ripped off our consumers. Any monies recovered goes direct to a system called JARD administered by the Home office. Since we started this work in 2014 some £349,014.83 has been recorded for Powys work on JARD, some of this going as compensation for victims. In some cases we receive a percentage under a scheme run by the Home Office (38.5%). In cases where compensation is involved all the monies go to victims. We have one accredited financial investigator doing this work.

In response to Councillor Barnes' supplementary question asking for an assurance that the Cabinet would continue to show strong leadership in this area, the Portfolio Holder conformed that this would remain a priority for the Cabinet.

15.16. Question to the Portfolio Holder for Highways, Recycling and Assets from County Councillor Jackie Charlton

I am seeking information on the process for applying for Road Traffic Orders now the Shire Committees no longer exist. Cllr Davies has been very helpful in trying to pursue a local issue for me in Llangattock and continues to support my regular requests for an update. Unfortunately he is unable to provide any and I understand this may be the case for other Cllrs. Could Cllr Davies confirm that Road Traffic Orders are being dealt with, how the process works and how Cllrs can generally be given an idea where in the system their individual requests are?

Response

Requests for all traffic orders can now be considered following the lifting of the moratorium, which to date only allowed for the advancement of parking restriction orders in line with the review of parking throughout the county.

The process is that Members initially discuss their request with officers of the traffic unit who can advise whether it would be suitable or not to take forward and

also what other solutions may be more effective. If it is agreed that a traffic order would be appropriate, the proposed order would then be ranked and assessed against other schemes across the County to create a prioritised list.

Currently staff resources continue to be taken up with the ongoing issues associated with the county-wide parking review and therefore the ranking of requested traffic order schemes has not yet taken place. It is planned to prioritise the list of schemes in readiness for 2019-20 financial year which will then determine a programme of those that can be progressed next year and also provide an indication of when the others could be undertaken.

I acknowledge that at present this does not provide you with specific information of when a particular scheme may come to fruition, but that every effort will be made to providing a prioritised programme in due course.

In response to Councillor Charlton's supplementary question as to how long the county wide review would go on the Portfolio Holder said that there was a very limited resource in the Council and that the parking review would take a long time given the size of the county.

15.17. Question to the Portfolio Holder for Learning and Welsh Language from County Councillor Karl Lewis

Can the Portfolio Holder for Learning and Welsh Language tell council what new methods of digital delivery she is promoting to support the Council's Vision for 2025?

Response

Powys continues to recognise the importance of digital solutions in the delivery of education.

1. We are piloting a digital learning platform with sixth form learners in Powys with two subjects being offered across all sites. It is hoped to develop this further with a commercial partner where teachers in Powys schools will develop courses for delivery using this online platform.
2. A delegation of Head teachers have visited Wrexham to look at the provision of this online learning platform.
3. In line with this we are also planning ICT support with primary schools using a partnership with a neighbouring Local Authority to secure high quality digital hardware for the future. Clearly this will allow the authority to further develop provision and options for working across schools.
4. Ceredigion and Powys are working jointly on an e-learning project called e-sgoil. This is a digital learning platform where pupils from different campuses can join interactive lessons. The e-sgoil form of digital learning has been developed in Scotland. This initiative is being launched in Ceredigion on Thursday 11th October by the Cabinet Minister for Education.

There was no supplementary question.

15.18. Question to the Portfolio Holder for Corporate Governance, Housing and Public Protection from County Councillor Peter Lewis

Can the Portfolio Holder update the council on the delivery of the 250 new homes for the County?

Response

The Housing Service has established an Affordable Housing Team to lead on the development of the 250 homes.

The team have been working with Planning and Highways services to consider the viability of approximately 80 sites in council ownership. This work is now complete and the Housing Service will be developing a long term development strategy, based on approximately 60 sites. The team have also been holding engagement events in communities across the county, to identify and confirm housing need.

Progress on the first six sites is detailed below. These sites will deliver approximately 170 of the 250 homes.

Bowling Green, Newtown – planning application was agreed at the Planning Committee on Thursday 13th September. Tender brief to be finalised and tender process to commence in October with a target start on site date of March 2019. The scheme has past the first assessment for Welsh Government Innovative Housing Programme grant.

Sarn – Architect (Hughes Architects) appointed and designs are currently being drawn up for a development which achieves Passivhaus standard. This project will provide a total of 7 units and 3 being made available for elderly tenant farmers that have lived in the area for many years and are looking to retire.

Cradoc Close, Brecon - Architect (Pentan) appointed and designs are currently being drawn up, this scheme will be the largest project providing up to 36 new homes. Anticipated start on site summer of 2019.

Clyro – the Housing Service are currently considering the type of build for this site. Anticipated start on site autumn 2019.

Former Smithfield site, Llanidloes – the site has been transferred into the Housing Revenue Account (HRA). The ecology officer is currently completing her site visits and we will receive the final report shortly. The design brief is currently being drawn up and it is expected to go out to tender early 2019.

Red Dragon/Youth Centre, Newtown – The Red Dragon and the former youth centre will be demolished in October. The design brief is currently being drawn up and finalised and this will be going out to tender early 2019.

In response to Councillor Lewis' supplementary question about using local contractors, the Portfolio Holder advised of the meet the buyer events being held with businesses in the county. In addition, a scheme that would see the council buy affordable houses off developers was being looked at.

15.19. Question to the Leader from County Councillor Diane Jones-Poston

Can the Leader update the council on the progress of the Mid Wales Growth Deal?

Response

The Mid Wales Growth Deal is at an early stage but beginning to move quickly to the next stage of the process. It is important to note that this remains a 'potential'

Deal until sign-off by central government. To develop the position a series of joint informal cabinets have been held with Ceredigion County Council. The work is also supported by the existing Growing Mid Wales Partnership that, along with the Leaders and officers from both councils, also includes attendees from the business sector, Welsh Government, Higher Education, Agriculture and Tourism. Officers met with senior Civil Servants from Central Government and Welsh Government to establish the approach to be taken for potential projects. A key part of the Deal will be the involvement of the business sector and this will be via an Economic Board to support delivery.

As part of the approach to delivering the Deal a wider regional economic action plan is being researched and drafted with external support from Aecom Ltd. This work is a joint commission involving Powys, Ceredigion and Welsh Government. As part of the process a series of workshops have been held involving businesses, regional groups and the Higher Education sector. The regional economic action plan will be a framework to help inform the Deal. Wales already has 3 existing Deals and contact has been made and we have also met with Shropshire County Council to raise awareness given the close transport links.

As help raise awareness of the Deal there will be an event held at the Senedd and another in Westminster.

There will be an update for all Councillors on the Mid Wales Growth Deal at a member development session over the coming weeks.

Responding to Councillor Jones-Poston supplementary question as to how the Council would engage with businesses to deliver the growth deal, the Leader explained that over 300 businesses had attended business breakfast meetings with the Cabinet. She also intended to form an economic development committee made up of local businesses to work alongside Mid Wales Partnership. At the end of January, a business day had been arranged for Powys businesses at the Senedd at which the Cabinet Secretary for Economy and Transport would speak.

15.20. Question to the Portfolio Holder for Finance, Countryside and Transport from County Councillor Claire Mills

Will the Portfolio Holder for Finance please update the council on what negotiations are taking place to ensure Powys receives its fair allocation of funding in the budget formula from the Welsh Government?

Response

The Council plays an active part in groups that develop and advise on Welsh Government's Local Government Finance Policies.

The Council has a place on the Distribution Sub Group that reports to the Welsh Government on the local government distribution formula. The Acting Deputy Chief Executive is also local government's representative on the Cabinet Secretary's Local Government Finance and Reform Working Group, looking at the future of local government finance in Wales.

In partnership with other rural areas, Powys successfully made the case to recognise the additional cost of delivering services in a rural area. Evidence was gathered to demonstrate the cost of providing community-based social services for older people in sparsely populated areas. This led to the sparsity allowance being allocated to Powys, amounting to an additional £3million over two years.

This provided a permanent change to our allocation and replaced the previous temporary and voluntary arrangement involving all 22 authorities. The Council responds to all consultations affecting our finances, and also raises this issue with Assembly Members and Members of Parliament.

In response to Councillor Mills' supplementary question as to whether Assembly Members representing the county and serving in the Welsh Government should be doing more to supporting the rural economy rather than backing budget cuts for rural councils, the Portfolio Holder acknowledged that the Welsh Government had been very supportive but unfortunately this had not been reflected in the settlement.

15.21. Question to County Councillor William Powell, Member of the Dyfed Powys Police and Crime Panel from County Councillor Michael Williams

In light of concerns expressed over the summer by leaders of the Association of Police and Crime commissioners (APCC) around the dangers of a 'No Deal' Brexit, what contingency plans is the Police and Crime Commissioner for Dyfed-Powys, Dafydd Llywelyn, making, in collaboration with his commissioner colleagues in the North Wales, South Wales and Gwent police force areas?

Given the real concerns expressed around security of supply of food and medical supplies, in the event of 'No Deal,' what consideration has been given to the cancelling of leave across Dyfed- Powys Police in March/April 2019 to ensure community safety?

In addition, what action is being undertaken by the Police and Crime Commissioner to spearhead preparations with the Public Service Boards in Powys, Ceredigion, Carmarthenshire and Pembrokeshire, in the face of this unfortunate eventuality?

Response

The Commissioner's role is to hold the Chief Constable to account for delivering an efficient and effective police force for Dyfed-Powys, but not make operational decisions. As this is an operational matter that requires a multi-agency approach, PCC Dafydd Llywelyn has sought assurance that Dyfed-Powys Police are working with partners via the Local Resilience Forum(s) and other operational groups.

Dafydd has also, on the 5th September, attended a meeting with Jo Hopkins from the Home Office in Wales, alongside Assistant Chief Constable Richard Lewis to explore and understand the operational implications in light of a potential No-Deal Brexit. He has also visited the Welsh Government Cabinet Secretary and Officials, where they had specific discussions regarding the policing concerns and response regarding a No-Deal Brexit.

Dafydd has been informed that at the National Police Chiefs' Council meeting on the 17th September, Chief Constables discussed the impact of a No-Deal Brexit. It is expected that in the coming weeks there will be more rapid progress in relation to contingency planning, however they concluded that there was not any intention at this time to cancel officer's leave. This position will be continually under review and will remain an option operationally for Dyfed-Powys Police.

There was no supplementary question.

15.22. Question to the Leader from County Councillor William Powell

It is a matter of public record that the town of Talgarth and its economy experienced considerable turbulence in the years leading up to and following the closure of the former Mid Wales Hospital from 1995-2000. In the last decade, the opening of the A479 Talgarth Relief Road, a renewed civic pride, enterprise and purpose and earlier this year the establishment of Ysgol y Mynydd Du have all served to signal fresh confidence in the town's future.

However, the sheer scale of Powys County Council owned sites in the town centre, currently or soon to be declared surplus, combined with the consultation on the Development Brief on the former Mid Wales Hospital site and other allocated sites once again see the town at a cross roads.

Given her understanding of the cross portfolio challenges and opportunities that Talgarth faces, what assessment has the Leader made of the merits of a Strategic Development Plan for Talgarth? With the County Council working in renewed partnership with Brecon Beacons National Park Authority, Talgarth Town Council and by harnessing the energy and vision of local people, such a plan would promote holistic, sustainable development of the town at a time of unprecedented growth. To this end, will the Leader please commit to convening an early meeting to establish the groundwork for such a plan?

Response

Officers from Powys County Council have supported many initiatives in the Talgarth area and are currently supporting the Black Mountains College proposal.

The Brecon Beacons National Park being the Planning Authority in the Talgarth area, are actively encouraging communities to develop a Place Plan. I understand that National Park are already progressing the development of a community led plan in Talgarth. Powys County Council will assist the process through our Regeneration Team as required.

As owners of most of the development sites, we cannot wait for a "place plan". I have already spoken with Property & Housing and we are arranging an initial meeting with Head of Housing, Lead Professional – Property, Local Member, Portfolio Holders and me.

Further discussion can then take place with others who will need to be involved.

Councillor Powell asked in his supplementary question if the Leader would commit to a multi-agency meeting with the National Park and other relevant agencies including the Mid and West Wales Fire and Rescue Authority. The Leader said that the Council owned a significant amount of land in the area and in the initial stages the Council needed to look at what could be done with those sites including the potential for employment sites. She was concerned that if all of the land was used for housing it would change the character of the community.

15.23. Question to the Portfolio Holder for Highways, Recycling and Assets from County Councillor Iain McIntosh

As the current list of farmers and contractors who were called upon to clear the heavy snowfall last winter struggled to cope, will the portfolio holder for

highways consider creating a second list of farmers and contractors with equipment suitable for clearing snow, so that they can be called upon should we get the same level of snowfall as last winter at some point in the future?

Response

Recognising the exceptional snow storms that we experienced last year, I consider the response and service provided was very good. An annual review of the Winter Service Plan is undertaken and as part of this exercise the current support network of contractors and farmers is also being reviewed. The experience and feedback gained from last winter has identified geographical areas where additional support will be beneficial.

The arrangements and mechanism for engaging this external support is currently being progressed within a framework to ensure the suitability of any support engaged, bearing in mind the Health & Safety, training/competencies and insurance cover level requirements associated with working on the public highway.

Councillor McIntosh's supplementary question was would there be any additional support from farmers and contractors with suitable equipment for the coming winter. The Portfolio Holder advised that as with the last winter area managers would be responsible for directing resources to winter maintenance operations.

15.24. Question to the Portfolio Holder for Highways, Recycling and Assets from County Councillor Iain McIntosh

The roads around the Yscir ward are in a very bad state. Many areas need resurfacing and numerous pot holes remain unrepaired. Can the portfolio holder for highways offer any reassurance to the residents of rural wards such as Yscir that their roads will be repaired to a better standard soon?

Response

Members will be aware that the budget for basic road maintenance has been continuously and severely reduced for a number of years and it is inevitable that the condition of our highways network will reflect this in a visible deterioration; particularly on the thousands of kilometres of rural roads we have in Powys. New methods of work have been recently introduced (use of Roadmaster patching machines) in an endeavour to combat the budget reduction and maintain a reasonable level of service, as is our duty as the highway authority. The use of this process of repair should ensure a more permanent repair to the increasing number of minor road defects.

I am informed that a considerable number of repairs have already been carried out in the area concerned following your reports, and these will continue within the constraints of the budget resource. A risk analysis of roads is undertaken to ensure that the priority repairs are programmed in a consistent manner across the county.

Roads identified as requiring more major repairs such as structural patching and wholesale surface treatments are ranked for priority and included in a forward programme for Capital funding.

Councillor McIntosh's supplementary question was to ask why Welsh Government was spending so much on the M4 relief road project rather than distributing resources equally throughout Wales. The Portfolio Holder noted that since 2011/12 the funding available for highways in Powys had reduced by £5m for a service looking after 5,500km of roads.

15.25. Question to the Portfolio Holder for Highways, Recycling and Assets from County Councillor Liam Fitzpatrick

What do Puffins and Y Gaer Brecon Cultural Hub have in common? They both come with extremely large mysterious bills. (that's not the question) Last weeks Brecon and Radnor express had a startling front page advising us that Y Gaer (Brecon cultural hub) will be delayed until next year due to issues with Stone and Puffins breeding.

However, a local ornithologist and the RSPB advised me that Puffins only breed in April and May every year and are not native to Powys but can be found in Scandinavia as well as the Isle of man and Yorkshire as well as Skomer island. Roast Puffin pie is of course a delicacy in Jamtland in northern Sweden and I am sure with the award of a Michelin star to Ynshir in Machynlleth will not be long that it may appear in Northern Powys.

Taking into consideration that Puffins will not be benefiting the Powys Pound soon and that it is October and Not April and they are of course not breeding I will now ask the cabinet member the question.

Will the Cabinet member agree the following; that not only is this possibly the most laughable excuse for incompetence since the classic 'the dog ate my homework ' and that it is deeply unfair that all council tax payers throughout Powys will have to continue to pay for this farce when there is a likelihood, with budget cuts in 2019 for libraries, museums and other cultural centres, that the building may not even have sufficient resources to actually open?

Response

We were informed by Kier that their subcontractor, Allesco, who are manufacturing the red sandstone panels for the new library building external cladding, had unfortunately not obtained or arranged to be quarried enough of the stone to complete the required number of panels.

The panels use a thin cut piece of stone on a composite backing on a metal frame, for fixing to the building. The stone, which had been approved by all including BBNPA, was quarried in the UK and shipped to the factory in Germany where the panels were made. We understand that the required matching stone is no longer available from the original quarry, and an alternative source was found near St Bees Head, in Cumbria. The quarry is adjacent to and RSPB sanctuary. We were advised that the stone could not be quarried until September due to the presence of the puffins (breeding or not). There is a 14 to 16 week manufacturing and delivery period from the date of obtaining the stone. As a result Kier have reported that the last elements of cladding will not be complete until early December.

In response to Councillor Fitzpatrick's supplementary question of whether given budget cuts the building would open, the Portfolio Holder confirmed that Y Gaer would open in 2019 and would be staffed.

15.26. Question to the Portfolio Holder for Corporate Governance, Housing and Public Protection from County Councillor Karen Laurie-Parry

Good Governance is essential in Local Government and working to Powys County Council's Agreed and Published Vision. Regarding the private housing development south of the former Bronllys CP School and that of Bronllys Village in general, how was the Public Engagement Event for you and how did you engage with significant persons in the process leading up to the day?

Response

The event was one which was of great use to the Council in getting over the message about the Council's plans to develop affordable housing to meet the needs of local communities. At the event which had been developed in consultation with the local councillor and the community council, 79 people from the village of Bronllys attended. The Housing Service received 32 completed questionnaires, of which approximately two thirds considered that there was a need for additional affordable homes in the village. In addition, 6 households who advised that they required affordable homes were encouraged to place their names on the Common Housing Register.

It is hoped that the message the community received from the event was that we want to work with the community to meet its needs for affordable housing, and that affordable homes won't be imposed on communities.

Councillor Laurie-Parry said the community wanted genuinely affordable homes.

15.27. Question to the Portfolio Holder for Corporate Governance, Housing and Public Protection from County Councillor Karen Laurie-Parry

Regarding Procurement of Housing Association/Private Developer, are you satisfied that the correct procedures and guidelines adopted by Powys County Council have been adhered to, by Councillors and Officers and can you explain the procedure that was utilised?

Response

The purchaser of the site, which was previously in private ownership, is Monmouthshire Housing Association (MHA). As the site will be developed by MHA without recourse to Social Housing Grant (SHG) and will be developed to provide market homes for sale, the council has had no role thus far. Obviously MHA, just like any other developer, will be required to follow planning policy when the scheme is built out. MHA were invited to the consultation event, as Officers were aware of their purchase of the site and it was considered that it would be a useful opportunity for MHA to meet with members of the community to discuss their plans for the site and listen to the views of the local community.

There was no supplementary question.

The Chair advised that the following item had been withdrawn and that there was no need to pass the access to information resolution.

17. NOTICE OF MOTION

This item was deferred.

County Councillor DW Meredith (Chair)

DRAFT