

**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE CABINET HELD AT BY TEAMS ON TUESDAY,
29 SEPTEMBER 2020**

PRESENT

County Councillor M R Harris (Chair)

County Councillors MC Alexander, G Breeze, A W Davies, P Davies, J Evans,
H Hulme and R Powell

In attendance: County Councillors I McIntosh, D Price, J Pugh, P Roberts, E.
Vaughan, JM Williams, J Williams.

1. APOLOGIES

There were no apologies for absence.

2. MINUTES

The Leader was authorised to sign the minutes of the last meeting held on 15th
September 2020 as a correct record.

3. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

County Councillor Myfanwy Alexander declared a personal and prejudicial
interest in the report on

4. REVISED 21ST C SCHOOLS BAND B STRATEGIC OUTLINE PROGRAMME (SOP)

Cabinet was asked to approve a revised Strategic Outline Programme (SOP) to
Welsh Government's 21st Century Schools Programme requesting an increase in
the funding envelope from £113 million to £263 million, to support the Council's
Strategy for Transforming Education in Powys 2020-30. In introducing the report,
the Portfolio Holder for Education and Property impressed upon colleagues the
significance of the decisions the Cabinet was being asked to make. He advised
that this was the first wave of school transformation proposals to be considered
by Cabinet and noted that the projects were at different stages of development
as reflected in the reports being presented at the meeting. The Portfolio Holder
advised that given the Covid-19 pandemic, ample time would be given to
consultation using a range of methods.

The Chair of the Learning and Skills Scrutiny Committee advised that the
committee would not be commenting at this stage but would be when reports
came back to Cabinet following consultation.

Cabinet gave its full support to this ambitious plan for education in the county
whilst noting that it would require considerable Welsh Government support and
have significant consequences for the Council's budget.

RESOLVED

- 1. To approve a revised Strategic Outline Programme (SOP) for submission to the Welsh Government's 21st Century Schools' Programme, requesting an increase in the funding envelope from £113 million to £263 million to support the Council's Strategy for Transforming Education in Powys; and**
- 2. To agree that officers will provide a draft sustainable financial strategy for the delivery of the ten-year education strategy, noting that it will have significant resource implications for the Council, which will need to be addressed in the 2021-22 budget and 2021-2031 Capital Programme.**

5.	21ST CENTURY SCHOOLS PROGRAMME - YSGOL BRO HYDDGEN COMMUNITY CAMPUS PROJECT
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Cabinet was asked to approve submission of a revised Strategic Outline Case (SOC) and Outline Business Case (OBC) to Welsh Government's 21st Century Schools Programme for capital investment to replace the existing Ysgol Bro Hyddgen school estate in Machynlleth with an all-age community campus on the current secondary campus site. The new flagship community campus would include early years and education provision, along with brand new leisure and library facilities, replacing the existing Bro Ddyfi Leisure Centre and Machynlleth library. It was the Council's intention for the Bro Hyddgen Community Campus scheme to become the blueprint for the new Strategy for Transforming Education in Powys.

The project had been approved by Welsh Government and Cabinet in July 2017 at an initial projection of £23.2 million. The funding required was estimated at £48,250,369, 65% funded by Welsh Government and 35% by the County Council.

Local Members County Councillors Elwyn Vaughan and Michael Williams spoke in support of the proposal and welcomed the proposed investment.

RESOLVED

- 1. To approve the submission of the combined Strategic Outline Case (SOC) and Outline Business Case (OBC) to Welsh Government's 21st Century Schools Programme for capital investment to replace the existing Ysgol Bro Hyddgen school estate in Machynlleth with an all-age community campus on the current secondary campus site. The new flagship community campus will include early years and education provision, along with leisure and library facilities. The revised SOC/OBC replaces the previous version which was approved by Welsh Government in 2017.**

2. To approve the purchase of additional land to develop a grass pitch to meet Building Bulletin guidance.

6.	LLANFAIR CAEREINION C.P. SCHOOL AND CAEREINION HIGH SCHOOL
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Cabinet was asked to give its approval to commence the statutory process to amalgamate Llanfair Caereinion C.P. School and Caereinion High School, to create a new all-age school in Llanfair Caereinion on the current sites of the two schools. The target date was to close the two schools on the 31st August 2022 and to open the new school on the 1st September 2022.

RESOLVED to commence consultation in accordance with the requirements of the School Organisation Code on the following proposal:

'To amalgamate Llanfair Caereinion C.P. School and Caereinion High School to create a new all-age school in Llanfair Caereinion. This will be achieved by closing Llanfair Caereinion C.P. School and Caereinion High School and opening a new all-age school providing education for pupils aged 4-18 on the current site of the two schools.'

The target date is to close the two schools on the 31st August 2022 and to open the new school on the 1st September 2022.

7.	LLANFYLLIN CATCHMENT PROGRAMME BUSINESS CASE
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County Councillor Myfanwy Alexander declared a personal and prejudicial interest in this item and left the meeting while it was being discussed.

Cabinet was asked to give its approval for the following:

- a) To submit a Programme Business Case (PBC) to the Welsh Government's 21st Century Schools Programme for the following capital investment in the Llanfyllin catchment:
 - A new community campus for approximately 900 pupils aged 4 – 18 in Llanfyllin, replacing the current poor condition buildings of Ysgol Llanfyllin – to be built on the current Ysgol Llanfyllin site.
 - To establish and build a new 360 place area school, to replace Carreghofa School and Llandysilio C. in W. School – this could also potentially include neighbouring schools in the Welshpool catchment as well. Site to be confirmed. The Portfolio Holder for Education and Property explained that one catchment was not being looked at in isolation and that catchments were not set in stone and boundaries may change.

- To establish a new Welsh-medium school on the current Llanrhaeadr-ym-Mochnant site, replacing both Ysgol Pennant and Llanrhaeadr-ym-Mochnant Primary School. This may require capital funding to extend the school.
 - To provide an extension to Llansantffraid CiW Primary School.
 - Possible closure of Llangedwyn CiW School, Llanfechain CiW School and Ysgol Bro Cynllaith.
- b) To bring back a further report to Cabinet by December 2020 outlining the initial school reorganisation proposals required.

The cost of the preferred way forward was estimated to be £49.5 million.

In the case of Ysgol Llanfyllin, it was not anticipated that any further consultation would be required to develop the new build community campus as a school reorganisation process to merge Llanfyllin C.P. School and Llanfyllin High School was carried out last year, and Ysgol Llanfyllin opened as a new all-age school in September 2020. With regard to the other proposals, confirmation was given that there would be full and transparent consultation with all schools and communities that were potentially affected and all schools would be named in the report that came to Cabinet in December.

The Leader confirmed that the Cabinet had received an email from County Councillor Arwel Jones as local member to Carreghofa and Llandysilio Schools who had asked the Cabinet to take into account that both schools offered excellent education and that the majority of pupils were able to walk to school which would not be the case with an area school. He had noted that extensions had been built at both schools at considerable expense and that whilst pupil numbers had fallen in recent years, the projections going forward were looking stable with planning applications approved for a total of around 130 properties to be built.

RESOLVED

- 1. To submit a Programme Business Case (PBC) to the Welsh Government's 21st Century Schools Programme for the following capital investment in the Llanfyllin catchment:**
 - **A new community campus for approximately 900 pupils aged 4 – 18 in Llanfyllin, replacing the current poor condition buildings of Ysgol Llanfyllin – to be built on the current Ysgol Llanfyllin site.**
 - **To establish and build a new 360 place area school, to replace Carreghofa School and Llandysilio C. in W. School – this could also potentially include neighbouring schools in the Welshpool catchment as well. Site to be confirmed.**

- **To establish a new Welsh-medium school on the current Llanrhaeadr-ym-Mochnant site, replacing both Ysgol Pennant and Llanrhaeadr-ym-Mochnant Primary School. This may require capital funding to extend the school.**
 - **To provide an extension to Llansanffraid CiW Primary School.**
 - **Possible closure of Llangedwyn CiW School, Llanfechain CiW School and Ysgol Bro Cynllaith.**
- 2. To bring back a further report to Cabinet by December 2020 outlining the initial school reorganisation proposals required. Full consultation will be undertaken before any final decisions are made. In the case of Ysgol Llanfyllin, it is not anticipated that any further consultation would be required to develop the new build community campus as a school reorganisation process to merge Llanfyllin C.P. School and Llanfyllin High School was carried out last year, and Ysgol Llanfyllin opened as a new all-age school in September 2020.**

Councillor Alexander returned to the meeting.

8. BRECON CATCHMENT PROGRAMME BUSINESS CASE
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Cabinet was asked to consider giving approval

- a) To submit a Programme Business Case to the Welsh Government's 21st Century Schools Programme for the following capital investment in the Brecon catchment:
- A new 360 place English-medium primary school in Brecon, to replace Mount Street Infants School, Mount Street Juniors School and Cradoc C.P. School, with a co-located Pupil Referral Unit and a community swimming pool – to be built on the site of the old Brecon High School.
 - A new 180 place dual-stream primary school in Sennybridge, replacing the current poor accommodation at Sennybridge CP School – to be built on the current site of Sennybridge CP School.
- b) To bring back a further report to Cabinet by December 2020 outlining the school reorganisation proposals required. This would be after consultation with schools and communities.

The cost of the preferred way forward was estimated to be £32,169,087

County Councillor Iain McIntosh spoke against the proposal to close Cradoc CP School noting that it was a well-run medium sized school with close links to the community. He questioned the need to build a new swimming pool. In response

Councillor McIntosh's points the Portfolio Holder acknowledged that the schools were very well run but said that it was important to plan for a schools footprint that could be sustained in the long term and invest in teaching and learning rather than maintain buildings. In respect of the swimming pool, it was explained that the leisure facilities in Brecon were outdated and in need of capital investment. The aim was to have the new school open for September 2024.

RESOLVED to approve the following:

- a) **To submit a Programme Business Case to the Welsh Government's 21st Century Schools Programme for the following capital investment in the Brecon catchment:**
- **A new 360 place English-medium primary school in Brecon, replacing Mount Street Infants School, Mount Street Juniors School and Cradoc CP School, with a co-located Pupil Referral Unit and a community swimming pool – to be built on the site of the old Brecon High School.**
 - **A new 180 place dual-stream primary school in Sennybridge, replacing the current poor accommodation at Sennybridge CP School – to be built on the current site of Sennybridge CP School.**
- b) **To bring back a further report to Cabinet by December 2020 outlining the school reorganisation proposals required. Full consultation will be undertaken before any final decisions are made.**

9. YSGOL CALON CYMRU STRATEGIC OUTLINE CASE
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County Councillor Rachel Powell declared a personal and prejudicial interest in this item and left the meeting whilst this item was being considered.

Cabinet was asked to give approval for the following:

- a) To submit a Strategic Outline Case (SOC) to the Welsh Government's 21st Century Schools Programme for investment to develop:
- New facilities for 925 pupils aged 11 – 18 in Llandrindod Wells, replacing the existing poor accommodation at the current Llandrindod campus – to be built on the current Llandrindod Campus;
 - New or remodelled facilities at Builth Wells to accommodate 450 pupils aged 4-18 along with early years facilities – to be built on the current Builth Wells Campus;
 - Community facilities will be included but these have not yet been defined;

- It is the intention that the Llandrindod Wells campus would deliver English-medium provision and that the Builth Wells campus would deliver Welsh-medium provision.
- b) To bring back a further report to Cabinet by November 2020 outlining the school reorganisation proposals required to achieve the changes outlined above. Full consultation would be undertaken before any final decisions are made.

The cost was estimated to be £61.0 million.

County Councillor David Price raised concerns over community cohesion noting that the organic growth of bilingual education had served the area well. He was concerned that the proposal would be divisive coming so soon after the merger to form Ysgol Calon Cymru and with pupils having to travel to Llandrindod for English medium education.

County Councillor Jeremy Pugh argued that the model proposed was not sustainable, questioning why there had been no assessment of the impact on other schools and noting that transport costs had not been taken into account. He said that this model should not be imposed on a predominantly English speaking area and asked if the Cabinet was seeking to close the Builth Wells site by the back door.

County Councillor Jon Williams welcomed the proposals to transform education in the area but asked how underfunding at Ysgol Calon Cymru would be addressed. He asked Cabinet to recognise the hard work of governors, staff and pupils at Ysgol Calon Cymru.

The Portfolio Holder for Education and Property explained that there was inadequate Welsh medium education provision in the south of the county and that this proposal would help address this utilising the facilities in Builth Wells. The Cabinet had committed to secondary provision in 13 localities including Builth Wells. The deficit position of Ysgol Calon Cymru showed that there were not enough resources to sustain two English medium schools in such close proximity. This preferred option would allow properly funded English medium education in Llandrindod Wells and Welsh medium education in Builth Wells. Addressing points about primary schools in the catchment and Sixth Form provision, it was explained that the schools transformation programme was phased into manageable parts and that further reports would be brought forward over the coming months.

RESOLVED to approve

- 1. To submit a Strategic Outline Case (SOC) to the Welsh Government's 21st Century Schools Programme for investment to develop:**
 - **New facilities for 925 pupils aged 11 – 18 in Llandrindod Wells, replacing the existing poor accommodation at the current Llandrindod campus – to be built on the current Llandrindod Campus;**

- **New or remodelled facilities at Builth Wells to accommodate 450 pupils aged 4-18 along with early years facilities – to be built on the current Builth Wells Campus;**
 - **Community facilities will be included but these have not yet been defined;**
 - **It is the intention that the Llandrindod Wells campus would deliver English-medium provision and that the Builth Wells campus would deliver Welsh-medium provision.**
2. **That officers bring back a further report to Cabinet by November 2020 outlining the detailed implementation steps, including consultation, required to achieve the new facilities.**

County Councillor Rachel Powell returned to the meeting.

10. COVID BUSINESS SURVEY

Cabinet received details of a survey carried out with businesses in Powys on the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic. Over 1,000 businesses had responded with 99% of businesses saying they had been affected and 81% saying the impact had been severe. 344 businesses had laid off staff temporarily and 96 had laid staff off permanently. Two thirds of businesses were worried about their businesses surviving. 99% had reported a drop in revenue, with half reporting a 100% drop in revenue. The Council had received some positive comments about the speed with which business grants were processed. It was noted that grants worth some £53m had been paid out in Powys, the third highest amount in Wales. Cabinet thanked officers for the report which would be used to lobby for further government support.

County Councillor M R Harris (Chair)