

**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE CABINET HELD BY TEAMS ON TUESDAY, 16  
FEBRUARY 2021**

**PRESENT**

County Councillor M R Harris (Chair)

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

In attendance: County Councillors G Jones and Pete Roberts

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| <b>1. APOLOGIES</b> |
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Apologies for absence were received from the Corporate Director (Children and Adults) and Geraint Rees Education Officer.

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| <b>2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST</b> |
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County Councillor Myfanwy Alexander declared an interest in item 3 Llanfair Caereinion CP School and Caereinion High School – All Age School Proposal as a governor of Caereinion High School. She was covered by the general exemption for governors when speaking on school modernisation proposals.

The Chief Executive read from the statement issued by Powys Teaching Health Board on the Covid pandemic highlighting the alarming rise in the number of cases in Powys and reminding everyone to follow the guidance to keep safe.

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| <b>3. LLANFAIR CAEREINION C.P. SCHOOL AND CAEREINION HIGH SCHOOL - ALL-AGE SCHOOL PROPOSAL</b> |
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Cabinet gave further consideration to the proposal to proceed with the statutory process to amalgamate the two schools and to establish a new all-age school following the call-in of the decision by the Learning and Skills Scrutiny Committee. The Chair of the Committee outlined the reasons why the Committee were recommending why the decision should be deferred.

The Portfolio Holder for Education and Property confirmed that there was no departure from current policy in the proposal and that this would be a step in the journey of developing Welsh medium education provision. He didn't accept that the proposal would lead to upheaval and he was positive about the interaction with governors and parents to date.

County Councillor Gareth Jones spoke as the local member and he advised that there was strong support in the community of Llanfair Caereinion for this proposal to go ahead.

**RESOLVED**

- 1. To approve the publication of a statutory notice to close both Llanfair Caereinion C.P. School and Caereinion High**

School from the 31st August 2022, and open a new dual stream all-age school for pupils aged 4-18 on the sites currently occupied by Llanfair Caereinion C.P. School and Caereinion High School from the 1st September 2022.

2. To accelerate the dialogue with representatives of the two schools and the community to explore ways to develop and enhance the Welsh-medium provision in Llanfair Caereinion, and to include all feeder schools in this dialogue.

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| 4. | <b>2021 ANNUAL REVIEW OF VISION 2025 OUR CORPORATE IMPROVEMENT PLAN, INCLUDING OUR STRATEGIC EQUALITY OBJECTIVES 2020-2024</b> |
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Cabinet considered an update to Vision 2025: Our Corporate Improvement Plan. The update had been considered by the Scrutiny Committees and a number of amendments had been made to strengthen the CIP in response to some of the points raised.

**RECOMMENDED to Council that the proposed amendments to Vision 2025: Our Corporate Improvement Plan (as outlined in Appendix A) are approved for publication in the CIP Update 2021, with implementation from April 2021.**

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| 5. | <b>QUARTER 3 PERFORMANCE REPORT</b> |
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Cabinet considered the performance report for the third quarter of 2020/21. The report was in two parts, the first part dealing with the Council's response to Covid-19 and the second setting out details of the top 20 Powys specific performance measures, top priorities and milestones in the Corporate Improvement Plan 2018-23, Public Accountability Measures and progress against the Strategic Equality Plan.

The Leader and Cabinet members paid tribute to staff for continuing to deliver services despite the challenges of the pandemic.

**RESOLVED that Cabinet notes the continued achievements and the tremendous response of the organisation during unprecedented and challenging times of a global pandemic, while balancing the need to progress business as usual and Vision 2025 priorities.**

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| 6. | <b>STRATEGIC RISK REGISTER REPORT QUARTER 3 2020/2021</b> |
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Cabinet considered the Strategic Risk Register for the third quarter of 2022/21. The report set out details of the 12 strategic risks and the mitigating actions being taken to control them. Since the last report no risks had been escalated to the Strategic Risk Register, but Children's Services had reviewed their risks and

consolidated them into one risk. In addition to the Strategic Risk Register the Covid-19 Risk Register was reviewed weekly by EMT. Cabinet also noted the questions raised by the Scrutiny Committees and the responses provided by the Heads of Services.

**RESOLVED that Cabinet notes the current Strategic Risk Register and is satisfied with progress against actions for Quarter 3.**

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| <b>7.</b> | <b>TREASURY MANAGEMENT QUARTER 3 REPORT</b> |
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Cabinet considered the Treasury Management report for Quarter 3 and noted that there had been no significant change in strategy since the last quarter.

**RESOLVED that the Treasury Management report for Quarter 3 be accepted.**

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| <b>8.</b> | <b>HOUSING REVENUE ACCOUNT RENT AND RELATED CHARGES CHANGES FOR 2021-22</b> |
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Cabinet considered changes for Council Housing Rents, Garage Rents and all property and tenancy related Service Charges, for the financial year 2021-22. The Council's HRA Business Plan had been stress tested to see what changes in rents and services charges needed to be made to allow it to remain viable and able to increase the number of affordable homes available across Powys and a 1.5% increase was recommended. Cabinet was pleased to note that this was the lowest proposed increase for three years.

Cabinet was advised that the waiting list for social housing in the County was just over 3,200 currently with the main demand for one and two bedroom properties. The Council was doing significant work to address this with its social building programme.

**RESOLVED**

- 1. That with effect from April 5<sup>th</sup>, 2021 the average rent in Powys will increase by 1.5% (the average rent being £93.82 per week) for all 5,389 Council owned homes excluding service charges.**
- 2. That service charges charged to HRA tenants are amended from effect from April 5<sup>th</sup>, 2021 to allow the Council to recover the cost incurred in providing these services.**
- 3. That the weekly cost effect from April 5<sup>th</sup>, 2021 for Careline in 2021-2022 is £1.10 per week.**
- 4. That HRA garage rents in Powys with effect from April 5<sup>th</sup>, 2021 for 2021-2022 are increased by £2.64 per week.**
- 5. That garage plot charges effect from April 5<sup>th</sup>, 2021 for 2021-2022 increase by £20.04 per annum.**

6. That the weekly occupation charge from April 5<sup>th</sup>, 2021 charges for Gypsy and Traveller pitches in 2021-2022 will be increased by 1.5% the average rent being £105.24.
7. That all other rental and service charges, not detailed above, effect from April 5<sup>th</sup>, 2021 will increase by 1.5%.

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| <b>9.</b> | <b>CHILDREN'S SERVICES EARLY HELP STRATEGY</b> |
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Cabinet considered the Early Help Strategy for Children's Services. The Early Help and Support focus of the strategy would implement partnership processes for the effective assessment of children and young people who would benefit from early help services. The Strategy would help ensure that resources were targeted where they would make the greatest difference. The Strategy was warmly welcomed by the Cabinet and the Leader congratulated the service on the progress being made.

**RESOLVED that the Early Help Strategy is approved.**

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| <b>10.</b> | <b>MID WALES ENERGY STRATEGY</b> |
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Cabinet considered a report on the progress of the Mid Wales Energy Strategy that was being developed jointly with Ceredigion County Council and Welsh Government. The strategy was aligned to UK and Welsh Government strategies to achieve by 2050 a net zero carbon system that delivers social and economic benefits, eliminates fuel poverty, better connects Mid Wales to the rest of the UK and contributes to wider UK decarbonisation. The next delivery phase would require the appointment of a dedicated officer to lead on behalf of the region. A bid had been made to the Welsh European Funding Office for funding under the European Social Fund (ESF) Priority 5 (Public Services Reform and Regional Working). The bid outlined proposals to establish a Regional Collaboration Office that would provide the required capacity for a Growth Deal PMO, and agile capacity to support wider activity in support of economic development activity aligned to the wider strategy.

**RESOLVED**

1. As individual Local authorities (Powys & Ceredigion County Councils) to endorse commitment to the mid Wales Energy Strategy and sign off the strategy document.
2. Powys and Ceredigion Senior officers to work together to develop and agree governance arrangements for the preparation of a Mid Wales Energy Strategy Delivery Plan, including the establishment of an Advisory group to advise on the Mid Wales Energy Strategy Delivery Plan.

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| <b>11.</b> | <b>FINANCIAL FORECAST FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31ST MARCH 2021 (AS AT 31ST DECEMBER 2020)</b> |
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Cabinet considered an updated assessment of the projected year-end financial position, and the ongoing impact the Covid 19 pandemic was having on the Council's revenue budget for 2020/21. The full year projected deficit of £1.15 million reported at the end of the second quarter had reduced to a near balanced position forecast of £0.57 million at year end (excluding Delegated Schools and Housing Revenue Account (HRA)). Cabinet acknowledged the work of services bring in the budget close to target and the support of Welsh and UK governments.

72% or £8.93 million savings had been delivered and a further 7% £0.88 million were assured of delivery by Heads of Service. £2.582 million, 21% were unachieved and were at risk of delivery in this year, although some targets would be rolled forward into 2021/22.

The report also set out a number of virements that required Cabinet approval.

**RESOLVED**

- 1. That Cabinet note the budget position and the projected full year position to the end of March 2021.**
- 2. That the virements proposed in section 7 of the report are approved.**

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| <b>12. CAPITAL FORECAST AS AT 31ST DECEMBER 2020</b> |
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Cabinet received an update on the financial position of the Council's capital programme as at 31<sup>st</sup> December 2020. Actual spend and committed expenditure amounted to £64.94 million representing 68% of the total budget. Cabinet was advised that capital receipts were lower than forecast due to the impact the lockdown but that there were still sufficient receipts to support the transformation programme.

The report also set out a virement in respect of the Nant Helen Fund and capital bids for cyber security, ICT software, to build a Household Waste and Recycling Centre in Welshpool Depot and make improvements to Newtown and Llanfyllin depots.

**RESOLVED**

- 1. That the contents of the report are noted.**
- 2. That the virements proposed in section 4 of the report are approved.**
- 3. That the capital bids proposed in sections 7.2, 7.3 and 7.4 of the report are approved.**

**County Councillor M R Harris (Chair)**