

**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE CABINET HELD AT BY TEAMS ON TUESDAY,
21 SEPTEMBER 2021**

PRESENT

County Councillor M R Harris (Chair)

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

In attendance: County Councillors P Roberts and E Vaughan

Cabinet paused to remember Garry Banks, the former Councillor for Presteigne and past Chair of Council and Cabinet member who had passed away. The Leader also expressed her condolences to Lee Evans in the Communications team on the death of his brother.

1.	APOLOGIES
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Apologies were received from the Executive Director: People and Organisational Development.

2.	DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST
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There were no declarations of interest reported.

3.	WELSH IN EDUCATION STRATEGIC PLAN (WESP) 2022-2032
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Cabinet was asked to give approval to carry out consultation on the authority's Welsh in Education Strategic Plan (WESP) for 2022-2032. The *Welsh in Education Strategic Plans (Wales) Regulations 2019* required local authorities to set a ten year target outlining the expected increase in Year 1 children taught through the medium of Welsh in the local authority's area during the lifespan of the Plan. Powys was expected to achieve an increase of 10-14+% in the percentage of Year 1 children taught through the medium of Welsh by 2030/31. This would require an increase from 22.2% of Year 1 pupils taught through the medium of Welsh in 2019/20 to between 32% and 36% pupils taught through the medium of Welsh in 2030/31. The WESP had been developed in order to contribute towards achieving this target and was based on 7 Outcomes which reflect a learner's education journey.

The consultation would commence before the end of September 2021 and continue for a period of 8 weeks. A post-consultation version of the WESP would be considered by the Cabinet in January 2022 before being submitted to Welsh Government by the end of January 2022.

Cabinet was advised that the consultation would seek to establish why there was a 20% drop off in the number of pupils in Welsh medium primary education going into Welsh medium secondary education.

County Councillor Elwyn Vaughan who had chaired the Welsh education partnership meetings, commended the commitment to ensuring there was access to Welsh-medium early years and primary provision in all parts of the county, to supporting dual-stream/English-medium primary schools to move along the language continuum so that they can provide Welsh-medium immersion education until the age of seven or eleven and establishing Welsh-medium secondary provision in at least 3 localities in Powys.

County Councillor Pete Roberts, the Chair of the Learning and Skills Committee advised that the Committee regarded the plan as appropriate for consultation. The Committee felt that there were a number of areas that could be improved upon which would come out in the consultation. The Committee would like to see the inclusion of some “stretch” targets in the later years of the programme in the final document which would help the authority achieve beyond Welsh Government targets. The Committee also wanted to see more evidence in the document supporting the change of location on the proposed Welsh Medium Secondary School in North Powys.

Cabinet welcomed the document which would form a key part of the schools transformation project. The Portfolio Holder for Adult Social Care and the Welsh Language noted that ensuring the Welsh language remained an integral part of life in Powys was a priority for the Cabinet. She also noted the important role played by organisations such as the Urdd, Mudiad Meithrin and the YFC in supporting the language. Support for early years was also very important. Cabinet noted that delivering the WESP would take significant resources to ensure equality of access in Welsh and English medium education. The Portfolio Holder for Education and Property thanked colleagues for their comments and their support for the WESP which would be a very critical part of the future of education in Powys.

RESOLVED to approve the commencement of consultation on the Council’s draft Welsh in Education Strategic Plan for 2022-2032.

4. NEW WAYS OF WORKING FOR THE COUNCIL'S WORKFORCE

Cabinet considered a report setting out New Ways of Working which best captured the learning from the past 18 months. Under the New Ways of Working (NWOW), it was proposed that all staff across the Council’s services will continue to work in one of three defined work styles:

Place-based workers: these are staff who are based at a particular location in order to fulfil their role, or because they are unable to work from any other locations for a variety of reasons.

On-the-go workers: these staff are mostly out and about in the community, directly delivering services, but need an office or building as a base.

Flexible workers: these are staff who can work flexibly from a variety of locations, including from home, various office buildings, partner locations, or community buildings which are near to where they live.

This would enable many staff to continue to work in agile ways, which better support future service delivery, whether this be to work regularly from home, from Council facilities, including corporate buildings, hubs, local facilities, or from agreed partner facilities.

Given that as part of NWOW, there would be no change to job titles, job roles or the day to day work of the workforce, there would be no consequential change to the terms and conditions of employment for staff, who would therefore be able to claim any expenses in the normal way in line with current conditions and guidance.

Members raised the issue of domestic violence which meant that home working may not be a safe option and the issue of stress. It was confirmed that no one would be forced to work from home. Every member of staff would have a discussion with their line manager about their future working arrangements and it was confirmed that both these issues would be included in the script provided to line managers. With regard to stress, three staff surveys conducted in the last 18 months indicated that staff were mostly very positive with their working arrangements.

The issue of elected members was also raised. Cabinet was advised that equipment had been purchased to enable hybrid meetings to take place in the Chamber in County Hall, however, such was the demand it could not be installed until early in January 2022. The Leader asked that consideration be given to enabling members to meet colleagues and officers earlier than that for informal meetings. She thanked all staff who had continued to deliver services during the pandemic whether working from home or on the front line.

RESOLVED to approve the rollout of New Ways of Working and the steps to embed this in each service, as laid out in this report. In summary, from October 2021 onwards, each service will envision and shape how New Ways of Working can best support future service delivery and will transition at a timing and pace that best underpins their plans.

County Councillor M R Harris (Chair)