QUESTIONS AT ANY TIME TO CABINET PORTFOLIO HOLDERS

Response by the Cabinet Members:

Thank you for seeking assurance that the strategic direction of Social Services remains on firm foundations following the departures of the Director of Social Services and the Heads of Children's Services and of Commissioning and Partnerships in recent weeks. We write to acknowledge your concern, and to provide that assurance.

Lynette Lovell has been appointed to oversee Children's Services, on an interim basis alongside her statutory role as Director of Education, and Nina Davies has been appointed as Interim Director of Social Services and Housing. Both appointments were made before the departure of the previous Director to ensure continuity of leadership for the services. The interim arrangements will be reviewed after six months before permanent arrangements are put in place.

Since the establishment of the interim arrangements at Director level, the Head of Children's Services and the Head of Commissioning Services have been offered, and have accepted, roles in other Local Authorities in Wales.

Please be assured that leadership teams across Powys Social Services remain strong. Senior managers are highly skilled and highly capable. The consistent improvements set out in the recent Care Inspectorate Wales report, and continued since the inspection, have been a team achievement.

A recruitment process to appoint an internal interim Head of Children's Services has been completed and Sharon Powell has been appointed, and a similar process to cover the responsibilities of the Head of Commissioning & Partnerships will be completed very early in September. These timescales will mean that there is a period of handover for the successful candidates before their predecessors leave. Permanent arrangements will be finalised in due course following appropriate HR and recruitment procedures.

We thank the departing officers for their work for Powys and wish them well in their new roles.