

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE CABINET HELD AT COUNTY HALL AND ON ZOOM ON TUESDAY, 4 MARCH 2025

PRESENT

County Councillor J Gibson-Watt (Chair)

County Councillors J Berriman, J Charlton, R Church, S C Davies, M J Dorrance, P Roberts, D Selby and D A Thomas

In attendance: County Councillors AW Davies, B Davies and E Vaughan

1.	APOLOGIES
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Apologies for absence were received from County Councillors Sian Cox, Adam Kennerley (Cabinet Assistant) and Ange Williams Joint Leader of the Independent Group.

2.	MINUTES
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The Chair was authorised to sign the minutes of the meeting held on 18th February and reconvened on 21st February as a correct record. The Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for a Fairer Powys and the Cabinet Member for a Learning Powys responded to a challenge from Councillor Aled Davies on the accuracy of the minutes saying they were content that they were an accurate record.

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

4.	WELSH LANGUAGE FIVE YEAR PROMOTION STRATEGY 2025-2030
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Cabinet considered the Welsh Language Five Year Promotion Strategy 2025 – 2030.

The Strategy has three objectives to promote the Welsh language. Each objective has actions and measures which will enable progress to be monitored. The objectives are:

- Increase the number of children and young people in Powys who speak Welsh confidently
- Increase the use of Welsh in our internal work
- Encourage businesses, the voluntary sector, and community organisations in Powys to use Welsh in their customer service offering.

The Welsh Language Governance Panel would monitor progress in their quarterly meetings and the Cabinet Member for Future Generations thanked the

Panel for their work on the strategy. Cabinet Members and the Chair of the Welsh Language Governance Panel, County Councillor Elwyn Vaughan, welcomed the ambition of the Strategy which would complement the Council's Welsh in Education Strategic Plan (WESP).

RESOLVED to approve the draft Welsh Language Promotion Strategy for 2025-2030.

5.	RETAIL, LEISURE AND HOSPITALITY RATES RELIEF SCHEME IN WALES 2025-26
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Cabinet considered adoption of a Business Rates Retail, Leisure and Hospitality Rates Relief scheme for financial year 2025-26, to support Powys businesses with the ongoing economic pressures faced, by granting rate relief and funded by Welsh Government. The report detailed how the scheme would operate. Cabinet was advised of the proactive steps that would be taken to make businesses aware of the scheme.

RESOLVED

- 1. That a Business Rates Retail, Leisure and Hospitality Rates Relief scheme 2025-26 be established in accordance with section 3 of the report.**
- 2. Applications for Business Rates retail, leisure, and hospitality rates relief 2025-26 under the scheme referred to above shall be delegated to and determined by the Portfolio holder for Finance in consultation with the Head of Finance.**

6.	FINANCIAL FORECAST FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31ST MARCH 2025 (AS AT 31ST DECEMBER 2024)
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Cabinet received a report on the projected revenue budget outturn for the 2024-25 financial year, based on the full year forecasts as at 31st December 2024. The projected outturn position was forecast to be an underspend of £894k. This was an improvement of £3.8 million from Quarter 2 due to the actions taken in response to the forecast at quarter 2 and additional funding received from Welsh Government. 52.0% (£6.7 million) of the agreed cost reductions had been delivered by the end of the third quarter and a further 24.9% or £3.2 million was assured of delivery by services within the 2024-25 financial year. 23.1% (£3.0 million) were described as unachieved and were at risk of delivery in this year. Services were being challenged as to the reasons for the changes in positions for some savings proposals and would be required to consider mitigating action to ensure that they can deliver within the budget allocated.

The report also contained requests for virements requiring Cabinet or Council approval.

RESOLVED

1. That Cabinet note the current budget position and the projected full year forecast to the end of March 2024.
2. That the grants set out in section 5.1 of the report and Appendix C are noted.
3. That the virements set out in section 5.2 of the report are approved and those in 5.3 recommended for approval by Council.

7.	TROCHI WORKING GROUP RECOMMENDATIONS
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County Councillor Bryn Davies presented the recommendations of the Trochi Working Group. He explained that the Working Group had spent a year looking into Trochi arrangements in the county for a year and speaking to teachers and specialists. The Working Group recommended that there should be accessible late immersion centres (trochi hwyr) to ensure the right to access Welsh language education in all parts of Powys and that there was funding for transitional immersion (trochi pontio) on a permanent basis that is not dependent on temporary grants from the Welsh Government.

The Cabinet Member for a Learning Powys thanked Councillor Davies and the Working Group for their work which had highlighted the significant investment needed to meet the aspirations of the WESP. Officers would be asked to bring back a costed paper to Cabinet with proposals.

8.	CAPITAL FORECAST 2024-25, AS AT 31ST DECEMBER 2024
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Cabinet received an update on the financial position of the Council's capital programme for 2024/25 as at 31st December 2024.

The revised programme at the 31st December 2024 was budgeted at £86.44 million following the successful award of additional grants and the reprofiling of budgets between financial years. Actual spend amounted to £46.86 million, representing 54% of the total budget. County Councillor Aled Davies, Chair of the Finance Panel, noted that the Panel had queried the low percentage of spend and he asked if the underspend in the HTR budget from projects which had not gone ahead could have been vired to other projects to maximise spend. The Chief Officer – Place agreed to look into this.

The report also contained two recommendations for budget virements in respect of Ffrwdgrech Depot and Welshpool C in W, installation of Solar Photo Voltaic and Battery Storage and works required at Rhayader Waste Transfer Station to ensure it can continue to be compliant with revised guidance issued by NRW (Natural Resources Wales). The Cabinet Member for a Greener Powys welcomed these installations.

RESOLVED

1. That the contents of this report are noted.
2. That the virements set out in section 5 of the report is approved.

9. CHARTER FOR FAMILIES BEREAVED THROUGH PUBLIC TRAGEDY
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Cabinet was asked to consider adopting the Charter for Families Bereaved Through Public Tragedy. The Cabinet Member for a Safer Powys explained that the Charter would provide a framework to support bereaved families and the community in the aftermath of any situation where the response of the Council to an incident was likely to have a significant impact on the confidence of an individual, their family, and/or community.

RESOLVED that Cabinet adopt the Charter and its principles on behalf of Powys County Council as set out in Annex A to the report, and that these principles are followed wherever the response of Powys County Council to an incident is likely to have a significant impact of the confidence of an individual, their family, and/or community.

This would enable the Council to meet the needs and expectations of Powys residents and communities, should we face a significant public disaster or major incident in the future.

10. CORPORATE SAFEGUARDING BOARD ACTIVITY REPORT

Cabinet considered the Corporate Safeguarding Board activity report. The report highlighted the follow up inspection by Audit Wales of the Council's Safeguarding arrangements and the Council's response to their recommendations. The report also gave an update on the Joint Inspectorate Review of Child Protection Arrangements and the action plan put in place following the inspection.

11. DELEGATED DECISIONS TAKEN SINCE THE LAST MEETING

Cabinet noted delegated decisions taken by Portfolio Holders.

12. FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME

Cabinet noted the forward work programme.

County Councillor J Gibson-Watt (Chair)