

**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE CABINET HELD ON ZOOM ON MONDAY,  
30 SEPTEMBER 2024**

**PRESENT**

County Councillor J Gibson-Watt (Chair)

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

In attendance: County Councillors J Brignell-Thorp (Cabinet Assistant), A Kennerley (Cabinet Assistant), Beverley Baynham, Aled Davies, Angela Davies and Gwynfor Thomas.

<b>1. APOLOGIES</b>
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Apologies were received from County Councillor Jake Berriman who was chairing another meeting.

<b>2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST</b>
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There were no declarations of interest reported.

<b>3. REVISION TO THE HOME TO SCHOOL TRANSPORT POLICY</b>
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Cabinet considered the results of a consultation on proposed amendments to the Home to School Transport Policy. The amendments did not fundamentally alter the provision of school transport but aimed to clarify the wording to remove ambiguity and align with the agreed catchment maps for schools admission. The policy also aimed to address the resolution passed by Council on 13th October 2022 that the review of the Home to School Transport Policy should not only provide greater clarity on pupils' and students' entitlement to free transport but also support greater parental choice of school, provided this does not increase the total school transport budget.

The Cabinet agreed with two suggestions made by Councillor Sian Cox to the ordering of the text in the policy in section 1.1 and on page 7 of the policy to include a sentence explaining why parents could not purchase vacant seats to a school that is not their child's catchment school.

County Councillor Aled Davies speaking as Leader of the Welsh Conservative group argued that the policy did not address the resolution passed by Council to support parental choice or explain that a child could have free transport to their nearest school, if that school lies outside catchments even if outside the county.

County Councillor Angela Davies, the Chair of the Economy Residents and Communities Scrutiny Committee, presented the recommendation of the Joint Committee held on 26<sup>th</sup> September 2024. The recommendation was to delay implementation of the Home to School Transport and Schools Admissions policies to September 2025, and that the two policies be aligned and launched

simultaneously. She noted that there had been a very poor response to the consultation due to the consultation having taken place over the school summer holidays.

County Councillor Gwynfor Thomas speaking as the Chair of the Learning and Skills Scrutiny Committee expressed his disappointment that the Committee had not been given an opportunity to scrutinise the policy earlier and he challenged how the consultation had been carried out.

The Leader of the opposition County Councillor Beverley Baynham called for a delay in implementation to allow for a better consultation process.

The Head of Legal and Monitoring Officer explained that the guidance from Welsh government clearly indicated that it was for the Council to set what it considers to be the nearest suitable school and therefore the policy was compliant with the legislation and the guidance. He advised the Cabinet that in his opinion the Gunning principles in respect of consultations had been followed.

The Cabinet member for a Greener Powys noted the comments made by the Chairs of the Scrutiny Committees and the political group leaders. She also noted the comments made by the Cabinet Assistant for Climate Change and the Cabinet Member for the Nature Emergency in respect of the Net Zero target for 2030 and on whether the proposals were carbon neutral. She felt that the updated policy was clearer and easier to read, and she confirmed that it would be regularly reviewed and monitored. She was therefore content to move the recommendation in the report which was seconded by County Councillor Pete Roberts.

**RESOLVED to approve the proposed amendments to the policy, facilitating its implementation for the 2025/26 academic year in accordance with the catchment maps developed by School Service. This alignment will enhance parents' comprehension by providing them with concurrent access to both the transport policy and the catchment maps.**

**County Councillor J Gibson-Watt (Chair)**