

CYNGOR SIR POWYS COUNTY COUNCIL.

CABINET EXECUTIVE

15th December 2015

**REPORT AUTHOR: County Councillor Arwel Jones
Portfolio Holder for Education**

SUBJECT: Schools Reorganisation Policy 2015

REPORT FOR: Decision

Summary

This report presents a new Schools Reorganisation Policy, which, if approved, will apply to all schools maintained by Powys County Council, and will be effective from 31st December 2015. It replaces all previous policies for the reorganisation of schools held by the Council, and will be applied to any plans to review or reorganise schools that are commenced from this date.

Background

On the 11th November 2014, Cabinet approved a Powys School Transformation Policy (“STP”), which set out the Council’s vision and process for the transformation of primary and secondary schools in the county. This Policy has underpinned all school reviews that have been carried out since the 11th November 2014.

However, it is necessary to introduce a new policy for the reorganisation of schools that allows more flexibility within the review process and a stronger alignment with the Welsh Government’s Schools Organisation Code.

Proposal

That Cabinet approves the School Reorganisation Policy 2015 for implementation from the 31st December 2015.

The Policy includes:

- The Vision for Schools in Powys
- Background and Context
- The Process for Reviewing Schools
- Potential Options for Reorganisation

The main change from the previous Policy is that all decisions during the review stage will be the responsibility of the Schools Service Senior Management Team in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Education.

This replaces the School Organisation Review Panel (SORP) under the current STP, and removes an unnecessary level of bureaucracy within the process.

The Policy will apply to all schools maintained by the Council, in accordance with the Schools Standards and Organisation (Wales) Act 2013.

There is more flexibility in the new Policy to define the format of reviews and the criteria for review has been amended to ensure closer alignment with the Welsh Government's School Organisation Code.

Officers will also be developing a new programme management structure to ensure that the Schools Transformation Programme has robust governance with appropriate programme management procedures.

One Powys Plan

'Transforming Learning and Skills' is a key priority within the One Powys Plan, and the Authority's aim is to ensure that 'all children and young people are supported to achieve their potential'. The plan states that the Authority needs to 'reorganise schools (primary, secondary and post 16) to ensure affordability, sustainability and appropriate leadership capacity'.

Options Considered/Available

The other option considered was to continue with the School Transformation Policy 2014.

Preferred Choice and Reasons

The preferred choice is to introduce a new policy which provides more flexibility when undertaking school reorganisation reviews.

Sustainability and Environmental Issues/Equalities/Crime and Disorder,/Welsh Language/Other Policies etc

Children and Young People's Impact Statement - Safeguarding and Wellbeing

The authority's Schools Transformation Programme is intended to improve educational outcomes for children and young people. This aligns with the aspiration to improve safeguarding and well-being for children and young people.

Local Member(s)

This Policy applies to all members within the Council.

Other Front Line Services

Support Services (Legal, Finance, Corporate Property, HR, ICT, Business Services)

Legal: There has been legal input during the formulation of the new policy which streamlines the process and aligns it more closely with Welsh Government's School Organisation Code.

Corporate Finance: "The professional Lead for Finance comments that the changes proposed relate to the Governance arrangements and processes for School Reorganisation and these they do not have any financial implications."

Local Service Board/Partnerships/Stakeholders etc

Corporate Communications

The report is of public interest and requires use of news release and social media to publicise the decision

Statutory Officers

The Solicitor to the Council (Monitoring Officer) has commented as follows: " I note the legal comment and have nothing to add to the report."

The Strategic Director Resources (S151 Officer) notes the comments made by Finance.

Members' Interests

The Monitoring Officer is not aware of any specific interests that may arise in relation to this report. If Members have an interest they should declare it at the start of the meeting and complete the relevant notification form.

Recommendation:	Reason for Recommendation:
To approve the Schools Reorganisation Policy 2015 for implementation from 31st December 2015	To provide a robust but flexible framework when undertaking school reorganisation reviews.

Relevant Policy (ies):	School Transformation Policy		
Within Policy:	Y	Within Budget:	Y

Relevant Local Member(s):	All Members
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Person(s) To Implement Decision:	Marianne Evans, Senior Manager Schools Transformation
Date By When Decision To Be Implemented:	31 st December 2015

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Background Papers used to prepare Report:

CABINET REPORT TEMPLATE VERSION 3