MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE COUNTY COUNCIL HELD AT COUNCIL CHAMBER - COUNTY HALL, LLANDRINDOD WELLS ON FRIDAY, 20 DECEMBER 2019

PRESENT
County Councillor B Baynham (Chair)

County Councillors MC Alexander, M Barnes, J Berriman, G Breeze, J Charlton, K W Curry, A W Davies, B Davies, D E Davies, P Davies, M J Dorrance, E Durrant, D O Evans, J Evans, L George, M R Harris, S M Hayes, H Hulme, A Jenner, E A Jones, E Jones, J R Jones, E M Jones, D Jones-Poston, F H Jump, H Lewis, K Lewis, MC Mackenzie, I McIntosh, S McNicholas, DW Meredith, G Morgan, R Powell, WD Powell, D R Price, P C Pritchard, J Pugh, G W Ratcliffe, L Rijnenberg, L Roberts, P Roberts, K M Roberts-Jones, D Selby, K S Silk, L Skilton, D A Thomas, R G Thomas, T J Van-Rees, E Vaughan, M Weale, A Williams, G I S Williams, D H Williams, J M Williams and R Williams

On behalf of the Council the Chair expressed condolences to the families of two long-serving members of staff, Jill Ramwell and Paul Jones, who had died recently.

The chair welcomed County Councillors Jake Berriman, Liz Rijnenberg and Les Skilton to their first Council meeting.

1. APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from County Councillors L V Corfield, S C Davies, L Fitzpatrick, J Gibson-Watt, D R Jones, G Jones, M J Jones, K Laurie-Parry, P E Lewis, C Mills, JG Morris, D Rowlands, J Wilkinson, J Williams and S L Williams.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest reported.

3. LADYWELL GREEN INFANTS SCHOOL AND HAFREN C.P. JUNIOR SCHOOL

The Head of Legal and Democratic Services explained that the decision to close Ladywell Green Infants School and Hafren C.P. Junior School and establish a new English-medium primary school for pupils aged 4-11 on the current sites of would be made by the Cabinet taking into account any comments made by Council.

Council received details of the consultation that had been carried out from 26th September to 7th November. Of 16 responses received 10 had been in favour of the proposal. The Portfolio Holder for Education and the Senior Manager – Education Services answered questions from Members.

Councillor Phil Pritchard sought an assurance that once a decision had been made, the new school would not be given away to any clubs as had happened in Welshpool. It was confirmed that the proposal was to establish a new school.

Councillor Hywel Lewis asked for clarification of the term all-through school and was advised that in this case it meant the merger of an infants school and a junior CP school to form a new 4-11 English-medium primary school.

Councillor David Selby was happy with the consultation process and with the proposal. He sought an assurance that there would be no slippage and that the end result would be a new school. The Portfolio Holder confirmed this noting that the council would be able to access 21st century schools funding.

Councillor Stephen Hayes expressed concern that there was no recognition in the report that that the schools were sited in the middle of the campus for the North Powys Wellbeing Project. He referred to the Cabinet meeting of 17th September 2019 when an undertaking had been given that any future decision about a new school building would be brought back to Cabinet for consideration as part of the wider discussion about the site and the North Powys Wellbeing Project. He noted that the Council was not the only organisation involved in the Project and that partners might be concerned if the council was seen to be taking decisions in isolation. The Portfolio Holder advised that the report dealt only with the amalgamation of the two schools and confirmed that there would need to be a wider discussion on the development of the site. The report to be considered by Cabinet would be amended to reflect this point. It was also confirmed that the schools service was working closely with the project team and that plans for the development of the site would require Cabinet approval.

Councillor Gareth Ratcliffe asked if all of the objections raised in the consultation had been addressed and was advised that all of the issues had been responded to and that there would be the opportunity for further objections during the next stage of the process.

Councillor Lucy Roberts sought an assurance that this proposal would not limit further reorganisation opportunities and the Portfolio Holder confirmed that it would not.

Councillor Elwyn Vaughan advised that he had submitted a motion for the next meeting which would end the requirement for Council to meet and consider school reorganisation proposals before they were considered by Cabinet. He was supported in this by Councillor Michael Williams.

Statement by the Leader

The Leader thanked all of the staff who had been involved in the General Election and in particular the election team led by Sandra Matthews.

County Councillor B Baynham (Chair)