

**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE CABINET HELD AT BY TEAMS ON
WEDNESDAY, 23 DECEMBER 2020**

PRESENT

County Councillor M R Harris (Chair)

County Councillors MC Alexander, G Breeze, A W Davies, P Davies, H Hulme,
R Powell and I McIntosh

In attendance: County Councillors K Laurie-Parry and R Williams

1. APOLOGIES

There were no apologies for absence.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

County Councillor Iain McIntosh declared a personal non-prejudicial interest as a governor of Cradoc CP School. He would be speaking in the debate as a local member not as a Cabinet member and would not be voting. County Councillor Roger Williams declared a personal non-prejudicial interest as a governor of Mount Street Junior School.

3. MOUNT STREET INFANT SCHOOL, MOUNT STREET JUNIOR SCHOOL AND CRADOC CP SCHOOL - PROPOSAL

Cabinet was asked to give approval to commence the statutory process in respect of a reconfiguration of schools in the Brecon catchment affecting Mount Street Infant School, Mount Street Junior School and Cradoc CP School as detailed in the report.

The Leader acknowledged the correspondence received by the Cabinet from parents, governors and councillors and the comments of County Councillors Liz Rijnenberg, Matthew Dorrance and David Meredith set out in the report.

County Councillor Iain McIntosh speaking as the local member asked the Cabinet not to support the proposal saying that it did not have the support of the community and arguing that a new school should be built on the site. He cited concerns over whether children moving to a new school would qualify for free school transport and questioned whether the proposals took into account Welsh Government guidelines on protecting rural schools. He also questioned the school capacity figure as it included pupils in temporary portacabins.

The Portfolio Holder for Education and Property explained that the Cabinet was looking for a sustainable future for education in Powys. He acknowledged that whilst it would be possible to build on the Cradoc site, there would be disruption. With respect to the question of school transport, the Portfolio Holder noted that the school transport policy was not set in stone and that pupils who had started in a school were normally protected. The Portfolio Holder for Finance and

Transport said it was important for all the information on travel times to come out in the consultation. He also questioned whether a new build could be justified given that half of the pupils came from outside the school catchment.

County Councillor Roger Williams, the local member for Felinfach Ward, also supported building a new school on the Cradoc school site noting that in recent years new schools had been built at other sites in recent years. The Portfolio Holder for Education and Property explained that these decisions had been taken some time ago.

County Councillor Karen Laurie-Parry, the local member for the Bronllys ward, noted that the newly built Brecon High School was operating at only half capacity and asked if any consideration had been given to moving Mount Street Infant School and Mount Street Junior School into the High School. The Portfolio Holder for Education and Property explained that the new school had been modelled as a high school which was a very different learning environment to a primary school.

Responses to the statutory consultation would be taken into consideration and evaluated by officers who would come back to the Cabinet with either the same or amended proposals. As part of the consultation a community impact assessment would be published and would be updated to take account of the responses in the consultation. It was further noted that as there was a presumption against the closure of rural schools, there would have to be a re-assessment of the proposals following the consultation. There would have to be sound reasons to continue with them or any other proposals arising from the consultation.

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RESOLVED that Cabinet approves the statutory process commences on the following proposal:

Phase 1

- **To amalgamate Mount Street Infants School, Mount Street Juniors School and Cradoc C.P. School to create a new primary school that would operate from the current three sites**
- **The target date for establishing the new primary school is September 2022.**

Phase 2

- **To make a regulated alteration to transfer the school to a new school building on a new site in Brecon.**

County Councillor M R Harris (Chair)