

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE CABINET HELD BY TEAMS ON THURSDAY, 18 MARCH 2021

PRESENT

County Councillor M R Harris (Chair)

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

1.	APOLOGIES
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Apologies for absence had been received from the Corporate Director (Adult and Children's Services) and from County Councillor Gwynfor Thomas who had hoped to speak as local member on item 4 Llangedwyn CiW Primary School, Llanfechain CiW Primary School and Llansantffraid CiW Primary School - Proposal Paper.

2.	MINUTES
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The Leader was authorised to sign the minutes of the meeting held on 2nd March 2021 as a correct record.

3.	DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST
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County Councillor Myfanwy Alexander declared a personal and prejudicial interest in item 4 Llangedwyn CiW Primary School, Llanfechain CiW Primary School and Llansantffraid CiW Primary School - Proposal Paper. Councillor Alexander left the meeting while the report was being considered.

4.	LLANGEDWYN CIW PRIMARY SCHOOL, LLANFECHAIN CIW PRIMARY SCHOOL AND LLANSANTFFRAID CIW PRIMARY SCHOOL - PROPOSAL PAPER
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Cabinet was asked to give approval to commence the statutory process on the following proposals:

- To close Llangedwyn C. in W. School from the 31st August 2023 with pupils to transfer to their nearest alternative schools
- To close Llanfechain C. in W. School from the 31st August 2023 with pupils to transfer to their nearest alternative schools
- To make a regulated alteration to increase the capacity of Llansantffraid C. in W. School by 90 places from 1st September 2023, following completion of the construction project at Llansantffraid C. in W. School.

Approval was also sought:

- To develop a Business Justification Case (BJC) for submission to Welsh Government to develop an extension to Llansantffraid C. in W. School
- To release £50,000 from the 21st Century Schools 'Other Projects' line in the capital programme, to support the initial feasibility and design stages of the new extension at Llansantffraid C. in W. school.

The Leader confirmed that letters and emails had been received and had been read by the Cabinet.

Comments from County Councillor Gwynfor Thomas, the local Member for Llanfechain C. in W. and Llansantffraid C. in W. Schools were read out. Councillor Thomas was supportive of the proposal to increase the size of Llansantffraid C. in W. School but asked the Cabinet to give careful consideration to the proposals to close Llanfechain and Llangedwyn Schools which had benefited from federation, with pupil numbers growing at Llanfechain.

County Councillor Aled Davies speaking as the local member for Llangedwyn C. in W. expressed his extreme disappointment that the school had only learned that the report was coming to Cabinet through a press release. Due to the low pupil numbers he was content for the proposals to go to consultation and for any inaccuracies in the report to be drawn out in the consultation process. He asked if the expansion of Llansantffraid was not achievable whether the whole proposal would fall. He remained concerned over the loss of children across the border out of the Welsh education scheme.

The Portfolio Holder and officers apologised for the failure to notify the Chairs of Governors before the press release was issued. It was confirmed that a larger extension was required at Llansantffraid to secure additional Church in Wales places for pupils should Llanfechain and Llangedwyn schools close. This had also been raised by the Diocese and officers put on record their thanks for the co-operation of the Diocese. A feasibility study would take place over the next three months which would provide more detail about the building works required at Llansantffraid. At that point a business justification case would be prepared for submission to Welsh Government to secure the funding required. Only after that was it proposed to go out to consultation.

RESOLVED

1. that Cabinet approves commencing the statutory process on the following proposals:

- **To close Llangedwyn C. in W. School from the 31st August 2023 with pupils to transfer to their nearest alternative school;**
- **To close Llanfechain C. in W. School from the 31st August 2023 with pupils to transfer to their nearest alternative school;**
- **To make a regulated alteration to increase the capacity of Llansantffraid C. in W. School by 90 places from 1st September 2023, following completion of the construction project at Llansantffraid C. in W. School.**

2. That officers proceed with the development of a Business Justification Case (BJC) for submission to Welsh Government to develop an extension to Llansantffraid C. in W. School
3. That Cabinet approves the release of £50,000 from the 21st Century Schools 'Other Projects' line in the capital programme, to support the initial feasibility and design stages of the new extension at Llansantffraid C. in W. School.

County Councillor Alexander returned to the meeting.

4.	FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME
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Cabinet noted details of the forward work programme.

5.	EXEMPT ITEMS
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RESOLVED to exclude the public for the following item of business on the grounds that there would be disclosure to them of exempt information under category 3 of The Local Authorities (Access to Information) (Variation) (Wales) Order 2007).

County Councillor Graham Breeze left to attend another meeting.

6.	GLOBAL CENTRE OF RAIL EXCELLENCE
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Cabinet received an update on the Global Centre of Rail Excellence project.

RESOLVED

1. that the Cabinet confirms that it is prepared to accept the repayable finance offer expected to be made by Welsh Government to progress the GCRE project.
2. The Cabinet authorises the Corporate Director (Economy and Environment) and the Head of Finance (Section 151 Officer) to accept the funding agreement as set out in Appendix A, with those officers also having delegated authority to accept minor amendments to the offer letter.
3. This funding will be held within our accounts in accordance with the requirements of the award letter from Welsh Government and established local authority accounting practice.
4. A further report will be presented to Cabinet and Full Council in due course. Subject to achieving satisfactory

due diligence on the project, the funding will be invested to enable it to successfully proceed.

County Councillor M R Harris (Chair)