

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE CABINET HELD AT COUNTY HALL AND ON ZOOM ON TUESDAY, 7 MAY 2024

PRESENT

County Councillor J Gibson-Watt (Chair)

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

In attendance: County Councillors J Brignell-Thorp, A Kennerley, (Cabinet Assistants), A Davies, J Jones and G Thomas.

1.	APOLOGIES
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Apologies for absence were received from County Councillors J Berriman and S Cox.

2.	MINUTES
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The Chair was authorised to sign the minutes of the last meeting held on 19th March 2024 as a correct record.

3.	DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST
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There were no declarations of interest reported.

4.	NEW SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITIES FOR LEARNING (CAPITAL FUNDING) STRATEGIC OUTLINE PROGRAMME
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Cabinet was asked to approve the submission of a new Strategic Outline Programme (SOP) to the Welsh Government's Sustainable Communities for Learning's nine-year rolling programme. This replaced the existing Band B programme. Years 1, 2 and 3 of the programme were projects expected to reach full business case within 3 years. Years 4,5 and 6 were projects being developed and going through statutory consultation. Years 7, 8 and 9 were pipeline projects.

Delivery partners would not be issued with a 'funding envelope'. Instead, an 'in-principle' agreement of the project pipeline would be approved, recognising the fluctuating nature of the current market. Intervention rates remained the same as for Band B.

It was proposed that the SOP would deliver projects currently in design stage and any school with condition D categorisation, with the addition of projects that will deliver the aspirations of the WESP plus support for further reorganisation of primary, secondary and post-16 provision as required, in line with the outcomes of Wave 2 and 3 of the Transforming Education Programme. Cabinet noted that it would play a key part in the successful delivery of the Council's Transforming Education Strategy 2022-32 which will contribute to the overall vision for a sustainable Powys.

County Councillor Gwynfor Thomas, Chair of the Learning and Skills Scrutiny Committee expanded on the observations and recommendations made by the

Committee. The Committee welcomed the aspirations of the programme but was unconvinced that programme linked with the Sustainable Powys project, the Transformation policy and the WESP. A formal response would be provided to the Committee's recommendations.

Officers were asked to provide more detail to capture the benefits of active travel in the submission. The Chair of the Learning and Skills Scrutiny Committee and the Finance Panel asked about the costs of the programme, noting that it was a reduction on what had previously been identified and were advised that the costs reflected the current position on Band B projects.

RESOLVED that the Strategic Outline Programme is approved for submission to Welsh Government.

5.	YSGOL CALON Y DDERWEN AND TROWEN C.P. SCHOOL - CONSULTATION REPORT
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Cabinet considered the results of the consultation on the following proposal:

Phase 1: Close Treowen C.P. School from 31 August 2025 and extend Ysgol Calon y Dderwen to include the former Treowen C.P. School site from 1st September 2025

Phase 2: Ysgol Calon y Dderwen to move to a new building located on the existing Ysgol Calon y Dderwen site during 2026/27, and the Treowen site closes.

The comments received during the consultation and the Council's responses were set out in an appendix to the report. Based on the findings of the consultation, the advice of officers was that the Council should proceed with the proposals in respect of Ysgol Calon y Dderwen and Treowen C.P. School by publishing a Statutory Notice for the reasons set out in the report.

County Councillor Joy Jones spoke as the local member to call on the Cabinet not to close Treowen CP School. She cited a lack of support for the proposal from the community and expressed concern that an important asset was being lost.

County Councillor Adam Kennerley spoke as a Newtown member. Whilst he felt that this was a good solution for those attending the two schools, his preferred option for Newtown as a whole was a single new primary school on the fields of the High School.

In response to Councillor Joy Jones' point about the Treowen CP School building, Cabinet was advised that consideration would be given to what services could be based in the building if it ceased to be a school. The school building would be retained for two years whilst a new school building was built. In response to Councillor Kennerley's suggestion, officers noted that the development was tied in with the development of the North Powys Well Being Hub so there were constraints on alternative options. It was also confirmed that there were no plans to change the name of the school.

Having considered the comments and the advice of officers Cabinet

RESOLVED

1. To receive the Consultation Report in respect of the proposal for Ysgol Calon y Dderwen and Treowen C.P. School.
2. To approve the publication of a statutory notice proposing the following:

Phase 1:

- To close Treowen C.P. School from 31 August 2025 and extend Ysgol Calon y Dderwen to include the former Treowen C.P. School site from 1st September 2025.

Phase 2:

- Ysgol Calon y Dderwen to move to a new building located on the existing Ysgol Calon y Dderwen site during 2026/27, and the Treowen site closes.

6.	FINANCIAL FORECAST FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31ST MARCH 2024 (AS AT 29TH FEBRUARY 2024)
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Cabinet considered the forecast revenue budget outturn for the 2023-24 financial year, based on the full year forecasts as at 29th February 2024. The projected outturn position was forecast to be an underspend of £1.7 million.

Cost reductions of £16.5 million were approved as part of the Council's budget for 2023-24 and the delivery of these is required to achieve a balanced budget this year. In addition, undelivered savings from 2022-23 have been rolled forward totalling £0.9 million, these also need to be delivered. 77% or £13.4 million savings had been delivered as at 29 February 2024, with a further 16% (£2.7 million) assured of delivery by services. £1.3 million (8%) were unachieved and unlikely to be delivered in the financial year.

The report detailed grants received and virements required.

RESOLVED

1. That Cabinet note the current budget position and the projected full year forecast to the end of March 2024.
2. The virements set out in section 5.3 of the report are approved, this is to comply with the virement rules for budget movements as set out in the financial regulations.

7.	CAPITAL FORECAST 2023-24, AS AT 29TH FEBRUARY 2024
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Cabinet received an update on the financial position of the Council's capital programme for 2023/24 as at 29th February 2024. The revised programme at the

29th February 2024 was budgeted at £79.34 million following the successful award of additional grants and the reprofiling of budgets between financial years. Actual spend amounted to £49.88 million, representing 63% of the total budget. Programmes would be reprofiled so spend would take place in the current financial year.

It was noted that the capital programme was a key enabler in how the Council contributed to addressing both the Climate Emergency and Nature Emergency. Approximately £33.00 million of the 2023/24 Capital Schemes and at least £10.00 million of the HRA schemes directly contribute to climate change and nature initiatives. In response to a question from the Chair of the Finance Panel, the Cabinet Member for a Greener Powys acknowledged that the Council was not currently on track to meet the goals of Net Zero by 2030, but that it continued to work to achieve it.

8.	STRATEGIC RISK REGISTER QUARTER 3 2023/2024
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Cabinet considered the Strategic Risk Register report for Quarter 3 of 2023/24. Digital Services had requested the escalation of a risk to the Strategic Risk Register, ICT0067: If we receive and act upon a phishing email THEN there is a risk that our information and systems will be vulnerable to a cyber-attack. Rating score 16 (risk profile of 'likely' and 'major').

RESOLVED that Cabinet notes the current Strategic Risk Register and is satisfied with progress against mitigating actions for quarter 3, and approves the escalation of ICT0067.

9.	RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE SCRUTINY HOWPS WORKING GROUPS
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Cabinner received and considered the observations of the Economy Residents and Communities Working Group and the Governance and Audit Committee Working Group on Heart of Wales Property Services (HoWPS). There was one recommendation which the Cabinet accepted and would respond formally to.

10.	CORPORATE SAFEGUARDING BOARD ACTIVITY REPORT
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Cabinet received a report on the activities of the Corporate Safeguarding Board.

11.	DELEGATED DECISIONS TAKEN SINCE THE LAST MEETING
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Cabinet noted the delegated decisions taken by portfolio holders since the last meeting.

12.	FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME
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Cabinet received details of the forward work programme.

13.	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 1 of The Local Authorities (Access to Information) (Variation) (Wales) Order 2007).

14.	NOT FOR PROFIT IN CHILDREN'S CARE - FOSTERING FRAMEWORK BUSINESS CASE
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Cabinet considered a business case for the development and implementation of a not-for-profit fostering framework. The business case for investment set out a number of priority areas for investment which could significantly increase the in-house fostering capacity. It was proposed to use the Council's Spend to Save reserve to fund the proposal with savings arising from the proposal being used to repay the reserve. Once the reserve was repaid there would be an annual saving in the service.

The Director of Social Services and Wellbeing was asked to challenge the Home Office on funding Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children placed in the County.

RESOLVED

- 1. That Cabinet consider and approve the business case for the development and implementation of the Not-for-Profit Fostering Framework (Appendix A).**
- 2. That in the 2024/25 financial year a virement of £620,385 to support the implementation of the Business Case is recommended from the Spend to Save Reserve for approval by Cabinet.**
- 3. That the Spend to Save Reserve is reimbursed from the savings delivered in the following two years.**
- 4. That following the reimbursement of the original investment made, the ongoing annual saving is included in the Councils Finance Resource Model.**
- 5. Proposed implementation date 1st July 2024.**

County Councillor J Gibson-Watt (Chair)