

## **CYNGOR SIR POWYS COUNTY COUNCIL**

**County Council  
24<sup>th</sup> January 2019**

**REPORT AUTHOR:** County Councillor Myfanwy Alexander, Portfolio Holder for Learning and Welsh Language

**SUBJECT:** Question from County Councillor Jackie Charlton

### **BACKGROUND**

Llangattock Church in Wales Primary School has been having extensive alterations and an extension to the school. It has been ongoing since July 2018. The project has cost just over £500,000 of which £120,000 has been contributed by the Church in Wales and an Education Trust in Llangattock.

The project discussions started six years ago, the build has taken over 6 months, it was 3 months late in starting after numerous other expectations of a start date during 2017.

The works were due to finish September 2018 in time for the new school year when the promised build start date in May 2018 was agreed. This had to be extended to July because of administrative mishaps. The issues are far too numerous to go in to here and the school Governors are at present trying to work through the problems, keep the school open and ready to educate for 2019.

I was given assurances by the portfolio holder in the July 2018 County Council meeting that the work would be duly completed even though children were expected to have a late start to the term due to building works. This had to be negotiated with parents and the education department. Nursery children have been taught in the Community Hall adjacent to the school since last September as their new build extension was not completed. On the 8 January 2019 it was still not ready.

The biggest issue for Llangattock Governors is the lack of accountability, no line of responsibility and shambolic project management with no-one knowing who takes on the role of these important tasks. During the build the building workforce has had full site access through the school, there have been days when the school has had to remain closed and days when the school was closed due to health and safety risks at short notice. The Head Teacher is there to run the school but in the light of poor project management has been expected to manage some aspects of the project, particularly in terms of health and safety and safeguarding, which has taken up an inordinate amount of time and put excessive pressure and stress on all members of the school community.

**This project has been a shambles from beginning to end and no one is taking responsibility. There could be long term implications for Powys County Council partnerships with builders and contractors on school premises.**

## **QUESTION**

**Do you as portfolio holder if there is a clear process for project management, accountability and responsibility for joint build projects in our schools where Kier and HOWPS work in partnership with our Education Department here in Powys?**

## **Response**

I am aware that for a number of reasons, the protracted construction works have caused inconvenience and difficulties with access, disruption and noise on the school site.

The work on site has now been substantially completed and the contractor, Kier, are in the process of carrying out final minor completion works, which we anticipate being completed over the next couple of weeks.

Following a meeting held at the school on the 11<sup>th</sup> January 2019, it has been agreed for any remaining external works to be completed through Powys County Council. This is to ensure that works can be carried out with minimal further disruption to the school.

The Authority, HOWPS and Kier have robust project management systems with clear governance and accountability. However, it is wholly apparent that these systems have not been successful in managing this particular project. We will be reviewing this project to ensure that lessons are learnt, and improvements are made where required and I can only apologise for our collective performance at Llangattock, but can I also thank Mrs Kathryn Marshall, the Headteacher, for the valuable contribution that she has, unfortunately, had to make to ensure that the works are completed and the school is operational.