

CYNGOR SIR POWYS COUNTY COUNCIL

**County Council
24th January 2019**

**REPORT AUTHOR: County Councillor Rachel Powell, Portfolio Holder for
Young People and Culture**

SUBJECT: Question from County Councillor Matthew Dorrance

Will the Cabinet Member make a statement on the delivery of Flying Start in St John Ward?

Response

Members will be aware that Flying Start is a Welsh Government programme which is geographically targeted using income benefit data in order to provide enhanced support to families living in the most deprived areas of Powys. Within the county, Flying Start is currently provided in Welshpool, Newtown, Llandrindod, Brecon and Ystradgynlais.

In Brecon, the Flying Start area is within St John ward. A contract was awarded to Priory Preschool Committee to deliver Flying Start childcare from September 2016. Due to increased admissions into the school, Powys Flying Start was informed in November 2017 by the head teacher that the Governors would no longer act as 'landlord' to the Flying Start setting beyond March 2018. However, through negotiation, it was agreed that Flying Start childcare would continue to be provided at the school until December 2018 whilst alternative provision was secured.

Following the notification from Priory School, Powys' Flying Start team worked to identify alternative sites which could provide Flying Start childcare in Brecon. The service investigated whether existing premises in Brecon could be modified to deliver Flying Start childcare, but no site which satisfied all requirements was found by September 2018. The Flying Start Team also approached local childcare providers in Brecon to identify vacant spaces which could potentially be utilised. The English medium provider in Brecon confirmed that they did not want to proceed with becoming a Flying Start setting. In November 2018, the Welsh medium provider confirmed that they would be willing to provide Flying Start childcare from January 2019. This would result in a change in language from an English medium setting at Priory School to a Welsh medium provider based at Ysgol y Bannau. This was discussed with the Flying Start team in Welsh Government who did not object.

The Flying Start childcare provided by Priory Preschool was managed by a committee with the head teacher as Responsible Individual and, as such, the staff were recruited and managed by the committee. Similarly, the Welsh medium provider at Ysgol y Bannau is also a committee run setting. The local authority therefore advised Priory

Preschool Committee as the employer of the staff to investigate whether Transfer of Undertakings (Protection of Employment) (TUPE) implications would apply in this instance. The local authority also sought advice from its Legal Department and it was confirmed that TUPE implications would not apply and this information was provided to Priory Preschool Committee.

Whilst it is recognised that the timescales for the transfer from one childcare provider to the new setting have not been ideal, it is positive that Flying Start families have had no gap in childcare provision as a result of the transfer. In order to support families with the change in childcare, the Flying Start Team wrote to all eligible families to keep them informed. The letter was also followed up by a telephone conversation with each family. All families were invited to attend an informal 'coffee and cake' catch up at the new childcare venue before end of the Autumn Term. The aim of this event was to give parents an opportunity to discuss concerns or barriers to them accessing the childcare in future. The concerns and questions raised by parents have been collated and are being discussed with colleagues in Welsh Government in order to find possible solutions.

Powys' Flying Start Team is continuing to work with Priory School via a capital bid to Welsh Government to build an extension at the school to provide increased capacity to deliver Flying Start in Brecon.