

## 1. Community Information

### **Powys Road Safety update**

The Strategic Road Safety task and finish group report was published in March 2024 and was picked up by the new Cabinet Secretary for Transport, Ken Skates, following his appointment later that month. A meeting between Mr Skates and the two Powys Cabinet Members from the Road Safety group, Cllr Jackie Charlton (highways) and Cllr Richard Church (public safety) took place on 18th July. The meeting was broadly positive, and the written response setting out the Minister's fully considered position, received today, indicates openness properly to review speed limits outside of existing 20mph-restricted areas, and to implement the initiative known as PRIMES (Perceptual Rider Information for Maximising Expertise/Enjoyment) to promote road safety for motorcyclists. The written response does not answer all of the group's concerns in full and does not commit to the full range of action the group sought, and Cllrs Jackie and Richard will seek further commitments from Mr Skates.

### **Update on Review of 20 MPH default speed limit**

Further to the item in my June/July report which stated that enforcement of the 20MPH-restricted roads is not being carried out during the period of the Welsh Government review of the new default limit, and the discussion at the community council that week citing apparently contradictory advice from two representatives of Dyfed Powys Police, I sought clarity from DPP and, when DPP indicated that police decisions to enforce on roads subject to the Welsh Government review required input from the local authority, from Cllr Jackie Charlton, Cabinet Member with responsibility for highways. Differences in opinion about whether or not local authority input is required persisted, and I was advised to seek clarity from Susanne Davies, a DPP analyst with the Wales Road Casualty Reduction Partnership. Her last email stated that the police

can carry out enforcement in the new 20mph limits. As with other speed limits the locations are assessed for suitability and criteria for enforcement. All locations where we carry out enforcement must be legally enforceable, and as part of the partnership the Local Authorities are responsible for making sure all signage is correct, and if needed, traffic orders are in place. We are also working closely with the LAs to try and avoid establishing enforcement sites on roads that are likely to be reviewed.

I have sought further clarity from Ms Davies as to the precise meaning of the last sentence, because it is this matter of the relationship between DPP decisions to enforce on a given road and the county council's perception of whether the limit on that road is likely to change following the review that is causing the confusion we discussed at the community council and which I was tasked with resolving.

### **Potential brownfield sites for temporary modular accommodation for homeless families**

In common with other local authorities, Powys County Council uses privately owned bed-and-breakfast or Air B&B types of temporary accommodation for homeless households awaiting

permanent housing, and is exploring other ways by which to provide interim accommodation. One of these is 'modular accommodation', which consists of factory-built, self-contained units, approximately the size and shape of shipping containers, provided with utilities and located close to amenities such as schools and shopping centres. The containers are lined internally with insulation and panelling, windows are cut into the sides and, depending on size and configuration, partitions are added. Wiring and plumbing is installed, and kitchen and bathroom sections created. Furnishings such as beds and chairs can be installed by the provider, the occupier or by the council and given the containers' status as temporary accommodation, the latter is likely to be the case. Depending on the supplier and the cost, units can in some cases be tailored to reflect certain elements of local architectural vernacular.

The council is interested in buying or renting sites for modular accommodation, and is asking town and community councils to suggest brownfield sites in their localities which might be suitable. The type of sites which would be suitable would be:

- those where a future development such as a factory or a retail unit is planned, but for which development is not scheduled or likely to start for a few years
- within or close to a town, so that homeless households are able to have full access to services and community facilities
- connected to or close to primary utility services – energy, water and sewage.
- with access for cars, vans and pick-ups for the households and lorries and plant to deliver and unload and put into position the units.

The reason for seeking brownfield sites is that where development sites are owned by Housing Services, the council will prefer to retain them for permanent housing, which can meet both interim and longer-term housing needs. Caravan sites require planning consent for change of use and are often in very rural areas, with no services.

Please send any suggestions about potential sites, with as much information as possible, to the Housing Development Team at: [housingservices@powys.gov.uk](mailto:housingservices@powys.gov.uk)

The Head of Housing, Andy Thompson, can provide further information on request, and would be happy to attend a community council meeting should you wish to discuss the proposals further.

### **Cardboard recycling containers to be removed from community recycling sites**

The decision to remove card recycling banks was agreed by the Cabinet earlier this year. A press release and social media posts to inform communities of the upcoming change were published in July, and posters will be displayed on the containers in the weeks leading to their removal, with a view to all removals being completed by the end of September.

Community recycling sites were introduced prior to kerbside recycling collection, to enable residents to recycle materials closer to home, but now represent a duplication of service. The waste and recycling service also faces ongoing and persistent problems with card in the containers being contaminated with non-recyclable waste, and with the free recycling service at card banks being used by businesses, who are not entitled to free collection.

All household card can be recycled in the blue kerbside box. Large amounts of card can be torn into smaller pieces and compressed more easily if dampened, and additional blue boxes can be requested by households who dispose of card in volumes too high for one box, even when compressed. Larger amounts of card can also still be taken to the Household Waste Recycling Centres.

Business owners can obtain a free quote for the recycling collection service for their business by email on: [commercial.recycling@powys.gov.uk](mailto:commercial.recycling@powys.gov.uk)

And by phone on: 01597 810829

### **Sustainable Powys Update**

The principles on which the Sustainable Powys transformation process is and will continue to be based were agreed at a meeting of Cabinet on 16<sup>th</sup> July. The attached Cabinet paper provides fuller detail but a summary of the principles is as follows:

- Being open-minded, seeking innovative solutions and using all expertise available
- Remaining focused on transforming to provide better services and meet need sustainably
- Learning and adapting continuously
- Working co-productively with residents and communities in the design and delivery of services
- Taking a whole-system approach
- Adopting collaborative, place-based planning across organisations and communities

The framework proposed for place-based planning across the county is for a service 'hub' with a bigger range of local authority-provided services in the four towns with the largest populations, representing four core areas of Powys. Smaller towns and all other areas of Powys will have council services provided in a place-based way according to local need and priorities, utilising the council's own community buildings and other community buildings and spaces wherever possible and operating in partnership with key partner agencies and local community services and groups. Smaller towns can present a business case for an additional service or services and such requests will be considered on a case by case basis.

The principles contain an undertaking to adapt and develop the public transport system in Powys to ensure that all communities in Powys can access a hub within one hour by public or community transport. There is one exception to this, Ystradgynlais, where a journey on public transport to the nearest hub town of Brecon would take 65 minutes.

The plan for the next phase of engagement is being finalised over August with a view to the first in a programme of activities taking place in September. Included in these will be in-person sessions with town and community councils.

Each town and community council has been allocated a council officer, at Head of Service level or higher, as their senior council contact for Sustainable Powys. Cwmdru and District community council's allocated officer is Matt Perry, Chief Officer for Place. Matt can be contacted at:

[matthew.perry@powys.gov.uk](mailto:matthew.perry@powys.gov.uk)

Mapping of the diverse range of activity undertaken throughout Powys by town and community councils and other voluntary and community groups is ongoing. An online form for sending the county council information about such activity can be accessed here:

<https://forms.office.com/e/a2MW9bK2Un>

Sustainable Powys resources for residents are available on the Sustainable Powys dedicated pages on the public website, here: [www.powys.gov.uk/sustainablepowys](http://www.powys.gov.uk/sustainablepowys)

For further information, contact [sustainable.powys@powys.gov.uk](mailto:sustainable.powys@powys.gov.uk)

### **Consultation on proposals to revise the School Transport Policy**

The schools transport policy has been reviewed as part of the council's widescale transport review, ongoing since late 2022. The school transport service proposes to amend the policy to align the provision of free school transport with the specified catchment schools set out in the schools admission policy and the new catchment maps, consulted on in 2023 and 2024 and scheduled for implementation in 2025. The service states its primary aim in undertaking the changes as being to provide greater clarity for parents about their free school transport entitlement, by clearly aligning it with the identified catchment schools (changing from the current position, which provides free school transport to the catchment school and also to the 'nearest suitable school'). The proposed amendments to the policy also relate to free school transport provision to Welsh medium schools, and aim to provide greater clarity of wording in relation to several other aspects of the policy.

The proposed amendments represent a working draft which are now the subject of public consultation following a decision to that effect by Cabinet on 30<sup>th</sup> July.

The consultation closes on 12<sup>th</sup> September.

It can be accessed and completed via the QR code on the attached flyer, and online here: [www.haveyoursaypowys.wales/home-to-school-transport](http://www.haveyoursaypowys.wales/home-to-school-transport)

The paper proposing the changes, the draft school transport policy, other associated documents and the webcast and minutes for the cabinet meeting can be accessed via the calendar page for the Cabinet meeting on 30<sup>th</sup> July, here:

<https://powys.moderngov.co.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=137&MId=8085>

Or by following the pathway from the county council's homepage, as follows:

PCC homepage > My Council (top menu bar) > Committee Meeting Information (select 'Cabinet and Committee Meetings') > Calendar of Meetings > The relevant date and meeting in the calendar grid.

### **Growing Mid Wales partnership**

Ceredigion and Powys county councils have been working in partnership across the public, third and private sectors to create strategic economic growth for the two counties. Partners have collaborated on a range of activities under a 'Vision for Growing Mid Wales', utilising funding from both UK and Welsh Government to create jobs and growth.

Work being undertaken in Mid Wales includes:

- The Mid Wales Growth Deal: a long-term investment of £110m from UK and Welsh Governments which currently supports a Sites and Premises programme and a Digital programme, and for which nine proposed projects are currently being assessed.
- The UK Shared Prosperity Fund: a £42.4m investment in Mid Wales supporting communities and businesses to prosper and grow.
- A programme for Energy, Transport and Skills
- The development of further joint partnership working and collaboration across government and economic sectors, to better address the unique challenges of a rural economy and to utilise its strengths to optimise sustainable development and growth.

Growing Mid Wales produces a monthly newsletter. To sign up for it, email:

[growingmidwales@ceredigion.gov.uk](mailto:growingmidwales@ceredigion.gov.uk)

### **Powys Public Services Board annual report 2023/24**

Powys Public Services Board (PSB) is a statutory partnership of public bodies operating in Powys, working together with other organisations and with residents to improve wellbeing in local communities.

The PSB has a Wellbeing Plan, reviewed and refreshed in 2023 for the five-year period to 2027, and has now produced its first annual progress report against the new Plan.

The Wellbeing Plan recognises key pressures under which Powys residents are living day to day, including the effects of the deepening climate and nature emergencies and the increased cost of living, which are exacerbating inequalities in health, wealth, and happiness.

The 2023/24 annual report provides an overview of PSB activity against its vision of ‘a Fair, Sustainable and Healthy Powys’ and under the three key steps of: Responding to the Climate Emergency, A Whole System Approach to Healthy Weight, and Evidence and Insight.

The Annual Report has been scrutinised by the Powys PSB Scrutiny Committee.

It can be read here: <https://en.powys.gov.uk/article/7509/Powys-Public-Service-Board---Our-Annual-Progress-Report>

To learn more, become involved or provide comment, email: [powyspsb@powys.gov.uk](mailto:powyspsb@powys.gov.uk)

### **NHS Healthy Start Scheme**

The NHS Healthy Start Scheme supports pregnant women and families with children between the ages of 0 and 4 years to buy healthy food. Eligible families can receive £8.50 per week for each child under the age of 1 year, and £4.25 per week for each child between 1 and 4 years of age. Eligible families enrolled on the scheme receive a prepaid card that can be used in any UK shop that accepts MasterCard. Payments are added each week and can be carried over week to week.

The card can be used to buy:

- Plain liquid cow's milk
- Fresh, frozen, and tinned fruit and vegetables
- Fresh, dried, and tinned pulses
- First stage infant formula based on cow's milk.

And can also be used to collect:

- Healthy Start vitamins (nutrient support for pregnancy and breastfeeding)
- Vitamin drops for babies and young children (suitable from birth to 4 years old)

Further information is available on the flyer, attached.

### **Farming Fit health outreach project for the farming community**

Powys County Council, Powys Teaching Health Board, Powys Association of Voluntary Organisations (PAVO), and the Royal Welsh Agricultural Society have worked together in partnership to develop the Farming Fit project, an outreach health promotion and screening service designed to be accessible and appropriate to the specific health and wellbeing needs of the farming community in Powys.

Monthly drop-in events at livestock markets in Brecon, Builth Wells and Welshpool between August and December 2024 will offer a range of health checks, screenings and health-related information and advice, and where appropriate signposting to other sources of support.

At each location the Farming Fit team will offer:

- Blood pressure checks.
- Pulse checks.
- Lifestyle assessments.
- Smoking cessation advice.
- Signposting and awareness of mental health support.
- A safe and confidential space for discussion of health and wellbeing issues.

As the service develops, it will be adapted to support unfolding identified needs.

### **Contacting the county council**

Powys county council aims to be an open, accessible and responsive council. Set out below are a range of ways to contact the council, report faults or issues with council services, and make a complaint.

### Opening a My Powys Account

A My Powys account can be used for a range of activity, including:

- Keeping a record of requests and reports made by the resident, and information obtained by the resident (such as school bus routes, as discussed above)
- Enabling the resident to view and track requests and reports
- Pre-filling forms submitted by the resident with the resident's address and contact information
- Expediting phone calls made by the resident by enabling the call handler to view and track the resident's requests and reports
- Enabling the council to send residents updates about their requests and reports

Residents can open a My Powys account here: <https://en.powys.gov.uk/login>

The pathway is via the 'Log in/Register' function at the top right of the county council's homepage, here: <https://en.powys.gov.uk/>

### Contacting the council online

All residents, with or without a My Powys account, can contact the council by any of the following means:

#### Contacting the council online

- Use the online live Chat function on the website's Contact Us page, here: <https://en.powys.gov.uk/contact>

The pathway is via the 'Contact Us' function at the top right of the council's homepage.

- Identify the email address for the service required and contact the service direct (on the same Contact Us page, scroll down to the grid of different services at the base of the page)

### Contacting the council over the phone

General Enquiries: 01597 827 460

Enquiries for a specific person whom the resident can name: 01597 826 000

### Contacting the council in person

Several transactions with the council can be undertaken at local libraries, Monday to Friday.

Library staff can signpost residents to the council services required and put them in touch with the appropriate council staff member/s for their enquiry.

Information about all Powys local libraries is available here:

<https://www.storipowys.org.uk/find-a-library>

### Reporting an issue

Residents can report a range of service-related issues directly via the council's website, here:

<https://en.powys.gov.uk/article/816/Report>

Pathway: From the county council's homepage, scroll to the first row of options below the search bar. 'Report' is second on the left. The function enables the uploading of photographs, also.

### Complaining and commenting about a service

Residents can submit complaints and comments about any council service directly via the 'Contact Us' page of the county council's website, here: <https://en.powys.gov.uk/complaints>

Scroll down to the grid of options at the base of the page. The complaints and comments function is the first option in the second row in the grid. There is a separate function (second grid on the second row) specifically for complaints and comments about Social Services.

Complaining formally in this way ensures that the complaint is logged and can be tracked by the resident making the complaint.

All of the functions outlined above can be performed via a resident's My Powys account, and 'as a guest' for anyone without an account.

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## 2. Council Information

### **Cabinet and Full Council meetings**

The county council's Cabinet met on 9<sup>th</sup>, 16<sup>th</sup> and 30<sup>th</sup> July.

Items discussed and decided at the meeting on 9<sup>th</sup> July included:

- The delivery agreement and preferred strategy for the Replacement Powys Local Development Plan
- The findings of a recent Food Standards Agency audit
- The transfer of the freehold lease of Ty Brycheiniog to Dyfed Powys Police to enable the two organisations to co-occupy the shared building following its development

The agenda, associated documents and webcast for the meeting can be accessed here:

<https://powys.moderngov.co.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=137&MIId=8084>

The single item discussed at the Cabinet meeting on 16<sup>th</sup> July was the document setting out the



principles for the Sustainable Powys process, discussed elsewhere in this report, and attached.

The paper can also be accessed along with the agenda and webcast here:

<https://powys.moderngov.co.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=137&MId=8742>

Items discussed and decided at the meeting on 30th July included:

- The annual self-assessment report of the council's performance against its strategic objectives as set out in the Corporate and Strategic Equality Plan; and the annual governance statement assessing the effectiveness of the council's governance arrangements during the year.
- The council's final budget outturn position for the 2023/24 financial year. Key points included:
  - The spend for the year left a surplus of approximately £1.8m after contributions to specific reserves.
  - The impacts on the council's finances of high inflation and pay awards were managed through mitigating action and the utilisation of the risk budget.
  - Savings of £15.4m were delivered in year
  - Additional income, external grant funding and a continued focus on reducing costs have enabled the council to release one-off funding to support the increasing pressure on the budgets for 2024/25 and future years.
  - Funds have been set aside to support the council's capital programme, to invest in schools, social services and climate change activities, and to support projects to transform the way the council works in line with Sustainable Powys
  - Budgets for education and social care represented 68% of the overall budget in the year. Roads, transport and recycling accounted for 11%.
- The outturn position on the council's capital programme for the year 2023/24
- The end of year report on the council's Treasury management
- A financial planning update for the year 2025/26 and future years, considering the changing economic climate and forecasts, potential impacts on the developing budget for 2025/26 and the council's Medium Term Financial Strategy, the use of reserves and the costs of achieving net zero by 2030
- A report on the financial forecast for the year ending March 2025
- A report on the capital forecast for the year ending March 2025
- The strategic risk register report for quarter 4, 2023/24
- Powys schools' outturn positions for 2023/24 and budget plans for 2024/25
- The public consultation, outlined above, on proposals to revise the School Transport Policy to align the provision of free school transport with catchment schools.

The agenda, documents and webcast for the 30<sup>th</sup> July meeting can be viewed here:

<https://powys.moderngov.co.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=137&MId=8085>

The pathway from the council's homepage to all documents relating to Cabinet, Full Council, Scrutiny and other meetings is as follows:

PCC homepage > My Council (top menu bar) > Committee Meeting Information (select 'Cabinet and Committee Meetings') > Calendar of Meetings > The relevant date and meeting in the calendar grid.

The Cabinet meets next on 17<sup>th</sup> September 2024. The agenda, associated documents and live-streaming link will be posted, on the calendar page for the meeting as per the pathway outlined above, in the week before the meeting.

### **Full Council meeting**

Full Council met last on 11<sup>th</sup> July 2024.

The council provides a 20-minute slot at the start of all full council meetings for public questions, and people who live, work or study in Powys are invited to submit a question to the meetings. Public questions considered by full council on 11<sup>th</sup> July focused on:

- Changes to the Direct Payments system and delays in the transfer of a small number of cases to the new system, which delayed some payments to personal assistants
- The role of the county council as the local planning authority in applications for wind turbines
- Response times and activity by the Highways Service to reports of obstructions to the highway.

All questions were submitted prior to full council in writing and each questioner received a written response from the relevant Cabinet member. Responses were provided in the documents attached to the agenda and available on the relevant calendar page of the council's website in the week prior to the meeting. Questioners are permitted to ask one supplementary question within the meeting, and are not required to submit it in advance. Supplementary questions asked at full council on 11<sup>th</sup> July start at 00:23:38 in the webcast of the meeting, here: [https://powys.public-i.tv/core/portal/webcast\\_interactive/894342/start\\_time/1144000](https://powys.public-i.tv/core/portal/webcast_interactive/894342/start_time/1144000)

Agenda items considered at the meeting included:

- A revised Delivery Agreement for the preparation of the Replacement Powys Local Development Plan and the Preferred Strategy for the replacement plan, for statutory public consultation
- The annual report of the Standards Committee
- The recommendation of the Democratic Services Committee to abolish the Champion role which task nominated councillors with championing a particular issue of relevance to the council's remit and responsibilities
- The annual report of the Director for Social Services
- A report setting out the salaries and expenses paid to councillors in the year 2023/24

One motion was debated by the council. Titled 'Supporting Agriculture in Powys', it prescribed a comprehensive set of specific undertakings. Debate ranged across multiple nuances affecting, in councillors' views, the viability of specific undertakings and of the motion overall. The extent and range of the debate led to a decision to discontinue the motion, negating the requirement for a vote by council on the motion itself.

Full Council Meetings are held at County Hall, Llandrindod Wells, and attended by some councillors in person and by others over the Zoom virtual meetings platform. They are open to the public, live-streamed and recorded for public view. The agenda, associated documents and live-streaming link – and, after the meeting, the Minutes and the webcast recording – can be accessed on the council's website via the following pathway outlined above.

The direct link to the full council meeting on 11<sup>th</sup> July is:

<https://powys.moderngov.co.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=149&MId=8389>

Full Council meets next on 3<sup>rd</sup> October, 2024.

The agenda, associated documents and live-streaming link will be available the week before the meeting and accessible via the pathway outlined above.

Questions from the public will be invited for the meeting on 3<sup>rd</sup> October. Questions must relate to the county and the services the council provides, and if accepted by the Chair of Council they will be added to the agenda in the order in which they were received. A total of four valid questions will be considered at each meeting, again in the order that they were received. Where the council receives more than four valid questions for a given meeting, the remaining questions are held over until the next full council meeting.

More information on public participation at council meetings is available here:

<https://powys.moderngov.co.uk/ecSDDisplay.aspx?NAME=SD672&ID=672&RPID=9845814>

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12<sup>th</sup> August 2024