

Powys County Council issued the following Press Release today (22 September 2020).

Ambitious education plans to be considered

Ambitious plans to transform education in Powys, providing learners with the world-class facilities they deserve, will be considered by Cabinet next week, the county council has confirmed.

Following extensive engagement with key stakeholders including headteachers, school staff, governors, parents and learners last winter, Powys County Council is committed to bringing forward plans to deliver an improved learner offer for children and young people by delivering its Strategy for Transforming Education in Powys, which was approved in April.

The four strategic aims of the strategy are – To improve learner entitlement and experience; To improve learner entitlement and experience for post-16 learners; To improve access to Welsh-medium provision across all key stages; and To improve provision for learners with special education needs / additional learning needs.

To deliver these aims will require significant investment in the education infrastructure in Powys.

On Tuesday, September 29, Cabinet will consider five reports which could see a potential investment of over £170m, resulting in brand new school facilities across the county as well as a proposal to consult on establishing a new all-age school.

However, several small schools could close as part of the transforming education work.

Cabinet will be considering the following plans:

A new all-age community campus for Ysgol Bro Hyddgen

Investment into Ysgol Calon Cymru for a new English-medium campus for pupils aged 11-18 in Llandrindod Well and a new/remodelled all-age Welsh medium campus in Builth Wells

A major reorganisation of schools in the Llanfyllin catchment which could see the construction of a new all-age community campus for Ysgol Llanfyllin, a new area primary school to replace Llandysilio and Carreghofa primary schools which could also include schools from the Welshpool catchment area. It is also planned to open a new Welsh-medium primary school in Llanrhaeadr-y-Mochnant by merging Ysgol Pennant and Llanrhaeadr-ym-Mochnant primary schools – the school would be situated on the current site of Llanrhaeadr-ym-Mochnant but would need capital investment to accommodate all pupils. It is also expected that there is an extension to Llansanffraid Church in Wales Primary School as well

A new English-medium primary school in Brecon along with new leisure facilities, and also a new pupil referral unit. It is also intended to build a new dual-stream primary school in Sennybridge. Three schools could be replaced as part of the plans

Establishing a new all-age dual-stream school in Llanfair Caereinion, merging Caereinion High School and Llanfair Caereinion County Primary School.

Cabinet will be asked for approval to submit Strategic Outlines Cases for Ysgol Calon Cymru, the school investment plans in the Brecon and Llanfyllin catchment areas as well as a revised Strategic Outline Case for Ysgol Bro Hyddgen to the Welsh Government 21st

Century Schools Programme for their consideration, who could fund 65% of the project with the council funding the remaining 35%.

All changes will be subject to the statutory school reorganisation process which involves extensive consultation with school and their communities, before any final decisions are made.

Cllr Phyl Davies, Cabinet Member for Education and Property, said: "Providing high-quality teaching and learning environments is one of the aims of our Vision 2025 and our Strategy for Transforming Education in Powys will help us meet these aims.

"These are exciting times and these plans ensure that we provide the best facilities for our learners, their families and the wider community.

"The last five months has been an extremely difficult period for the council as it responds to the Covid-19 pandemic but it is a testament to everyone involved in our transforming education programme that Cabinet will be considering some of these initial plans at the end of the month."

Further information on the plans are below:

Ysgol Bro Hyddgen

A state-of-the-art learning and leisure community campus for Machynlleth's Ysgol Bro Hyddgen could take a step forward if Cabinet give the go-ahead to submit revised plans to the Welsh Government.

The flagship all-age school campus, which will replace the existing school buildings, will include early years and education provision, along with brand new leisure and library facilities, replacing the existing Bro Ddyfi Leisure Centre and the town's library.

Ysgol Calon Cymru

New and remodelled facilities could be provided for Ysgol Calon Cymru.

The new facility for 925 for pupils aged 11-18 at the Llandrindod campus would replace the existing accommodation, which is in poor condition while a new remodelled 450-pupil facility for pupils aged 4-18 would be provided in Builth Wells.

As part of the plans for Ysgol Calon Cymru, the Llandrindod Wells campus would deliver English-medium provision and the Builth Wells campus would deliver Welsh-medium provision. Consultation with pupils, parents, staff, governors and the wider communities would need to take place before any changes are implemented.

Llanfyllin catchment area

Two new schools could be built in the Llanfyllin catchment area.

The council is looking to build a new community campus for Ysgol Llanfyllin, which recently opened as an all-age school following the merger of Llanfyllin High School and Llanfyllin Primary School. The school could include pupils from the Llangedwyn,

Llanfechain and Llansilin areas which means that the primary schools in those areas could close.

A new 360-place area primary school could also be built to replace Carreghofa County Primary School and Llandysilio Church in Wales Primary School, and possibly other schools in the Welshpool catchment area. Investment could also see an extension to Llansanffraid Primary School.

It is also planned to open a new Welsh-medium primary school in Llanrhaeadr-y-Mochnant by merging Ysgol Pennant and Llanrhaeadr-ym-Mochnant primary schools – the school would be situated on the current site of Llanrhaeadr-ym-Mochnant but would need capital investment to accommodate all pupils.

Again, these will be formally consulted upon before any final decisions are made.

Brecon catchment area

Two new primary schools could be built in the Brecon catchment area as part of investment plans.

The council wants to build an English-medium primary school on the site of the old Brecon High School, replacing Mount Street Infant, Mount Street Junior and Cradoc schools. This development could also include leisure facilities, including a swimming pool. There are also plans to build a new pupil referral unit on the site.

It also wants to build a new dual-stream primary school in Sennybridge, replacing the current Sennybridge CP School building, which is in poor condition.

Consultation would need to take place before any final decisions are made.

New all-age school for Llanfair Caereinion

Llanfair Caereinion's primary and high school could merge to create the county's third all-age school.

Cabinet will be asked to give the go-ahead to start consultation on the amalgamation of Llanfair Caereinion County Primary School and Caereinion High School and opening a new all-age school. The new school would provide dual-stream education for pupils aged 4-18 on the current site of the two schools.

The target date is to close the two schools on the 31 August 2022 and to open the new school on the 1 September 2022.

ENDS