MINUTES of an EXTRAORDINARY MEETING of the COUNCIL held in the
COUNCIL CHAMBER, COUNTY HALL, HAVERFORDWEST on THURSDAY,
14 JANUARY 2016 at 10.00a.m.

Present:

Councillors W E Evans (Chairman), J L Adams (Leader), J S Allen-Mirehouse,
J A Brinsden (Vice-Chairman), D M Bryan, Daphne Bush, J T Davies,
Pat Davies, M L Evans, L L Frayling, H M George, B J Hall, S L Hancock,
N P Harries, Umelda Havard, Tessa Hodgson, D K Howlett, S T Hudson,
D G M James, O W James, Lyn Jenkins, M J John, P Kidney, K Lewis,
R M Lewis, Mrs P Llewellyn, D G B Lloyd, E A Morse, D J Neale, J A R Nutting,
R Owens, Myles Pepper, Susan Perkins, G Price, D J Pugh, D W M Rees,
T J Richards, K Rowlands, D Simpson, D R Sinnett, P A Stock, R M Stoddart,
Mrs V M Stoddart, R G Summons, A W Wilcox, Jacob Williams, M Williams,
W J A Williams and S Yelland.

Officers in Attendance:

Mr I Westley, Chief Executive
Dr S P Jones, Director of Development
Mrs P Marsden, Director of Social Services and Leisure
Ms K Evan-Hughes, Director for Children and Schools
Mr J Haswell, Chief Finance Officer
Mrs C Incledon, Head of Legal and Committee Services
Miss C Jones, Monitoring Officer
Mr D Thomas, Head of Highways and Construction (part of meeting)
Mrs N Lewis, Finance Manager (part of meeting)
Mrs S Sanders, Committee Services Officer

Apologies for Absence:

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors P R Baker, R G Bowen,
D M Edwards, S G Joseph, R P Kilmister, Alison Lee, P N Miller, P J Morgan,
J S Preston, T B Tudor and G Woodham.

345. Chairman's Announcements

The Chairman announced that it was possible that an Extraordinary Meeting of
Council would be held on 18 February 2016 to consider education matters and
that arrangements would be confirmed shortly.

Furthermore, he reminded Members that the next ordinary Meeting of Council
would be held on 10 March and he asked Members to set aside a full day for the
meeting. He stated that following a discussion with the Vice-Chairman he would
be requiring Members of Council leaving the meeting early to advise the meeting
of the reason why they were leaving the meeting and that the time would be
noted on the webcast.

346. Declarations of Interest

Councillor J S Allen-Mirehouse declared an interest in Agenda Item No. 2 –
Review of Education Provision in the Angle Peninsula, by virtue of being a
Governor of Stackpole School; Chairman of the Governors of Orielton School;
and an interest in Angle School. He advised Council that he had a dispensation from the Standards Committee to speak on the matter, but not vote.

Councillor H M George declared a personal and prejudicial interest in Agenda Item No. 5 – Review of Secondary Education Provision in Mid and North West Pembrokeshire - Welsh Medium Provision, by virtue of a close family member working in a school mentioned in the report.

Councillor E A Morse declared an interest in Agenda Item No. 4 - Proposal to Federate Tavernspite Community Primary School and Templeton Community Primary School, by virtue of being a Governor of Templeton School, appointed by the Authority.

Councillor D Simpson declared a personal interest in Agenda Item No. 4 - Proposal to Federate Tavernspite Community Primary School and Templeton Community Primary School, by virtue of being a Governor of Tavernspite School, appointed by the Authority.

Councillor K Lewis declared a personal interest in Agenda Item No. 5 – Review of Secondary Education Provision in Mid and North West Pembrokeshire - Welsh Medium Provision, by virtue of being a Governor of Ysgol y Preseli, appointed by the Authority.

347. Review of Education Provision in the Angle Peninsula

Council considered a report by the Director for Children and Schools which outlined the findings of the statutory consultation undertaken in relation to the review of primary education provision in the Angle peninsula during October and November 2015.

Council noted that at its meeting held on 14 May 2015, a report had been presented on the findings of preliminary consultation which had taken place during the autumn of 2014. Furthermore, that at that meeting the Director for Children and Schools had been authorised to commence statutory consultation on the proposal to discontinue Angle VC School, Orielton CP School and Stackpole VC School, and establish a new 3-11 Voluntary Controlled English Medium school for the Angle peninsula.

Details of the case for change; the statutory consultation process undertaken; the Consultation Report; matters raised during the statutory consultation; pupil, financial, property and transport related matters; and a way forward were set out in the report for Council’s consideration.

Councillor Susan Perkins, the relevant Cabinet Member, introduced the report and she referred to the statutory consultation process undertaken. She stated that the proposals had taken account of the responses received during the consultation and she pointed out that there was a strong level of support for the proposals. Councillor Perkins stated that the case for change was compelling and was predicated on the need to improve standards; provide purpose built C21st accommodation; and improve cost efficiency.

Council was advised that the three schools were led by an Executive Headteacher which provided challenges in terms of leading three schools in
three separate locations. Furthermore, she advised that federation legislation did not allow for federated arrangements between community and voluntary schools.

Councillor Perkins referred to the strong feelings expressed by Angle and Stackpole parents and residents over the loss of their local schools and she stated that meeting the needs of all parties was a difficult challenge. In terms of the responses received, Councillor Perkins stated that it was clear that many parents did not want to lose their schools; however, she stated that the new school proposed would provide the same characteristics, albeit in modern, 21st Century facilities. Councillor Perkins also referred to Estyn’s comments that the proposals provided a clear rationale which focussed well on the advantages to pupils of a new, larger, better equipped school building and improvements in provision that might be possible.

Councillor Perkins considered that the proposal was sensible and provided the most equitable solution for all the communities on the Angle peninsula, whilst addressing many, if not all, of the issues highlighted in the case for change and, on that basis, she commended the report to Council.

Councillor Susan Perkins Moved the Recommendation set out in the report; Seconded by Councillor J L Adams.

Councillor J S Allen-Mirehouse, the local Member, addressed Council in support of the proposals. He stated that all three schools achieved well; had excellent reports; and that Inspectors had praised the ethos of the schools. However, he stated that the issue related to the funding of three small schools with reducing class sizes, especially at Hundleton and Angle Schools. He pointed out that the financial situation at Stackpole School was stable at present, but that numbers on roll were falling. He stated that local people would prefer to retain the status quo due to emotional attachment but he accepted that it was not an option. Councillor Allen-Mirehouse referred to the many public meetings and consultation that had occurred and he stated that the majority preferred a new school sited in Hundleton, with a small minority preferring to keep the school in Stackpole. He reminded Council that the proposals were looking at the mid and long term benefits for future generations on the Angle peninsula. Councillor Allen-Mirehouse advised Council that he understood the history of the three schools in question and he considered that the proposals were logical and, on that basis, he called on Council to adopt the Recommendation to build a new school at Hundleton.

Councillor A W Wilcox agreed with the points made by the local Member. However, he pointed out that the majority of pupils were placed in Stackpole School; that the Authority would be required to purchase the land for the proposed site, which he stated was a mile and a half from Monkton School and could attract pupils therefrom. He also considered that the case for siting the school in Hundleton was not convincing.

The Leader of Council referred to an email all Members had received the previous night and he sought clarification on a reference contained therein in relation to the original cost being £5.5M for the new build and later on reduced to £3M. The Leader stated that he was familiar with the geography of the peninsula and that he was mindful of the road network. He referred to the information in the report which identified where pupils travelled from to attend the three schools
and he suggested that this provided conflicting messages in terms of the sustainability of the schools.

The Leader urged Members to not shy away from considering the financial matters and he stated that the current model was unsustainable. He pointed out that a 120 pupil school would provide a wide range of skills and opportunities for pupils to prepare them for secondary education than was the case with the current model, particularly for Angle School pupils. The Leader stated that the land was available for the site in Hundleton at a reasonable cost; that merging three schools with one headteacher and a single governing body was the way forward and that the proposal provided an important opportunity for the Council to take.

Councillor Mrs V M Stoddart referred to there being no mention of the site in the Recommendation of the report and she queried whether the site was still to be determined. She expressed her concern that to approve the Recommendation as worded could leave the matter open for further debate.

In response, the Leader stated that the site being considered was identified in the report and was situated opposite Orielton School. He stated that the site was available, but would be triggered by a number of stages, namely confirmation of the decision of Council and 21st Century Schools funding.

Councillor J A R Nutting sought clarification on the rationale behind the ranking of the options available and queried why a new school on the Stackpole site was in fifth place given that refurbishment costs would be less than a brand new school. The Chairman advised that the answer was contained in the report and that the Cabinet Member would respond in her summing up.

Councillor Jacob Williams stated that there was no dispute with a single site; however, he expressed his concern that it was unknown whether the preferred site required a departure from policy; and that the site was too close to the school in Monkton. He pointed out that the site in Stackpole was within the Authority’s ownership; that expansion should be considered; and he considered that the case for siting the new school in Hundleton had not been made. Councillor Williams sought clarification on the reason for the voluntary controlled status of the new school. He further stated that the fact that there was a covenant on the Stackpole School building could restrict the Authority’s ability to get a good price for the building.

Councillor Tessa Hodgson stated that no one disagreed with the proposal for a single school. However, she stated that the Recommendation was at issue as there was no mention of Hundleton being the preferred site. On that basis, she Moved an Amendment to the effect that as the site was still to be decided, it should include consideration of the refurbishment and enlargement of Stackpole School; Seconded by Councillor A W Wilcox.

In responding to points made, Councillor J S Allen-Mirehouse stated that there was an excellent community spirit in all the three villages and he disputed the comment made that it was stronger in Stackpole. Furthermore, he stated that the proximity between Monkton School and Hundleton would be the same as to Grove School. Councillor Allen-Mirehouse referred to the location of the site and he stated that the reason for a central location was based on travel across the
Angle peninsula, as the roads were better between Pembroke and Hundleton, rather than Angle to Stackpole which were narrow and twisty in nature. He also pointed out that half the pupils at Stackpole School were from out of the catchment area and chose to go to Stackpole School because it was a good school where they were happy; and he assured Council that there would be the same ethos at the new school, but with better facilities. On that basis, Councillor J S Allen-Mirehouse stated that Hundleton was the right site, both now and in the future.

In summing up, Councillor Susan Perkins responded to various points made by Members. In terms of Stackpole School being a better site, Councillor Perkins stated that the roads to Stackpole were not good, particularly for buses. In terms of the listed building status, Councillor Perkins stated that any building work would need to occur around the listed part and would not provide a brand new school attracting 21st Century School funding. She pointed out that only half the pupils in Stackpole School lived in the catchment area and only four lived in Stackpole village.

Councillor Perkins stated that in the consultation process many parents had indicated they wanted the school to be sited in Hundleton and she considered that the leak of pupils from the Monkton area was very unlikely. In terms of the status of the school, Councillor Perkins stated that two of the schools were already voluntary controlled schools and that the other school was agreeable to taking on that status.

Councillor Perkins urged Council to support the Recommendation as support for the Amendment proposed would see a further delay. She reminded Council that the proposal was for a brand new school with 21st Century Schools funding; that the timescale for the funding would be limited and she urged Council to consider the proposal in the interest of the children now and in the future.

In response to the question put by Councillor Jacob Williams, the Leader stated that the Stackpole School building had a reverter clause attached to it which required it to be offered to the original owners at market value.

In response to a further question put by Councillor Jacob Williams on the planning status of the proposed site, the Leader responded that Planning Policy GN33 would allow the opportunity for consideration of the proposal at the Orielton site.

In response to a question on the capital costs, the Chief Finance Officer advised that the difference of £200k between the £3m and £2.8m figures quoted was due to the life cycle costs. In respect of the question posed by Councillor J A R Nutting on the ranking of the options, the Chief Finance Officer stated that the Authority was required to rank the options with the HM Treasury Guidance five case investment model which determined life cycle costs over a 60 year period, covering capital and revenue costs and income and expenditure; and then used discounted factors to get a cost over the 60 year period to arrive at the ranking order.

On a point of clarification, the Chief Executive advised Council that, in accordance with the School Organisation Code, the Authority could not publish a
statutory notice without naming a single school site and he asked Council to consider the implication of the Amendment on the consultation process.

The Director for Children and Schools confirmed that if any changes were made to the proposals it would be necessary to reconsult for a further six weeks on revised proposals and report back on the findings to Council, as consultation had been undertaken on the basis of the new school being sited in Hundleton.

In response to concerns raised about the lack of detail of the site in the Recommendation, the Chief Executive advised that the site was referred to in paragraph 11 (d) of the report; and, to provide clarity, he suggested that Council considers adding that paragraph to the Recommendation set out in the report. He further advised that if Members were concerned with the location of the site, that the Amendment be taken separately to the Recommendation, to enable further work to be undertaken on the extension/refurbishment of the Stackpole site.

Councillor Tessa Hodgson stated that unless the site was mentioned in the Recommendation she could not vote on the matter today. The Chief Executive stated that he understood the concerns raised by Members; however, he stated that the Recommendation could not cover every item of detail and he reiterated his point that inclusion of the first sentence of paragraph 11(d) to the Recommendation could provide the clarity sought. He further reminded Council that the School Organisation Code would not allow the publishing of a statutory notice unless a single site was identified.

On that basis, Councillor Tessa Hodgson withdrew her Amendment and proposed a further Amendment to the effect that the site be at Stackpole.

The Leader Moved an Amendment to the effect that the first sentence of paragraph 11(d) be added to the Recommendation; Seconded by Councillor Susan Perkins.

The Chief Executive advised Council that support for Councillor Hodgson’s second Amendment would reopen full consultation on the matter. On that basis, Councillor Tessa Hodgson withdrew her second Amendment; and, in doing so, she expressed her concern about the conduct of the matter and the wording of the Recommendation.

On being put to the vote the Amendment was carried.

RESOLVED

(a) That the Director for Children and Schools be authorised to publish a Statutory Notice to discontinue Angle VC School, Orielton CP School and Stackpole VC School and to establish a new 3-11 Voluntary Controlled English medium school for the Angle peninsula.

(b) That the site of the proposed new school be located across the road from the current Orielton Community School, i.e. on land to the south of The Elms, Hundleton.
[Councillor Tessa Hodgson wished that her abstention from voting on the above Resolution be recorded.]

348. Proposal to Federate Tavernspite Community Primary School and Templeton Community Primary School

Council considered a report by the Director for Children and Schools on a proposal to formalise the current federated arrangements at Tavernspite and Templeton Schools.

Details of the consultation arrangements and a summary of the outcomes of the consultation were set out in the report. The Consultation Document and Consultation Report were appended to the report for Council’s consideration.

Councillor Susan Perkins, the relevant Cabinet Member, introduced the report and she stated that the report provided the findings of the preliminary consultation undertaken in 2014. She stated that at that time arrangements had been put in place whereby the Headteacher of Tavernspite School had responsibility over both Templeton and Tavernspite Schools and that feedback from the preliminary consultation had been positive.

Council noted that the Governing Bodies of both schools had supported the arrangements for federation and that at its meeting on 22 October 2015, Council had resolved that the Director for Children and Schools be authorised to commence consultation on the proposal to federate Tavernspite and Templeton CP Schools. Councillor Perkins stated that formal consultation had ended on 30 December 2015 and that the Consultation Report reflected the support for the proposal and praise for the current arrangements.

Councillor Perkins stated that standards at Templeton School had improved during the time of the informal federation arrangements and that numbers on roll had increased. She further stated that Tavernspite School remained in the green category and that the arrangements had not had any adverse effect on school.

Councillor Perkins stated that by formalising the federated arrangements under one Governing Body, resources could be used more efficiently and there could be increased sharing of expertise between the schools with a wider range of experiences offered to pupils.

Councillor Perkins Moved the Recommendation set out in the report; Seconded by Councillor H M George.

Councillor D Simpson, a Governor of Tavernspite School, advised Council that the arrangements had been a resounding success and worked well as a result of significant consultation and meetings with the Education Directorate to explore options for educational provision in the area. He stated that federation was the way forward; that the informal arrangements had been in place for 12 months and both schools had worked together for the success of the arrangements.

Councillor Simpson referred to the increasing numbers on roll and the concern initially raised about the impact on Tavernspite School’s performance which he stated had not happened. He stated that attendance had improved to 96%; that Templeton School had moved from Amber category in December 2013 to Yellow; that pupil numbers had increased from 66 to 90 in January 2016; and that federation had been welcomed in the community. Councillor Simpson stated
that Templeton School had received significant investment and that Inspectors had referred to the arrangements as a best practice model and he expressed his support for the proposals on the basis of the benefits for the area.

Councillor E A Morse, a Governor of Templeton School, presented a joint statement made with the Chairman of the Governing Body of Templeton School and he sought support for the proposals to be implemented. He referred to the views of the community already outlined. He stated that the benefits of collaboration had been the new initiatives implemented to focus on learning and teaching and he referred to the informal federation being a good opportunity for collaborative working and sharing of resources. Furthermore, he referred to the category of Templeton School having been increased to Yellow and to Blue for its safeguarding arrangements. Councillor Morse stated that the schools had received a visit from Estyn who had reaffirmed the management arrangements as a model of good practice.

Councillor Morse stated that federation of the two schools was the best outcome for the education of children in the Templeton area. He referred to the Governing Body’s support for the proposal and he pointed out that 75% of respondents to the consultation had favoured federation.

RESOLVED

That the Director for Children and Schools be authorised to implement the proposal, as published, to federate Tavernspite CP School and Templeton CP School, with effect from 11 April 2016.

349. Review of Secondary Education Provision in Mid and North West Pembrokeshire - Welsh Medium Provision

[Councillor H M George reiterated his declaration of a personal and prejudicial interest in this item of business, by virtue of a close family member working in a school mentioned in the report and withdrew from the meeting.]

Council considered a report by the Director for Children and Schools outlining the findings of the statutory consultation undertaken in relation to Welsh Medium provision in Mid and North West Pembrokeshire during September to November 2015.

Council noted that at an Extraordinary Meeting of Council held on 10 September 2015, Council had resolved that the Director for Children and Schools be authorised to commence statutory consultation on the proposal to close Ysgol Gymraeg Glan Cleddau and to establish a new 3-16 Welsh Medium school in Haverfordwest with post 16 Welsh Medium provision to be provided at Ysgol y Preseli.

Details of the context; case for change; current provision; statutory consultation; the consultation report; matters raised during the consultation; and proposals for the way forward were set out in the report for Council’s consideration.

Councillor Susan Perkins, the relevant Cabinet Member, introduced the report and she outlined the findings of the statutory consultation undertaken. She
stated that all responses had been carefully considered and that there was an overwhelming level of support for the proposal.

Councillor Perkins stated that the case for change for expanding the Council’s Welsh Medium offer was compelling and predicated on maintaining or improving educational standards for learners, and extending primary and secondary Welsh Medium provision to meet stated demand, a matter which Estyn had previously challenged the Authority on.

Councillor Perkins explained that the proposal was not dependent upon the decision in relation to secondary English Medium provision and that the Authority was required to progress a solution to address Welsh Medium demand, irrespective of what happened in relation to English Medium. Councillor Perkins acknowledged that secondary Welsh Medium provision had been well served by Ysgol y Preseli over the years, but she stated that the school was not accessible to large numbers of pupils from south, mid and western areas of the County.

Council was advised that the consultation responses provided sufficient evidence that parents from those areas were turning their back on Welsh Medium provision because of the lengthy journey to Crymych. Councillor Perkins stated that a new school in Haverfordwest would address that matter and would ensure reasonable accessibility to approximately 96% of the pupil population in Pembrokeshire.

In terms of the proposed catchment area of the new school, Councillor Perkins stated that there were two separate elements to the catchment area: one for 3-11 and another for 11-16. Councillor Perkins stated that the catchment broadly reflected that of Ysgol Gymraeg Glan Cleddau. She stated that the map of the proposed catchment on Page 238 of the report excluded a large number of areas and this accounted for the need to establish a strategy for Welsh Medium provision in the Milford Haven, Havens, Neyland and Burton/Llangwm areas. Councillor Perkins also stated that should there be sufficient demand for primary Welsh Medium provision from those areas, it might become feasible, in the future, to consider separate provision. In the event that such demand could be accommodated at the proposed 3-16 school in Haverfordwest, Councillor Perkins stated that consideration could then be given to extending the draft catchment area to include those areas.

Council was advised that the proposal was for the new 3-16 school to be implemented year by year and would benefit both the proposed school and Ysgol y Preseli where there might be older siblings; and that such an arrangement was a necessary part of the transition from one Welsh secondary school to two.

Council was advised that Officers were currently working on the feasibility of appropriate sites for the proposed school, and that the details would be shared with Members during the next two to three months prior to seeking approval to proceed to statutory notice.

Councillor Perkins commended the report to Council and she Moved the Recommendation set out in the report; Seconded by Councillor K Lewis.

Councillor K Lewis, Deputy Leader, referred to the process having been a long journey and that there was now the opportunity to confirm the last stage and he
commended the report which addressed concerns previously raised. The Deputy Leader stated that it was critical to provide Welsh language provision across the County to support the language in the future. As part of the process, the Deputy Leader advised of the need for a review of the facilities at Ysgol y Preseli campus to be undertaken.

Councillor M J John spoke in support of the proposals and he welcomed the provision in the middle of the County for 3-16 year olds. With regard to the catchment area, Councillor John drew attention to the fact that his electoral division was outside the catchment area outlined on page 238 of the report and he stated that local parents were not in support of that exclusion. He urged that discussions be held with local Members on any changes to catchment areas prior to being published in a report.

The Leader of Council spoke of the importance of collectively supporting the development of the Welsh language and he welcomed the opportunity to strengthen the Authority’s commitment to Welsh language provision in the County, including the opportunity for a future decision on secondary education provision in Tenby following investment in Welsh Medium provision there.

Councillor M L Evans referred to the location of the proposed new school and he stated that the school would be underpinned by pupils from the South of the County and, on that basis, he considered that a location on the south side of Haverfordwest would be advantageous to pupils from the South. Councillor Evans stated that the issues raised in terms of travel time would also apply to Sixth Form provision. He drew Council’s attention to the fact that the proposal would have implications for Ysgol y Preseli over the next five years, which could lead to surplus places, and he sought assurance that pupils residing in Pembrokeshire would be considered first for places at Ysgol y Preseli, particularly those with siblings already at the school.

In summing up, Councillor Susan Perkins responded to various points made. In terms of pupils from the Havens and the Milford Haven area, Councillor Perkins confirmed that those pupils would have access to the new school. She stated that the catchment area map in the report was for reflecting on the proposal to consult in the Milford Haven area to provide primary education provision in that area as necessary. She also confirmed that local Members would be consulted during the consultation. In terms of the admission criteria, Councillor Perkins stated that Pembrokeshire pupils would come first and that there was a criteria in place for siblings. Councillor Perkins reminded Council that a site was being sought and details would be brought back to Council in two to three months and she stated that consultation had indicated that the new school would be sited within a mile of Haverfordwest.

RESOLVED

That the proposal, as set out in the Consultation Report, to proceed with the establishment of a new 3-16 Welsh Medium school in Haverfordwest be confirmed.

The meeting ended at 11.30a.m.