



**Powys Local Development Plan  
Topic Paper  
Community Facilities**

**DEPOSIT VERSION PAPER**  
(Updates the Pre-Deposit Stage version)

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## 1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 The planning system regulates the development and use of land in the public interest. It should reconcile the needs of development and conservation, securing economy, efficiency and amenity in the use of land, thereby contributing to sustainable development.

1.2 In 2004, the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act introduced a new Local Plan process for Wales. The new system requires each authority in Wales to prepare a Local Development Plan (LDP) for their area which, once adopted, replaces any existing development plan, which for Powys is the Powys Unitary Development Plan (UDP).

1.3 Welsh Assembly Government guidance on the preparation of LDPs includes, within Paragraph 4.3 of *Local Development Plans Wales: Policy on Preparation of LDPs* (WAG, 2005), that local planning authorities are required to prepare, maintain or have access to an up-to-date information base on sufficient aspects of the economic, environmental and social characteristics of their area in order to ensure that its development plan policies and proposals are founded on a thorough understanding of the area's needs, opportunities and constraints

1.4 This paper is therefore one of a series of topic papers being prepared by Powys County Council as part of its preparation of the Powys Local Development Plan.

The aims of these papers are therefore to:

- Provide a summary of the policies and strategies at national, regional and local level that will influence the development of Powys' Local Development Plan
- Provide a summary of the current evidence base for the topic
- Identify key messages arising from the policy review and evidence base
- Identify emerging key issues
- Provide a review of existing Powys development plan (UDP) policies for the topic

1.5 Whilst each topic paper produced focuses on a different theme, they are inter-related and together form the strategic overview of issues to be addressed in the Local Development Plan.

### 1.6 COMMUNITY FACILITIES TOPIC PAPER

Community facilities play an intrinsic role in the life of the County's Communities and are crucial for the economic, social and environmental sustainability of all of Powys.

The Community Facilities to be covered by this topic paper include:

- Community Centres
- Youth Centres
- Libraries
- Colleges
- Schools
- Hospitals

- Surgeries
- Emergency Service Stations (Police / Fire / Ambulance)
- Courts
- Cemeteries

1.7 Additional Community Facilities covered by other topic papers, include:

- Recreational facilities including Leisure Centres, Theatres & Museums (covered by the Environment – Leisure & Recreation Topic Paper)
- Roads, paths, cycle ways and public transport provision (covered by the Transport Topic Paper)
- Sewerage, surface water drainage, water supply, electricity and gas supply and communication cables (covered by the Infrastructure Topic Paper)
- Social housing provision (covered by the Population & Housing Topic Paper)
- Rural retail provision including Post Offices & Public Houses (covered by the Town Centres and Retail Development Topic Paper)

## 2.0 NATIONAL AND REGIONAL POLICY CONTEXT

It is essential that any policies and proposals contained within Powys' Local Development Plan relating to Community Facilities are consistent and integrated with European, National and Regional legislation, regulations, plans and strategies.

This section of the topic paper therefore provides an overview of this national and regional policy context and highlights some of the most relevant messages for the preparation of Powys' Local Development Plan.

### 2.1 The Wales Spatial Plan: People, Places, Futures (2004) & The Wales Spatial Plan 2008 Update

2.1.1 The Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 states that local planning authorities, in preparing a local development plan (LDP), must have regard to the Wales Spatial Plan (WSP). Indeed having regard to the Wales Spatial Plan is one of the tests of soundness of a LDP.

2.1.2 The WSP provides the context and direction of travel for LDPs.

The Spatial Plan's Vision states:

*"We will sustain our communities by tackling the challenges presented by population and economic change; we will grow in ways which will increase our competitiveness while spreading prosperity to less well-off areas and reducing negative environmental impacts; we will enhance our natural and built environment for its own sake and for what it contributes to our well-being, and we will sustain our distinctive identity."*

The Plan is structured according to 5 guiding themes of:

*Building Sustainable Communities, Promoting a Sustainable Economy, Valuing our Environment, Achieving Sustainable Accessibility and Respecting Distinctiveness.*

Under these themes a number of all-Wales objectives and actions have been identified.

2.1.3 Of particular relevance to this topic paper is the theme *Building Sustainable Communities* which identifies that the future of Wales "depends on the vitality of our communities as attractive places to live & work. We need to reduce inequalities between communities while retaining their character and distinctiveness".

2.1.4 More locally the WSP splits Wales into 6 sub-regions and Powys lies within the 'Central Wales Spatial Plan Area'. However, the Ystradgynlais area in the south of the County is also covered by the 'Swansea Bay – Waterfront and Western Valleys Spatial Plan Area'.

Each of the sub-regions has an Area Strategy within the WSP which identifies a vision, propositions and actions for each area.

#### 2.1.5 *The Central Wales Spatial Plan Area*

The WSP vision for this area is as follows:

*“High-quality living and working in smaller-scale settlements set within a superb environment, providing dynamic models of rural sustainable development, moving all sectors to higher value-added activities”*

#### 2.1.6 *The Central Wales Spatial Plan Area Strategy*

Priorities identified for this area, relating to the Community Facilities topic, include:

- Building on the important key centres in the area, whilst improving linkages and spreading benefit and growth to the wider hinterlands and rural communities that fall outside those immediate places
- Responding to the needs of our rural communities and hinterlands by enabling appropriate and integrated growth and development, and empowering local communities to enhance their level of sustainability

2.1.7 Within the *Building Sustainable Communities* section, the Area Strategy identifies that the Central Wales area is categorised by a network of different types of settlements, with a large proportion of people living in relatively remote locations. The Plan therefore identifies that “A key priority for Central Wales is to build on the regional strengths of the area. The rich mosaic of towns and villages is important for employment, social and recreational activity and to access a wide range of services. In such a diverse area it is important to recognise the interaction between places of varying sizes and their mutually supporting roles in providing access to services”.

In addition the section also highlights that ensuring good access to services across the Area is a key determinant of quality of life. Particular reference is made to the importance of improving the quality, integration and delivery of services and tackling the significant geographical and social inequalities of health, social care and well being in the predominantly rural area of Central Wales.

2.1.8 The Central Wales Spatial Plan Area Strategy provides a model for sustainable development broadly identifying primary settlements and hubs and clusters as focal points for appropriate plan-led growth and investment.

Powys’ primary settlements, hubs and clusters are illustrated in the Central Wales Spatial Plan Area map and include:

- The Llandrindod Wells cluster
- The Severn Valley cluster with Newtown identified as a primary settlement Ystradgynlais in the south of the County, whilst maintaining links with the Brecon Beacons cluster, has significant influence and linkages with the Swansea Bay – Waterfront and Western Valleys Spatial Plan Area which will necessitate strong cross-boundary synergy in its future development.

The hub and cluster approach seeks to encourage communities to work collaboratively, not competitively, to support their own needs and those of the smaller settlements and hinterlands which gravitate towards them, balancing the needs and aspirations of communities with appropriate plan-led growth and service provision.

Nonetheless, the Strategy also recognises that the approach may not be appropriate for all service provision or development activity which may, due to its nature and by necessity, cover a smaller or larger area (e.g. health or higher education)

2.1.9 *The Swansea Bay – Waterfront and Western Valleys Spatial Plan Area*  
As detailed above the Ystradgynlais area of Powys also lies within the Swansea Bay – Waterfront and Western Valleys Spatial Plan Area.

Whilst 11 key settlements (hubs) have been identified across the region for their critical role in the success of the area including their function as important service centres, Ystradgynlais is one of a number of other smaller settlements across the area identified as supporting communities that provide affordable and attractive places to live but dependant on the hubs for some key facilities (e.g. health facilities).

## **2.2 Planning Policy Wales (PPW), Edition 7 (July 2014)**

2.2.1 PPW sets out the national land use planning policies which local authorities need to take into account when compiling their LDP.

2.2.2 Paragraph 2.4.4 of PPW states that LDPs should take account of social considerations relevant to land use issues, such as the relationship of planning policies and proposals to social needs and problems, including the likely impact of policies and proposals on the whole community, on women and men, on children and families, or on groups such as elderly and disabled people, single parent families, ethnic minorities, disadvantaged and deprived people. As part of this it is identified that LDPs should make provision for land for schools, further and higher education, places of worship, recreation and other community facilities.

2.2.3 A key PPW objective relating to Community Facilities states that LDP's should promote access to employment, shopping, education, health, community, leisure and sports facilities and open and green space, maximising opportunities for community development and social welfare (PPW, para. 4.4.3).

2.2.4 PPW also identifies, in paragraph 4.6.1 the role that development can play in urban areas in arresting the decline in community facilities and delivering environmentally sound modernisation, re-use or replacement of urban infrastructure.

2.2.5 Within the guidance provided on locating new development PPW (para. 4.7.4) states that local authorities should adopt policies to locate major generators of travel demand such as housing, employment, retailing, leisure and recreation, and community facilities including libraries, schools and hospitals within existing urban areas or in other locations which are, or can be, well served by public transport, or can be reached by walking or cycling. Whilst, in paragraph 9.2.9, PPW states that one of the criteria that may be used in determining which sites to allocate for development in a Development Plan is:

the capacity of existing and potential infrastructure, including public transport, water and sewerage, other utilities and social infrastructure (such as schools and hospitals), to absorb further development, and the cost of adding further infrastructure.

2.2.6 PPW also identifies, within its chapter on housing, that Local Planning Authorities may include policies within its Development Plan that seek developer contributions towards community facilities.

### **2.3 Technical Advice Note 6: Planning for Sustainable Rural Communities (July 2010)**

2.3.1 Technical Advice Notes (TANs) should be read in conjunction with Planning Policy Wales and be taken into account by planning authorities in the preparation of development plans.

2.3.2 TAN6 provides guidance on how the planning system can support sustainable rural communities. Of particular relevance to this topic paper it provides guidance, in chapter 5, on how the Local Planning Authority may contribute to sustainable rural services.

2.3.3 The document details that when preparing development plans planning authorities should obtain information on the availability of services across the area - this will help to identify the most sustainable locations for development intended to meet general need and locations where a more proactive approach should be taken to meet essential community service requirements.

2.3.4 It further identifies that development plans should:

- Facilitate the provision of services as an essential part of new developments (where they are of a sufficient scale);
- Seek to broaden the range of services available in local service centres to meet the needs of the catchment;
- Outside of identified service centres support the provision of local facilities, especially where they would be of benefit to rural residents distant from existing facilities (with multi-purpose use identified as an appropriate way to ensure service viability, particularly in more remote areas);
- Adopt a positive approach to planning proposals designed to improve the viability, accessibility or community value of existing services and facilities (including village shops, post offices, rural petrol stations, village & church halls and rural public houses); and
- Support the retention and expansion of these local facilities and set out the criteria to be applied when considering planning applications that will result in the loss of important village services.

### **2.4 One Wales: One Planet (May 2009)**

2.4.1 The Welsh Government's Sustainable Development Scheme, which sets out the Welsh Government's vision of a sustainable society for Wales as follows:

"Safe, sustainable, attractive communities in which people live and work, have access to services, and enjoy good health and can play their full roles as citizens".

2.4.2 One of the key outcomes identified under this vision is that:

“All have access to better homes so that we reduce carbon emissions and tackle fuel poverty, and new homes and community facilities are sited in sustainable locations, free from the risk of flooding”.

## **2.5 Rural Health Plan - Improving integrated service delivery across Wales (2009)**

2.5.1 The aim of this plan is “to focus on the health of people living in rural communities – their well-being, their healthcare and health and social care needs to enable them to live happy and fulfilled lives as independently as possible”.

2.5.2 The plan highlights the following issues as the main focus of the plan - Access, Integration and Community Cohesion & Engagement.

Access is an important key issue that relates not only to the distances that patients, friends and family need to travel but also the accessibility through ICT systems to provide online health services. Transport is a key factor in increasing the accessibility to health services, which will be referred to locally in the Regional Transport Plan (2009).

Integrated services are also an important key factor to arise out of the plan, and the plan makes reference to the model that has emerged in Builth Wells (the Glan Irfon centre).

The surrounding communities also play an important role in the provision of health services, ensuring that health follow up services are available so patients can stay at home or around their community. For example, volunteering and aid organisations that exist in communities can deliver extra services, reducing the need for repeat visits to the specialist hospitals.

## **2.6 Community Focused Schools. Circular 34/2003 (WAG, 2003)**

2.6.1 Community Focused Schools are schools that focus on the needs of the community and provide a range of services and activities, often beyond the school day, to help meet the needs of its pupils, their families and the wider community.

2.6.2 The Assembly views this approach as a positive sustainable way forward for schools & rural communities and its potential benefits include additional facilities and equipment for the school, improvements in child behaviour and social skills and better access to essential services for the community.

2.6.3 The types of services that a school could provide include:

- Childcare;
- Lifelong Learning;
- Health & Social Services;
- Cultural and Sporting Activities;
- Youth Services;
- Information Resources and IT;
- Shops and Commercial Services; and
- Community Centres

### **3.0 LOCAL POLICY CONTEXT**

As a spatial plan the Powys Local Development Plan will need to be consistent and integrated with other plans and strategies which have been prepared for the County, the most significant of which are detailed in this section.

#### **3.1 One Powys Plan: A Single Delivery Plan for Powys (2014-2017)**

3.1.1 The Local Government (Wales) Measure 2009 placed a duty on each Council in Wales to prepare a Community Strategy for promoting and improving the economic, social and environmental well being of their areas, and contributing to the achievement of sustainable development in the UK.

3.1.2 A new approach has been adopted in Powys with the development of The One Powys Plan. Its aim is to improve public services for the citizens of Powys by bringing together strategic partners in to a single planning and delivery framework.

3.1.3 In 2014, for the first time Powys Council merged its own improvement plan (previously called the Powys Change Plan) into the One Powys Plan. This has been done so that strategic partners can better work together for the good of the county. By producing a coherent plan residents can find out what is planned and what results they can expect to see if the priorities are achieved.

3.1.4 This move towards a more integrated approach across public sector delivery encompasses the work of the following organisations, partnerships and plans/strategies: -

- Brecon Beacons National Park Authority (Management Plan)
- Coleg Powys (Institutional Strategic Plan)
- Countryside Council for Wales (Corporate Plan)
- Dyfed Powys Police (BCU Policing Plan – part of the Local Policing Plan)
- Mid and West Wales Fire and Rescue Service (Command Business Plan – part of the Strategic Plan)
- Powys Association of Voluntary Organisations (Financial and Strategic Plan)
- Powys County Council (Change Plan)
- Powys teaching Health Board (Corporate Plan)
- Powys Local Service Board (Community Strategy)
- Powys Children and Young People’s Partnership (Powys Children and Young People’s Plan)
- Powys Community Safety Partnership (Powys Community Safety Plan)
- Powys Health Social Care and Well Being Partnership (Powys Health Social Care and Well Being Strategy)
- Powys Environmental Partnership
- Powys Regeneration Partnership

3.1.5 The plan sets out 5 priorities for improvement that will guide the work of strategic partners until at least 2017. It describes the issues that are important to Powys and provides a clear picture of how partners will tackle them.

- Integrated health and adult social care
- Children and young people
- Transforming learning and skills
- Stronger, safer and economically viable communities
- Financially balanced and fit for purpose public services

3.1.6 Under the 5 priorities identified are ten outcomes and associated actions to deliver them. Nonetheless, the actions identified are not an all-inclusive list, but instead focus upon those areas that have been prioritised for most significant changes and improvements over a 3 year period. Some of the outcomes and their associated actions that best relate to this topic are as follows:

- *Older people will be supported to lead fulfilled lives within their communities*

Modernise our approach to care options in the community, for example the accommodation we provide

- *Carers have a good sense of wellbeing and are able to fulfil the caring responsibilities they choose to do*

Access to social and leisure opportunities for carers

- *Powys citizens will lead fuller and longer lives, be resilient, have good health and be more able to participate and contribute to their communities*
- *Powys citizens will be supported and empowered to lead active and healthier lives*

Increasing access and opportunities for physical activity

- *All children and young people are supported to achieve their full potential*

Ensure that a high quality of education is accessible to all. This includes the development and implementation of a school transformation policy which provides a vision and infrastructure for 21st century schooling for a bilingual future

- *Bringing people together in Powys so they feel that they matter, belong and can contribute to their community*

Align the Local Development Plan to ensure it provides a sustainable infrastructure that underpins the delivery of the One Powys Plan

- *Improving passenger transport services to enable them to be affordable, accessible and efficient*

Work with local community groups to strengthen access to alternative types of community based transport

- *Enabling 'joined up' services for Powys citizens through public and third sector partnerships*

Maximise efficiency in our support services by pooling budgets, resources and investments in Property, Customer services (electronic self-service systems so that the public can serve themselves) and Support services

## 3.2 Powys Regeneration Strategy (2011)

3.2.1 The Powys Regeneration Strategy provides a framework within which the County Council and its partners will ensure that regeneration is embedded into everyday practice, to deliver outcomes which will have a positive impact upon not just the physical, social, environmental, but the economic and cultural attributes of the county as well.

3.2.2 It is based around a vision that:

*“Regeneration in Powys will nurture and promote the County’s assets and strengths as the means to addressing its weaknesses, by establishing a robust and sustainable economy that is based upon vibrant communities, and which enhances and protects the physical, social and cultural environment of Powys.”*

3.2.3 The Vision is to be realised and supported by *Regeneration Objectives*, which will create a clearer decision making framework for Powys County Council. The regeneration objectives that relate to Community Facilities include:

*Objective 1: Green Powys*

The natural and built environments of Powys are key assets and every opportunity will be taken to sustain and enhance these attributes for the benefit of current and future generations of residents and visitors.

*Objective 3: Resilient Communities*

The County’s communities will become more resilient, supportive and healthy.

*Objective 5: Access to Services*

Powys residents will have access to a choice of services from a range of integrated agencies and community organizations.

*Objective 7: Cultural Powys*

Powys will be positively associated the output of its artistic and cultural endeavours and the vitality of the Welsh language.

3.2.4 In order to guide the delivery of the Vision and Objectives, 11 Regeneration Priorities have been developed and are specific areas of focus for activity. The priorities of specific relevance to this topic paper include:

*Maximise the Regenerative Impacts of Education & Training Expenditure*

The strategy identifies that the County currently faces a number of education challenges such as the large number of small schools resulting in a high unit cost per pupil. However, there are opportunities, notably through the Council’s *School Modernisation Programme*, which offers the opportunity to create integrated community and skills ‘hubs’ across the county. It recognises the need to prioritise projects where the *Schools Modernisation Programme*, investment in ICT and creation of co-located facilities can maximise the regenerative impact of educational expenditure on communities across Powys.

*Council Assets as a Regeneration Catalyst*

The County Council is a significant owner of land and premises which could be used to promote regeneration. However, the County Council is facing difficult decisions in terms of asset management. Only 39% of the Councils buildings are in either a good or satisfactory condition (Wales average is 67%)

and almost 60% of the Council owned buildings in Powys are in poor condition compared with a Wales average of 29%. The closure and/or disposal of assets (or liabilities) may be a means of income generation and revenue reduction for the County Council. However, the Strategy recommends a holistic approach to property rationalisation is adopted so that regeneration objectives are considered against short term financial benefits. By adopting a more holistic approach to asset management the County Council needs to use their assets as catalysts for initiatives which reduce the budget deficit but also have positive long term outcomes on the socio-economic wellbeing of the County.

3.2.5 The delivery of the Strategy centres on a three year Action Plan, which summarises the actions and recommendations of the strategy. This effectively details the 'quick wins' and provides some targets for each of the regeneration priorities. The current action plan is for 2014-17 and, in relation to community facilities, includes the roll out of Powys' Community Hub project which aims to enable communities to provide multi-use, community-run and led buildings, which are proactive in enabling a range of services to improve the quality of life for the whole community.

## **4.0 COMMUNITY FACILITIES IN POWYS – LOCAL CONTEXT**

### **4.1 The Powys Regeneration Strategy**

The Regeneration Strategy provides a brief summary of the geographic, demographic and economic context of the county, extracts of which are detailed below:

#### *4.1.1 Geography*

Powys is an extensive, largely upland and extremely rural county covering over 5,000 square kilometres of the centre of Wales (approximately one quarter of the area of Wales).

Powys is a land-locked county at the centre of Wales. Its long boundary with England to the east adjoins Shropshire and Herefordshire and it borders 11 Welsh counties to the north, south and west. This suggests that the process of implementing this strategy will need to be undertaken in partnership with internal stakeholders, as well as those on Powys' borders.

The geographical features of the county present it with a number of unique assets, but also a range of challenges. The scale of the county and dispersed nature of the population presents challenges for the delivery of services in an equitable and efficient way. Budget cuts and rising transportation costs place an even greater strain on these services.

The geographical nature of Powys and the fact that there are no motorways and few dual carriageways has implications for accessibility and access to key services.

Generally travelling distances for residents is greater, the cost of which will be impacted by the volatility of fuel prices. Some rural areas do not have access to broadband internet and suffer from a lack of mobile phone coverage which restricts the ability to dispense information and services via the internet and affects business location and the ability of people to work from home.

#### 4.1.2 *Demography*

The current and projected demographic profile of the area presents a number of challenges for the future of Powys. With 26 persons per square kilometre (2008), Powys is the most sparsely populated county in England and Wales. The overall population of the county is growing at a slow rate due to net in-migration rather than natural growth. However, within the 15 to 29 year old age bracket there has been net out-migration, highlighting a key issue faced by the county of an aging population and so called 'brain drain'.

Limited higher education opportunities, a perceived lack of employment opportunities and poor access to services, and relatively high house prices is leading to the out-migration of the younger, economically active population. Alongside this, the quality of life that Powys offers is attracting a significant number of older people to the area and life expectancy is increasing resulting in an average age above the national average (44.0 in Powys in 2008 compared to 40.9 in Wales). In Powys in 2008 21.6% of the population were aged 65 and over compared to 18.0% in Wales as a whole. The increasing age of the population will put a further strain on services.

## **4.2 The One Powys Plan**

4.2.1 A Joint Strategic Needs Assessment was prepared to inform the preparation of the One Powys Plan. Underpinning this overarching Assessment, and of particular relevance to this topic paper, is a Transport Joint Needs Assessment (31/3/11), which identifies that:

4.2.2 The inability to access a range of services considered necessary for day to day living is a key determinant of deprivation and has a significant impact on individual's health and well being. Given the geography of the county, this issue is particularly acute in Powys.

In areas which lack both local services and public transport, private transport is a necessity forced upon all households, including those in poverty, for reaching the distant services and workplaces.

Further more, significant population groups are not able to drive a car and they are always disadvantaged where there is no public transport; Notably these will include vulnerable groups such as the young, elderly, sick, visually impaired, physically disabled, learning disabled, illiterate, and the carers left at home when the wage earner has left for work in the household car.

4.2.3 As lack of public transport is such a major barrier to access to services for the poor and vulnerable the Welsh Government's Welsh Index of Multiple Deprivation 2014 (WIMD) Access to Services domain measures time taken to access to services by public or private transport and /or on foot.

4.2.4 The WIMD identifies that in 2013 80,357 Powys people, equivalent to 61% of the population, were living in an area ranked among the worst 20% of areas in Wales for access to services. 20,776 of these were aged 65 or over and 12,834 were children under the age of 16.

4.2.5 The WIMD also provides the following, more service specific, information:

- In 2014, 54% of the Powys population live in an area where it takes on average more than half an hour to reach a food shop by public travel, compared to Wales 14%.
- In 2014, 63% of the Powys population live in an area where it takes on average more than half an hour to reach a GP surgery by public travel, compared to Wales 24%.
- In 2014, 48% of the Powys population live in an area where it takes on average more than half an hour to reach a primary school by public travel, compared to Wales 11%
- In 2014, 68% of the Powys population live in an area where it takes on average more than half an hour to reach a secondary school by public travel, compared to Wales 43%
- In 2014, 53% of the Powys population live in an area where it takes on average more than half an hour to reach a post office by public travel, compared to Wales 13%
- In 2014, 63% of the Powys population live in an area where it takes on average more than half an hour to reach a public library by public travel, compared to Wales 36%
- In 2014, 62% of the Powys population live in an area where it takes on average more than half an hour to reach a pharmacy by public travel, compared to Wales 21%.
- In 2014, 68% of the Powys population live in an area where it takes on average more than half an hour to reach a leisure centre by public travel, compared to Wales 45%.
- In 2014, 1% of the Powys population live in an area where it takes on average more than half an hour to reach a petrol station by private travel, compared to Wales 0%.

Source: 2014 Welsh Index of Multiple Deprivation from Welsh Government © Crown Copyright and 2013 Mid Year Population Estimates for Lower Super Output Areas from ONS © Crown Copyright

## **5.0 COMMUNITY FACILITIES IN POWYS – CURRENT & FUTURE PROVISION**

### **5.1 Education Facilities**

5.1.1 As identified in section 3.1 of this topic paper the One Powys Plan (2014-2017) has identified that “all children and young people are supported to achieve their full potential” as one of its ten outcomes. This outcome has the associated action to “ensure that a high quality of education is accessible to all. This includes the development and implementation of a school transformation policy which provides a vision and infrastructure for 21<sup>st</sup> century schooling for a bi-lingual future”. Under this action the Schools Service aims to develop a fit-for-purpose model for

- Primary schools;
- Special schools;
- Secondary schools; and
- Post-16 provision

This educational provision will be based on a principle of community-focussed services and will be achieved by the Schools Modernisation and Transformation Programme.

5.1.2 The Schools Modernisation Programme is developing a sustainable education system by providing modern learning environments which are efficient and cost-effective. To do this, the Schools Service is aiming to achieve the following over the next two decades:-

- Bring all school buildings to a Grade A or B physical condition
- Improve the overall condition, suitability and sustainability of its building stock by reducing the overall level of surplus student places to under 10%, with all schools having capacity levels of between 85% and 105%.

The above targets will be achieved through three major work streams:-

- Review of small primary schools or streams
- Area reviews of primary schools
- Reviews of secondary schools and Post-16 provision

5.1.3 In addition to reducing surplus student places by closing schools or removing physical blocks within a school, the Schools Service is also exploring the possibility of reducing surplus places by assessing the potential for alternative community use of spaces, in line with Powys Children & Young Peoples Partnership's "Community Focused Services Strategic Plan" ([www.cypp.powys.gov.uk/index.php?id=7210](http://www.cypp.powys.gov.uk/index.php?id=7210)) and Welsh Government Circular 34/2003 "Community Focused Schools", detailed in section 2.6 of this paper.

5.1.4 Powys Council's Welsh in Education Strategic Plan (2014-17) has 3 strategic aims:

1. To ensure that by 2020, all primary school pupils in Powys have the opportunity to attend a Welsh-medium primary school if they choose.
2. To provide robust linguistic continuity of Welsh-medium provision across all key phases of education.
3. To ensure that by 2020, all young people have the opportunity to access a designated Welsh-medium secondary school within the county or outside the county, if they choose.

This Plan will result in:

- more pupils learning through the medium of Welsh
- more pupils progressing to a Welsh-medium stream/school in the secondary sector, allowing a wider choice of subjects to be offered
- a better range of Welsh-medium provision at all Powys dual-stream secondary schools
- more schools being either Welsh-medium or delivering Welsh-medium provision through a dual stream system; and
- better linguistic progression from pre-school to the end of Key Stage 4 and into Post-16 Education

5.1.5 By carrying out the above actions, the Authority anticipates that between 2015 and 2030 the county will reduce the number of primary schools from the current 86 to around 65-70 schools, with the average school size increasing from just above 110 to between 150-175.

Nonetheless, it is recognised that the School's Service is required to provide home-to-school transport for all learners living more than two miles (primary) or three miles (secondary) from their allocated school. The reduction and reconfiguration in the number of schools within the Authority may increase CO<sub>2</sub> emissions as the number of learner miles increases.

#### *5.1.6 Primary School Provision*

Since 2013, the following primary schools have closed:

- Beguildy C in W School
- Llanigon C P School

The Cabinet of the Authority has in addition approved the closure of Whitton (Aided) School, and the authority is currently waiting for the decision on this proposal from the minister.

The cabinet at their meeting on the 11<sup>th</sup> November 2014 approved a new Transformation policy with the initial review being undertaken in the town of Welshpool and surrounding area..

#### *5.1.7 Secondary School & Post 16 Provision*

In Powys there are 12 Secondary Schools over 13 sites, one site in each of the following towns :

Brecon / Builth Wells / Crickhowell / Gwernyfed / Presteigne / Llandrindod Wells / Llanfyllin / Llanfair Caereinion / Llanidloes / Newtown / Welshpool / Machynlleth / Ystradgynlais.

Further Education and some higher education provision is provided by Grwp NPTC. The Centre of Alternative Technology (CAT) in Machynlleth provides Postgraduate education courses in Architecture and Environmental studies, relating to renewable energy and also provides educational visits for local schools.

Whilst there are currently no proposals to close any of the above-mentioned Secondary School sites the authority has just commenced a review to consider a range of options for the delivery of Secondary & Post 16 education in the County.

## **5.2 Health Facilities**

5.2.1 Powys teaching Health Board (PtHB) is responsible for the provision of health care services in the County.

5.2.2 Current health facilities in the County include 17 GP Surgeries, 23 dental practices, 4 Minor Injury Units (at Brecon War Memorial Hospital, Llandrindod Wells County War Memorial Hospital, Welshpool Victoria Memorial Hospital and Ystradgynlais Community Hospital) and 6 other Community Hospitals, as follows:

- Bronllys Hospital;
- Glan Irfon Health and Social Care Centre (Builth Wells);
- Knighton Hospital;
- Llanidloes War Memorial Hospital;
- Machynlleth Community Hospital (Bro Dyfi); and
- Montgomery County Infirmary (Newtown);

There are, however, no District General Hospitals (DGHs) in Powys. DGH coverage for Powys is provided by the following:

North East Powys - Shrewsbury and Telford Hospitals

North West Powys - Aberystwyth Hospital

South Powys - Hereford, Abergavenny, Merthyr Tydfil and Aberystwyth

5.2.3 The core aim of PtHB is to improve the quality and range of services available to local people and to ensure timely access to safe and appropriate health services when needed. However the PtHB faces a number of challenges if it is to achieve this aim, including:

- the rural nature of Powys;
- a small population living in a large geographical area;
- the increasing average age of local people;
- delivery of advances in medicine in small communities; and
- a difficult financial and economic climate

5.2.4 The PtHB in response to these challenges has produced a discussion document “New Directions For Powys” which identifies that if the PtHB does not change the way in which it provides services then it is likely that more and more people would need to travel out of the County for treatment and local services could be lost.

5.2.5 Of specific relevance to this topic paper is the proposal contained within the New Directions document relating to the County’s Community Hospitals. The document identifies that each of Powys’ hospitals has a small number of beds providing high quality care. Many of the wards were built some time ago and are unlikely to withstand the demands of the next 100 years. All these buildings require support services such as cleaning, catering and have the unavoidable cost of heating and lighting. The small number of beds in each hospital means that they are now some of the most expensive to run in Wales.

There are also a number of care homes across the county for which demand will increase as people live longer. Currently people are not always able to remain in their own community to access the type of care home that they need.

The PtHB therefore believes that by bringing these facilities together it can continue to provide services to people in Powys, close to where they live.

However, the PtHB identifies that it can no longer be constrained by buildings that it already owns, proposing a health and social care centre in each of the main towns in Powys to bring together the different types of options for care.

In Builth Wells the Community, PtHB and the Council worked together to provide such a health and social care centre. The facility, the Glan Irfon Health and Social Care Centre, provides a modern, high quality environment and a focus and beacon for care in which the community can take pride.

PtHB propose to work towards such a solution for each community in the county. This is a 5-10 year process of renewal of health and social care services. However, each area of Powys has a different history, community, care needs and local facilities. The solution for each community will also therefore be different according to local circumstances.

In this regard, the PtHB invited the Prince's Foundation for the Built Environment to work with local people to consider a new vision for the Bronllys Hospital site. Several suggestions for the development of the site have been made and PtHB continued its dialogue with the local community to discuss the options for the long term future of the Bronllys Hospital site in 2014.

5.2.6 In addition, the New Direction document identifies that the PtHB and Powys County Council are committed to working closely together as both organisations have a common purpose to provide high quality public services to the people of Powys and share common challenges in providing services to a sparse, rural population with limited resources. PtHB and PCC therefore aim to bring together health and social care services as a single integrated service.

### **5.3 Leisure Facilities**

5.3.1 There are 15 Leisure Centres proportionally spread out across the county, with varying facilities including 13 centres with swimming pools, 14 with fitness suites and nearly all with access to sports/events halls. Thirteen of the fifteen leisure centres are located on high school sites (the other 3 being Knighton, Hay on Wye and Rhayader sports centres). The leisure centres in the County currently provide a number of different services, including healthcare, resources for schools and activities for the public, but there may be potential to locate other services to Leisure Centre sites.

5.3.2 However, the affordability of the existing infrastructure is in question due to a backlog of maintenance, repair and replacement issues amounting to at least £850k (required annually). This includes the repair & maintenance of 8 dual-use learning/community premises including school halls, Artificial Turf Pitches (ATP's), Redgra's etc which are essential for key stage learning. Therefore, in June 2014, Powys County Council Cabinet considered a report on the future management and delivery of leisure services in the county and a decision was taken to agree to the procurement of a suitable leisure operator / partner to manage and deliver Leisure Services in Powys. This will reduce the need to decommission the number of centres required to meet the increasing financial pressures and will support the future sustainability of leisure services for residents and the communities in Powys.

5.3.3 More detailed information on Leisure Centre Provision within the County is contained within the Powys Local Development Plan Topic Paper entitled "Environment – Leisure and Recreation".

### **5.4 Library Facilities**

5.4.1 The public library service within Powys is a much valued community service. It exists to provide equal and unbiased access to knowledge, information and ideas. Among the service's aims are:

- The promotion of reading and a literacy culture
- Support for formal learning

- To provide a resource for all who are engaged in informal learning
- Provide for the information needs of groups and individuals

5.4.2 There are 18 libraries in Powys, as follows:

Brecon / Builth Wells / Crickhowell / Hay on Wye / Knighton / Llandrindod Wells / Llanfair Caereinion / Llanfyllin / Llanidloes / Llanwrtyd Wells / Machynlleth / Montgomery (run as an agency by Montgomery Community Council for Powys Library and Archives Service) / Newtown / Presteigne / Rhayader / Talgarth / Welshpool / Ystradgynlais

As well as the usual library services these branches offer a wider range of services including: Gallery/Exhibition Space, Computers/Printers/Scanners, Wi-Fi, Fax/Photocopiers and access to a wide range of council services (e.g. council bill payment facilities).

5.4.3 In addition to the above, there are 4 mobile libraries that supply services over 38 routes in Breconshire, Radnorshire and the Newtown & Welshpool areas of Powys.

5.4.4 The public library service is a statutory responsibility of the Local Authority under the Public Libraries & Museums Act, 1964.

More recently, the responsibility to provide a “comprehensive and efficient service” has been defined under the Welsh Public Library Standards framework. Under the Welsh Public library standards, the aggregate provision of publicly accessible space should be 27m<sup>2</sup> per 1,000 population and Powys is broadly on target, based on current provision.

5.4.5 The Library Service Asset Management Plan (2010) identified that Powys maintains a relatively high number of service points in relation to the size of its population. The County provides a branch or mobile library for every 5,763 residents, as compared with the Welsh average of 8,691.

However, when benchmarked against other library authorities with comparable population sparsity, Powys is average. Moreover, distances mitigate against further rationalisation, with only 57% of households located within a two-mile radius of a library.

5.4.6 Nonetheless, in 2014 the Council undertook a review of its library service as the continued national spending squeeze and resulting cuts in funding for public services and local government in particular have had a huge impact on the Council’s annual budgets and ability to deliver services. The need to make financial savings, together with the requirements of the Welsh Public Library Standards, is the key driver for finding alternative ways of delivering Powys’ Library Service.

This review resulted in the Council's decision, on the 21<sup>st</sup> October 2014, to:

1. Reduce branch library opening hours and frequency of mobile library visits with affect from 1st April 2015.
2. To support further engagement with individual libraries and communities regarding future provision of the library service to include looking at opportunities for co-location and other alternative methods of delivery.

## **5.5 Village/Community Halls**

5.5.1 There are over 100 village halls and community centres in the County, which host a variety of important services for the County's communities including encouraging and enabling lifelong learning, a range of sustainable projects and social or recreational activities.

5.5.2 The Halls vary in size and ownership, from Halls that are owned by Powys County Council but are leased out to Management Committees, to those that are completely independent but provide community facilities.

The communities they serve also vary from very small villages with populations of hundreds to larger centres of population in and around the main towns of Powys such as Welshpool, Newtown, Llandrindod Wells, Knighton, Builth Wells and Ystradgynlais.

Approximately 30 of the supported Village Halls have extensive use by primary schools, many providing space for sport, lunches and music and arts activities.

5.5.3 The Council, through its Community Asset Transfer policy is able to transfer control of some Local Authority controlled halls to local communities.

## **5.6 Youth Centres**

5.6.1 Powys' Youth Service strives to ensure that all young people have access to, and are involved in decisions about the services, support, opportunities, activities and experiences which will enable them to gain the personal, social, emotional, intellectual and practical skills they need to get the best from their lives now and in the future. As part of its work it operates a number of youth centres throughout the County to promote social inclusion and community cohesion.

5.6.2 A new Youth Service strategy for the period 2013 – 2017 is currently being implemented. Part of the strategy is to reduce the number of centres it was responsible for to five 'hub' centres (see below) whilst striving to deliver youth services across a number of 'spoke' locations the county.

Currently the Youth Service delivers services from the following 'hubs':

- Brecon Youth Centre
- Llandrindod Wells Youth Centre
- Newtown Youth Centre (Maesyrhandir)
- Penrhos Youth Centre, Ystradgynlais
- Welshpool Youth Centre

Two Centres (Penrhos and Welshpool) host Skate Park recreation facilities.

The service currently is responsible for two further buildings but is exploring whether this responsibility can be relinquished:

- Llanidloes Youth Centre
- Llanfyllin Youth Centre

In addition, services are delivered in the following areas, where the service is not responsible for the premises:

- Crickhowell (Crickhowell High School)
- Hay-on-Wye (Hay on Wye Primary School)

- Knighton (Leisure Centre / Community Centre)
- Machynlleth (Ysgol Bro Hyddgen)
- Talgarth (Football Club)

5.6.3 The Council's Leisure & Recreation Department / Youth Service also have the following assets:

- Crickhowell Old School (leased out to Arts Alive Charity)
- Newtown New Hall (leased out to Newtown Town Council)
- Newtown Scout Hut (leased out to Newtown Scouts)
- Rhayader Bryntirion Old Canteen (leased out to the Rhayader and District Young Farmers Club)
- Presteigne Old School Hall (leased out to 'Presteigne Youth Project')
- Rhayader Dolgerddon Hall (leased out to YMCA Wales)

## 5.7 Cemeteries

5.7.1 Cemeteries play an important role in our local communities. They have an important function as burial grounds but can also hold significant environmental, historical and cultural value.

5.7.2 Whilst many burial grounds are in private ownership, a "Bereavement Services Review" undertaken for the Council in November 2008, identifies that the Council maintains 19 cemeteries across the County (although 2 are old churchyards and another is a very small disused burial ground), as follows:

1. Brecon Cemetery, Cradoc Road, Brecon, Powys
2. Buttington Cemetery, Buttington, Powys
3. Castle Caereinion Cemetery, Castle Caereinion, Powys
4. Guilsfield Cemetery, Cemetery Lane, Guilsfield, Powys
5. Hay-on-Wye Cemetery, Brecon Road, Hay-on-Wye, Powys
6. Knighton New Cemetery, Knighton, Powys, LD7 1HY
7. Knighton Old Cemetery, Knighton, Powys, LD7 1EW
8. Llandrindod Wells Cemetery, Llandrindod Wells, Powys, LD1 6AS
9. Llanfilo Churchyard, Llanfilo, Brecon, Powys
10. Llanfyllin Cemetery, Bridge Street, Llanfyllin, Powys
11. Llanwrtyd Wells Cemetery, Llanwrtyd Wells, Powys, LD5 4AD
12. Machynlleth Cemetery, Tregarth, Machynlleth, Powys
13. Montgomery Cemetery, Tanymur, Montgomery, Powys
14. Nant Ddu (Cwmtaff) Cemetery,
15. Newtown Cemetery, Pool Road, Newtown, Powys
16. Presteigne Cemetery, Presteigne, Powys, LD8 2LR
17. Rhayader Cemetery, Rhayader, Powys, LD6 5DH
18. Welshpool (Maesgwastad) Cemetery, Mount Street, Welshpool, Powys
19. Oddfellows Burial Ground, Oddfellows Road, Ystradgynlais

5.7.3 The Bereavement Services Review identified that additional space was required in some locations and as a result the following actions have been undertaken or are ongoing:

- Extensions to Welshpool and Machynlleth Cemeteries have been undertaken; and
- Improvement works have taken place in Rhayader and Llanfilo

- Discussions are taking place to acquire additional burial space in Hay-on-Wye

5.7.4 In addition to the above-mentioned Authority controlled burial grounds, the Council is only aware of capacity issues with one other burial ground, located in Llanymynech and jointly owned by Llanymynech and Pant Parish Council.

## **5.8 Post Offices**

5.8.1 In May 2007 the Government announced a range of proposed measures to modernise and reshape the network of Post Office branches. This announcement was in response to fewer people using Post Office branches, partly because the traditional services branches offer (including benefits payments and other services) are now available from other sources such as online or directly through banks.

The Government announcement led to Post Office Ltd commencing a Network Change Programme. As part of this Programme, Post Office Ltd published a Central Wales Area Plan (March 2008) setting out changes that it proposed to make to the Post Office network in the region. This programme included the closure, in Powys, of Cwmgiedd (Ystradgynlais), Evenjobb (Presteigne), Garth-Owen (Newtown), Llanfaes (Brecon) and Ridgebourne (Llandrindod Wells) Post Offices and the temporary closure of Nantoer (Newtown).

Nonetheless, Post Office Ltd identify in their "Network Change Programme - Additional Consultations Decision Booklet" that it will still remain the largest retailer by network size in the area and will still have more branches open than all of the major banks and building societies combined.

5.8.2 More recently, the Government has committed £1.34bn for the Post Office network to make sure there is no programme of further Post Office closures and to update branches. In November 2013, the Government committed a further £640m investment in the Post Office network for the period from 2015 to 2018. A major part of this programme of investment is the introduction of two new-style Post Offices:

1. Main Post Office branches with a dedicated Post Office Counter offering a full range of services in a modern environment and with extended opening hours; and
2. Local Post Office branches within a retail outlet that provides a range of services from the retail till.

This investment programme is intended to provide easily accessible Post Office branches with longer hours that are financially sustainable (<http://corporate.postoffice.co.uk/modernising-post-office>).

5.8.3 More information on rural retail provision within the County is contained within the Powys Local Development Plan Topic Paper entitled "Economy – Town Centres & Retail Development".

## **5.9 Emergency Services**

5.9.1 The geographical nature, sparse population and limited infrastructure of Powys presents particular difficulties for emergency service operators in the County and means that, in the event of emergency, the public in Powys can be at a higher risk due to the time taken for emergency services to reach them.

It is therefore essential that the Local Development Plan is supportive of proposals that will support emergency service provision within the County and recognises the importance of new development being well served by such facilities.

#### 5.9.2 *Police*

There are 16 Police stations in the County, as follows:

Brecon Police Station (Divisional Headquarters);  
Builth Wells Police Station (Not Continuously Staffed);  
Crickhowell Police Station (Not Continuously Staffed);  
Hay on Wye Police Station (Not Continuously Staffed);  
Knighton Police Station (Not Continuously Staffed);  
Llandrindod Wells Police Station;  
Llanfair Caereinion Police Station (Not Continuously Staffed);  
Llanfyllin Police Station (Not Continuously Staffed);  
Llanidloes Police Station (Not Continuously Staffed);  
Llanwrtyd Wells Police Station (Not Continuously Staffed);  
Machynlleth Police Station (Not Continuously Staffed);  
Newtown Police Station;  
Presteigne Police Station (Not Continuously Staffed);  
Rhayader Police Station (Not Continuously Staffed);  
Welshpool Police Station (Not Continuously Staffed); and  
Ystradgynlais Police Station (Not Continuously Staffed)

#### 5.9.3 *Fire*

There are 18 fire stations in Powys all located in the main settlements, as follows:

Northern Powys - Newtown, Machynlleth, Montgomery, Welshpool, Llanfair Caereinion, Llanfyllin & Llanidloes  
Central Powys - Knighton, Rhayader, Llandrindod Wells, Builth Wells, Llanwrtyd Wells & Presteigne  
Southern Powys - Brecon, Abercrave, Crickhowell, Hay-on-Wye & Talgarth

#### 5.9.4 *Ambulance*

The Transport Joint Needs Assessment that was prepared to inform the One Powys Plan (detailed above) identifies that:

The current Welsh Assembly Government annual national targets for ambulance response times are *“To maintain a monthly all-Wales average performance of ambulance services with at least:*

- 60% of first responses to Category A calls (immediately life threatening calls) arriving within 8 minutes within each LHB area. In addition, there is also an All Wales target of 65%.
- 70% of first responses to Category A calls (immediately life threatening calls) arriving within 9 minutes
- 75% of first responses to Category A calls (immediately life threatening calls)

*arriving within 10 minutes.”*

The percentage of emergency ambulance responses arriving within 8 minutes increased in Powys from 44% in 2006/07 to 60% in 2010/11 (Wales 56% in 2006/07, 65% in 2010/11).

The 12 Ambulance Stations located within the County are as follows:

North Powys Area - Knighton, Llansilin, Llanidloes, Newtown, Machynlleth, & Welshpool

South Powys Area - Brecon, Bronllys, Builth Wells, Crickhowell, Llandrindod Wells & Ystradgynlais

5.9.5 There is little change proposed to the emergency service infrastructure network in the County. However, one significant development is that of a new custom-built facility incorporating Llandrindod Wells Fire Station, a divisional police station for Dyfed Powys Police and a multi-disciplinary Justice Centre for Her Majesty’s Courts and Tribunals Service. This modern, energy efficient, building reduces carbon emissions and waste, whilst improving resource efficiency and reducing running costs through joint occupancy and the sharing of some key facilities.

## **5.10 Courts**

5.10.1 The Lord Chancellor and Secretary of State for Justice undertook a review of the provision of court services across England and Wales in 2010. The results of this review are detailed within the Ministry of Justice’s “Proposal on the provision of court services in Wales” (December 2010).

5.10.2 The Ministry of Justice’s document identifies that “At present, there are 530 courts across England and Wales, many of which have poor facilities and do not have sufficient workload to sustain them in the long term. For example, in 2009–10 magistrates’ courts were utilised for on average less than two thirds of their available time and on average a county court courtroom was used for only 180 days of the year. In addition, courts are located based largely on historical factors, often in close proximity to one another. They frequently do not take into account demographic changes and improvements in personal mobility”.

The document therefore considers that, in this period of financial constraint, the Estate needs to be reduced if the quality of court-houses is to be raised across the board and has a better balance in terms of workload.

5.10.3 With respect to Magistrates’ Courts in Dyfed Powys the document details that there are 10 magistrates courts in the Dyfed Powys area and that 3 of these are earmarked for closure (Ammanford, Llandovery & Cardigan). However, the three magistrates’ courts within the County of Powys continue to sit at Brecon, Llandrindod Wells and Welshpool.

5.10.4 One of the three courts within Powys, the Llandrindod Wells court, has been moved to a new purpose built facility that will be shared with the Fire, Police and Ambulance services in the town (as detailed in paragraph 5.9.5 above).

## **6.0 DATA / INFORMATION GAPS**

6.1 The Council is able to obtain significant information on Community Facilities owned and/or run by the Authority and its partners on the Local Service Board. This information often includes details of each individual asset and any plans for that asset's future.

Nonetheless, it is acknowledged that many communities in Powys may benefit from facilities that do not fall under the remit of the above mentioned service providers and details of such facilities are therefore more difficult to obtain, and long term strategies for their future may not be available.

In addition, many service providers are currently reviewing their plans for service delivery which will include proposals to open, expand or close facilities. Such proposals will continue to emerge throughout the life of the Local Development Plan.

Therefore, whilst this topic paper has endeavoured to identify as many current proposals as possible in order to provide an up-to-date position on community facilities in the County, the Local Authority will need to ensure that the Local Development Plan is sufficiently flexible to accommodate future changes throughout the Plan period.

## **7.0 DRIVERS OF CHANGE**

Community facility provision within Powys is subject to a number of 'Drivers of Change'. Drivers for Change currently identified include:

### **7.1 Demographic Change**

7.1.1 As identified in Section 4.1.2 of this topic paper, the current and projected demographic profile of the area presents a number of challenges for the future of Powys. With 26 persons per square kilometre (2013), Powys is the most sparsely populated county in England and Wales and the population is currently falling due to net out migration. Within the 15 to 29 year old age bracket there has been net out-migration, highlighting the key issue faced by the county of an aging population. Powys has the second highest average age in the whole of Wales and the largest population cohorts in Powys are the 60-64 and 65-69 year olds. For Wales and the UK on the other hand, the largest cohorts are 40-44 year olds and 45-49 year olds (Source: 2013 ONS Population Estimates Unit © Crown Copyright).

7.1.2 The implication of having a sparse population on community facility provision is therefore compounded by the changing demography of the county. A critical issue for Powys' community facility provision is therefore that the challenge of providing services in such a sparsely populated County may be heightened by an aging population putting greater demands on certain types of provision (for example greater demand for health care facilities) whilst reducing demand for other facilities (such as educational facilities).

## **7.2 Recession and Public Sector Funding Cuts**

7.2.1 The UK has experienced a recession after an extended period of continuous economic growth and its effects have been felt throughout the whole economy. The WAG's *Framework for Regeneration Areas* document identifies that "we have not yet seen all of the effects of the recession, since these will take time to work through the system and to be measured. We will need to retain the flexibility to respond to the challenges arising".

7.2.2 Current constraints on public sector finances, reflected in particular in the UK Government's Comprehensive Spending Review (CSR) and welfare reforms have had significant implications for the provision of community services in Powys. Service providers are now under greater pressure than ever to ensure that community services are provided in the most efficient and effective ways possible. Such a priority leads to changes in the way that services are provided in the County. Such changes include the development of new facilities, expansion of existing facilities, the closure of less efficient facilities and the integration of services into combined facilities.

7.2.3 The Council owns and runs a number of Community Facilities in Powys and has been investigating ways to change how it delivers such services in light of the budgetary pressure it is now under. In this regard, the Council ran a number of community delivery and budget workshops across the county during September and October 2014, where the financial forecast to 2020 and delivery of services was discussed.

The Council's aim is to engage communities in the difficult task of protecting highly valued services that are under threat due to severe cuts from Welsh Government and increased service delivery costs so that services are delivered locally. Therefore, in the future, it is anticipated that communities will be responsible for some services as the Council delivers fewer services and its role changes to an assisting and supporting role, alongside some continued service delivery.

This change in emphasis towards community delivery is reflected in the Council's new vision: *Strong communities in the green heart of Wales*.

## **7.3 Climate Change & Volatile Fuel Prices**

7.3.1 There is wide spread consensus that the climate is changing as a result of man's activities, and the rate of change is unprecedented. This is the view of the overwhelming majority of scientists with expertise in climate, environment and ecology. In addition, we have seen significant volatility in fuel prices in recent years.

7.3.2 The emphasis placed upon tackling climate change combined with volatile fuel prices may have a number of potential impacts upon community facilities in Powys, including:

- The need for facilities to be as environmentally friendly as possible. This may require the adaptation / extension of existing facilities or the replacement of existing facilities with more environmentally friendly replacements.

- A greater priority being placed on reducing the need to travel of both service users and service providers. Not only will this priority emphasise the importance of local service provision it will also affect the way in which people choose to access goods & services (with greater importance being placed on public transport links) and how service providers chose to offer their services.

## **8.0 KEY ISSUES**

The following section details a series of issues that have been identified through this paper relating to Community Facilities. Some of the issues can be defined as strategic in nature and influence the LDP's strategy whereas others may influence individual policies and proposals:

### **8.1 Rurality / Access to Services**

8.1.1 The inability to access a range of services considered necessary for day to day living is a key determinant of deprivation and has a significant impact on an individual's health and well-being. The Transport Joint Needs Assessment that underpins the *One Powys Plan* (see section 4.2.2 above) identifies that, given the geography of the county, this issue is particularly acute in Powys.

The Wales Spatial Plan (2008 update) highlights that ensuring good access to services across the Central Wales area is a key determinant of quality of life with particular emphasis on tackling the significant geographical and social inequalities of health, social care and well-being in the predominantly rural area of Central Wales.

8.1.2 It is evident therefore that community facilities, such as village halls and schools, are essential to the social & physical well-being of the community, support the vitality and viability of our rural settlements and the loss of such facilities undermines the sustainability of rural life.

The Local Development Plan must therefore support the provision of local facilities alongside improving access to existing facilities.

8.1.3 National planning policy and guidance (contained within Planning Policy Wales and its accompanying Technical Advice Notes) provides advice on the type of support the Local Development Plan may provide, including:

- Facilitating the provision of services as an essential part of new developments (where they are of a sufficient scale);
- Seeking to broaden the range of services available in local service centres to meet the needs of the catchment;
- Outside of identified service centres supporting the provision of local facilities, especially where they would be of benefit to rural residents distant from existing facilities; and
- Support the retention and expansion of these local facilities and set out the criteria to be applied when considering planning applications that will result in the loss of important village services.

## **8.2 Distribution of Development**

8.2.1 The significance of the role of Community Facilities in determining the distribution of development in the Local Development Plan is identified in national planning policy (Planning Policy Wales) which identifies that one of the criteria that may be used in determining which sites to allocate for development in a Development Plan is “the capacity of existing and potential infrastructure, including public transport, water and sewerage, other utilities and social infrastructure (such as schools and hospitals), to absorb further development, and the cost of adding further infrastructure”.

Further national policy and guidance (contained within Planning Policy Wales and its accompanying Technical Advice Notes) builds on this guidance by advising local authorities that information on the availability of services across the area will help to identify the most sustainable locations for development intended to meet general need and locations where a more proactive approach should be taken to meet essential community service requirements.

8.2.2 This topic paper and primary research including further engagement with service providers throughout the Local Development Plan’s preparation process provides the authority with information on the availability of community facilities. This information is essential in determining the most appropriate locations for new development.

8.2.3 Appropriate locations for new development will include locations that benefit from community facilities with spare capacity to accommodate new development. It may also include locations where, given that demand for community facilities within the County generally grows as a consequence of housing growth, the distribution of housing growth may arrest the decline in existing community facilities.

## **8.3 Land Needs**

8.3.1 National planning policy identifies that Local Development Plans should make provision for land for schools, further and higher education, places of worship, recreation and other community facilities.

There are a number of reviews, plans and strategies that relate to the community facility network in Powys, including the following:

### **8.3.2 *School’s Modernisation Programme***

Under this programme, educational facility provision in the County is undergoing a significant transformation.

Since 2008, a number of primary schools have closed, including:

- Ysgol Thomas Stephens
- Howey Church in Wales School
- Llangurig County Primary School
- Llanfihangel Yng Gwynfa Church in Wales School
- Ysgol Efferwly

In addition, primary school provision in other areas is being, or will be, reviewed, whilst secondary school & post 16 provision is also subject to review.

These reviews will undoubtedly lead to further changes to educational facility provision in the County, such changes are anticipated to include school closures, removal of physical blocks within a school and the development of new facilities.

### 8.3.3 *Powys Regeneration Strategy*

One of the outcomes of the *One Powys Plan* is stated as “Enabling joined up services for Powys citizens through public and third sector partnerships”. Under this outcome public bodies will ensure sustainable community focussed services by effectively managing assets and resources, this may include operating fewer, better utilised, higher quality facilities. In this regard, the *Regeneration Strategy* identifies that, due to current budgetary constraints, it will become increasingly difficult for the Council to sustain the current configuration of its property portfolio and the closure and/or disposal of assets may be a means of income generation and revenue reduction for the County Council.

### 8.3.4 *Powys teaching Health Board - New Directions*

As detailed within section 5.2, the *New Directions* document identifies that it can no longer be constrained by buildings that it already owns.

It is therefore proposing a health and social care centre in each of the main towns in Powys to bring together the different types of options for care. In Builth Wells such a development has taken place with the replacement of an existing hospital and care home with a purpose built facility on the site of the care home.

In addition, plans for the redevelopment of the Bronllys Hospital site are also being developed.

### 8.3.5 *Powys Youth Service Strategy (2013-17)*

Part of the Youth Service strategy for the period 2013 – 2017 is to reduce the number of centres it is responsible for to five ‘hub’ centres whilst striving to deliver youth services across a number of ‘spoke’ locations the county, in order to ensure best use of resources.

8.3.6 It is therefore essential that the Local Development Plan:

- Safeguards sites that have been identified for proposed new community facility developments;
- Provides a flexible approach that enables opportunities to enhance provision in key locations (and in this regard national policy identifies that policies should be adopted to locate major generators of travel demand including community facilities within existing urban areas or in other locations which are, or can be, well served by public transport, or can be reached by walking or cycling); and
- Enables the appropriate redevelopment of redundant community facilities

## 8.4 **Viability**

8.4.1 Given the budgetary pressures that may service providers now find themselves working under, particularly as a result of the economic downturn,

associated public sector funding cuts and the volatility of fuel prices, it is important that service providers find new ways of managing services.

8.4.2 In this regard there is significant emphasis placed on the importance of co-locating community services in order to ensure service provision continues to be effective and viable at the local level and a range of complimentary services are available. There are a number of proposals to integrate service provision across Powys, including:

Health – the Rural Health Plan (see section 2.5) emphasises the importance of integrated facilities and combined health & social care facilities are being proposed in each of the main towns in Powys. The Glan Irfon Health and Social Care Centre in Builth Wells is an exemplar of this approach.

Education – the Council's Schools Service, as part of the School's Modernisation Programme, is assessing the potential for alternative community use of spaces. The Welsh Government's circular on Community Focussed Schools identifies that schools can focus on the needs of the community and provide a range of services and activities to help meet the needs of its pupils, their families and the wider community.

Emergency Services & Courts – the combined emergency services centre (Fire, Police & Ambulance station) and new Magistrates' Court that has been developed in Llandrindod Wells (as detailed in paragraphs 5.9.5 & 5.10.4 above) illustrates the potential for the integration of services.

8.4.3 The Local Development Plan will therefore need to enable the provision of co-located community services. National planning policy (contained within Planning Policy Wales and its accompanying Technical Advice Notes) also identifies other ways in which the Local Development Plan may support the viability of community facilities, as follows:

- Outside of identified service centres support the provision of local facilities, with multi-purpose use identified as an appropriate way to ensure service viability, particularly in more remote areas;
- Adopt a positive approach to planning proposals designed to improve the viability, accessibility or community value of existing services and facilities (including village shops, post offices, rural petrol stations, village & church halls and rural public houses); and
- seek developer contributions towards community facilities

In addition, as detailed under 8.2 (above) demand for community facilities within the County generally grows as a consequence of housing growth. The distribution of housing growth may therefore arrest the decline in existing community facilities.

## **8.5 Key Issues for Inclusion in Deposit Plan**

8.5.1 The above paragraphs identify a number of issues relating to Community Facilities that the Deposit Draft Local Development Plan must address.

In order to ensure that the Deposit Draft Plan is succinct, it is considered that the identified issues can be summarised in the following statements:

LDP Key Issue 32 -

The LDP will need to direct development to locations that are best served by existing and potential infrastructure and services and to ensure that the location of development is co-ordinated with the review of public service provision.

LDP Key Issue 34 -

The LDP will support the provision and retention of community facilities and seek contributions from development to provision where appropriate.

## **9.0 OBJECTIVES**

The following objectives relating to this topic have been proposed for the LDP. They have been written to address the key issues identified in this topic paper and those identified in some of the other topic papers.

### *LDP Objective 2 – Sustainable Settlements and Communities*

To support sustainable development, access to services and the integration of land uses, by directing housing, employment and services development in accordance with a sustainable settlement hierarchy. Higher levels of development will be directed to Powys' towns and larger villages but where these are unable to sustain further growth due to capacity constraints, development will be accommodated in nearby towns or large villages.

(Addresses key issue 32)

### *LDP Objective 9 – Infrastructure and Services*

To support the provision of infrastructure and services to meet the future needs of Powys' communities.

(Addresses key issue 34)

### *LDP Objective 16 – Community Well-being*

To promote development that supports community wellbeing and cohesion, especially in communities suffering from multiple deprivation and social exclusion.

(Addresses key issues 32 & 34)

## **10.0 DEPOSIT DRAFT POLICIES**

The Policies below have been included in the Deposit Draft Plan to support and achieve the objectives above. These policies cover numerous issues and objectives, not just those identified in this topic paper.

It should be noted that some of these policies have not been repeated in their entirety. Full policy text and supporting justification for the policies (based on the content of this and other topic papers) is contained within the Deposit Draft Plan.

### **Policy DM1 - Strategic Planning Matters**

**All proposals for development must not compromise, or unacceptably adversely affect, either on their own or in combination with existing or approved development, the following:**

**1. The integrity, role or objectives of a settlement as defined by the LDP's Sustainable Settlement Hierarchy or lead to unacceptable detrimental pressure on existing community facilities, public service provision or infrastructure.**

**5. An existing community or indoor recreation facility unless it can be demonstrated that:**

**i. Appropriate alternative provision is to be made available or the potential for continued use is no longer viable; and**

**ii. Alternative solutions to support the long term use of the facility for the community have been adequately explored.**

*(Objectives 2, 9 & 16)*

### **Policy DM3 - Planning Obligations**

**Planning obligations will be sought by agreement with applicants, where necessary, to ensure that:**

**1. The development provides for adequate infrastructure necessary to serve the proposal, and that satisfactory maintenance arrangements are achieved;**

**2. Benefits in the public interest are secured where these are relevant and reasonably related to the proposal, and required to enable it to proceed.**

*(Objectives 9 & 16)*

### **Policy C1 - Community Facilities and Indoor Recreation Facilities**

**Proposals for community or indoor recreation facilities will be permitted where:**

**1. Proposals are within or adjoining a settlement identified in the strategic settlement hierarchy;**

**2. No suitable facility exists nearby which could appropriately accommodate the proposed use; and**

**3. The appropriateness and feasibility of multi-use has been considered.**

*(Objectives 2, 9 & 16)*

## 11.0 REVIEW OF UNITARY DEVELOPMENT PLAN POLICIES

UDP Policy	Comment	LDP Approach
UDP SP9 - LOCAL COMMUNITY SERVICES AND FACILITIES	A strategic policy that seeks to facilitate the continued availability and enhancement of community services across Powys in accordance with the UDP's sustainable strategic settlement hierarchy.	LDP Policies DM1 (criterion 1) and C1 seek to support the provision of community facilities appropriate in scale and nature to their location.
POLICY GP2 – PLANNING OBLIGATIONS	A generic policy that seeks to identify when planning obligations will be sought.	LDP Policy DM3 is a direct replacement for current UDP Policy GP2, with similar aims and objectives.
POLICY CS1 - LAND SAFEGUARDED FOR COMMUNITY FACILITIES	This policy supports proposals that enhance the provision of premises specifically for community services and facilities.	LDP Policy C1 directly addresses the aims and objectives of UDP Policy CS1.
POLICY CS2 - PROTECTING EXISTING COMMUNITY FACILITIES AND SERVICES	To ensure that residents throughout the county have access to a wide range of community facilities, this policy seeks as far as possible, to safeguard existing community premises from redevelopment.	The aims and objectives of UDP Policy CS2 are adequately addressed by LDP Policy DM1, criterion 5.
POLICY CS3 - ADDITIONAL DEMAND FOR COMMUNITY FACILITIES	This policy seeks to ensure that where new development and in particular new housing places a greater demand on local community facilities because of the additional users it is likely to generate, that planning conditions or obligations are	The aims and objectives of UDP Policy CS3 are adequately addressed by LDP Policy DM3.

	attached to any granting of consent to ensure provision or contribution towards community facilities.	
POLICY CS4 - SHARED USE OF EDUCATIONAL PREMISES FOR COMMUNITY PURPOSES	This policy supports appropriate shared use of educational premises for community purposes .	It is not considered necessary to prove a direct replacement for UDP Policy CS4 as its aims and objectives can be addressed by LDP Policies CS1 (criterion 3), DM1 (criterion 5) and DM2 (criterion 10).
POLICY CS5 - EDUCATIONAL DEVELOPMENTS	This Policy supports the expansion or improvement of existing educational facilities when located in accordance with the UDP's strategic sustainable settlement hierarchy.	The aims and objectives of UDP Policy CS5 are adequately addressed by LDP Policy DM1 (criterion1) and CS1.
POLICY CS6 - HEALTH CARE DEVELOPMENT	This Policy supports the development and improvement of health care facilities when located in accordance with the UDP's strategic sustainable settlement hierarchy. .	The aims and objectives of UDP Policy CS6 are adequately addressed by LDP Policy DM1 (criterion1) and CS1.

## 12.0 MONITORING

Below are the proposed annual monitoring indicators that relate to the topic of Community Facilities.

It will be noted that no specific indicator targets have been identified relating to the level of community facility provision. This is due to the variety of facilities covered and also the period of significant change that is and will be experienced in the ways in which community facilities are delivered during the Plan period, with different models of service delivery emerging.

Nonetheless, it is proposed that more generally community service provision will be monitored in determining whether there has been any significant change in the role or function of a settlement and its subsequent consistency with the sustainable settlement hierarchy (see AMR 3).

In addition, the contribution planning makes to supporting the provision of community services will be monitored as part of the work to monitor the use of planning obligations (see AMR 11).

<b>Topic &amp; Reference</b>	<b>Role &amp; Function of Settlements – AMR 3</b>
<b>LDP Objective</b>	1 – Meeting future needs 2 – Sustainable settlements and communities
<b>Target</b>	Changes in the role and function of settlements in the sustainable settlement hierarchy throughout the lifetime of the LDP.
<b>Policies</b>	Chapter 3 & Appendices.
<b>Local Indicator</b>	Loss of services and facilities, de-population, demand for additional growth, major development impact. *To co-incide with full review of the plan.
<b>Source</b>	Community feedback, development management information.
<b>Triggers and Actions</b>	Any significant change to the role or function of a settlement and its subsequent consistency with the sustainable settlement hierarchy should be considered at the full plan review stage.

<b>Topic &amp; Reference</b>	<b>Planning Obligations – AMR 11</b>
<b>LDP Objective</b>	1 – Meeting Future Needs 2 – Sustainable Settlements and Communities 8 – Regeneration 9 – Infrastructure and Services
<b>Target</b>	Amount of planning gain achieved.
<b>Policies</b>	DM3
<b>Local Indicator</b>	Total amount of developer contributions (£) received for/towards: a. Transport infrastructure or improvements b. Utility infrastructure c. Affordable Housing provision d. Community facilities e. Health facilities

	f. Recreation and open space facilities g. Education/Welsh Language
<b>Source</b>	Development Management/ Section 106 monitoring officer Information.
<b>Triggers and Actions</b>	Monitoring for information and to ensure S106 contributions aren't pooled more than 4 times.

### 13.0 INVOLVEMENT

Information and comments from representatives of organisations with responsibility for Community Facilities have been sought throughout the preparation of this topic paper.

The initial draft of this paper was presented to and considered by the Council's LDP Working Group on the 19<sup>th</sup> October 2011. The LDP Working Group comprises of 9 County Councillors who provide a broad political and geographical coverage. The agendas, reports and minutes of past LDP Working Group meetings are available for viewing on the Council's website.

A draft of this topic paper was subsequently subject to a targeted consultation exercise from 29<sup>th</sup> November 2011 to the 30<sup>th</sup> December 2011 with the following stakeholders:

Organisation	Organisation	Representative (and LDP Representor Number)
Ambulance Stations	Welsh Ambulance Service NHS Trust	██████████ Estates Officer - LDP Representor No. 5893
Cemeteries	Powys County Council	██████████ Principal Environmental Health Officer - LDP Representor No. 4800
Community & Village Halls	Powys County Council	██████████ Community Regeneration Manager, - LDP Representor No. 5070
Courts	HM Courts & Tribunals Service - Courts Transformation (Wales)	██████████ Director - LDP Representor No. 5896
Fire Stations	Mid & West Wales Fire & Rescue	██████████ Estates Officer - LDP Representor No. 5892
Health	Powys teaching Health Board	██████████ Head of Strategic Planning - LDP Representor No. 4635
Health and Social Care Facilities	Powys County Council	██████████ Development Officer - Health, Social Care & Well - LDP Representor No. 5890

Higher Education	Coleg Powys	██████████ Estates Officer - LDP Representor No. 5895
Leisure Centres	Powys County Council	██████████ Service Strategy & Development Manager - LDP Representor No. 4806
Libraries	Powys County Council	██████████ Principal Librarian - LDP Representor No.1472
Police Stations	Dyfed Powys Police	██████████ Deputy Head of Estates - LDP Representor No. 5891
Primary & Secondary Schools	Powys County Council	██████████ Strategic Manager Schools Modernisation & ██████████ ██████████ Senior Manager Central Support Services - LDP Representor No. 5894
Youth Centres	Powys County Council	██████████ Principal Youth Officer & ██████████ ██████████ Senior Youth Support Services Manager - LDP Representor No. 5887

Feedback from this consultation exercise has influenced the content of the paper and, following the consultation exercise, subsequent discussion with stakeholders has taken place on an individual basis to further inform and update the paper.

In addition to the above, engagement with all Community Councils within the Plan Area was undertaken immediately following the commencement of the LDP preparation in January 2011, when the Council issued a 'Call for Candidate sites' over a 12 week period from 14th Feb 2011 to 6th May 2011. As part of this exercise, Community and Town Councils were asked to update and identify known community issues and needs (including issues/matters relating to community facilities). This exercise was repeated in a second phase undertaken in April and May 2013 to ensure that the most up to date information was available to inform the content of the Plan. Packs of information with relevant forms were sent to the Town & Community Councils and four evening question and answer briefing sessions were held as follows:  
17/4/2013 - Llandrindod Wells (The Gwalia) & Welshpool (Neuadd Maldwyn)  
18/4/2013 - Brecon (Neuadd Brycheiniog) & Carno (Community Centre).

The Deposit Version draft of this paper was presented to and considered by the Council's LDP Working Group on the 12<sup>th</sup> January 2015.