# WRITTEN STATEMENT

# BY

# THE WELSH GOVERNMENT

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| **TITLE** | **Powys County Council – Update** |
| **DATE** | **14 February 2018** |
| **BY** | **Alun Davies, Cabinet Secretary for Local Government and Public Services and Huw Irranca-Davies, Minister for Children and Social Care** |

This statement updates Assembly Members on the next phase of support to Powys County Council and the establishment of an Improvement and Assurance Board to oversee and coordinate the delivery of improvement in Powys County Council.

Following a request for statutory support under the Local Government (Wales) Measure 2009 from Cllr Rosemarie Harris, Leader of Powys Council, an external adviser, Sean Harriss, was appointed to carry out an independent assessment of the Council. Sean Harriss has now completed his review and the report, *Review of Leadership, Governance, Strategy and Capacity, January 2018* is available via the following link <http://gov.wales/topics/localgovernment/publications/review-leadership-governance-powys-county-council/?lang=en>

The report shows the Council has made progress but faces significant challenges in respect of strengthening its corporate leadership and capacity. The report also indicates these challenges can be overcome with increased capacity and capability in the local authority coupled with an enhanced and intense package of sector led improvement.

The Leader of the Council has confirmed she intends to implement the recommendations in the report and Welsh Government and the WLGA will be supporting her to do so.

We have agreed with the Council to take this opportunity to put in place a new Improvement and Assurance Board with a broader remit encompassing both corporate improvement and social services. This will replace the current Social Services Improvement Board. The purpose of the new Improvement and Assurance Board will be to assist the Leader in driving forward the required change and improvement in the local authority. The Board will be made up of the Leader, Deputy Leader and representatives of the opposition as well as a number of independent members, including the Chair, Jack Straw, who has been chairing the Social Services Improvement Board in Powys. Further details of the terms and reference and members will be provided to Assembly Members once they are confirmed.

In addition, the Welsh Ministers will be providing a further focused package of short-term support, led by an external adviser, to assist the Council in addressing the areas for immediate action outlined in Sean Harriss’ report.

This second phase of support will focus on:

* Developing a clear political and managerial vision for Powys, which sets out the ambition and outcomes for the area over the next three to five years, including a detailed strategy and delivery plans
* Developing a performance management system that measures the achievement of the Council's vision and outcomes and enables them to track performance in key service areas
* Developing a comprehensive organisational development and change strategy, in order to strengthen its corporate culture and behaviours
* Supporting the Council in working with key external partners on the Vision for Powys
* Strengthening strategic financial and budget planning processes

Sean Harriss has been appointed to take this work forward immediately with the Council over the next six weeks.

The Improvement and Assurance Board then consider what further support may be required once that work is complete.

Further updates on progress will be provided to the Assembly.