

COUNTY COUNCIL

WEDNESDAY, 6 DECEMBER 2023

PRESENT: Councillor B.A.L. Roberts (Chair) (In Person)

Councillors (In Person):

S.M. Allen	K.V. Broom	J.M. Charles	P. Cooper
C.A. Davies	W.R.A. Davies	H.L. Davies	L. Davies
S.L. Davies	A. Evans	H.A.L. Evans	L.D. Evans
W.T. Evans	J.P. Hart	J.K. Howell	P. Hughes-Griffiths
J.D. James	M. James	H. Jones	A. Lenny
N. Lewis	K. Madge	A.G. Morgan	M. Palfreman
D. Price	H.B. Shepardson	E. Skinner	D. Thomas
E.G. Thomas	J. Tremlett	A. Vaughan Owen	F. Walters

Councillors (Virtually):

L.R. Bowen	M.D. Cranham	A. Davies	T.A.J. Davies
C. Davies	G. Davies	K. Davies	LI.M. Davies
T. Davies	D.C. Evans	A.D. Harries	G.H. John
A.C. Jones	G.R. Jones	M.J.A. Lewis	A. Leyshon
D. Owen	S.L. Rees	E.M.J.G. Schiavone	J. Seward
R. Sparks	G.B. Thomas	P.T. Warlow	D.E. Williams

Also Present (In Person):

W. Walters, Chief Executive
C. Moore, Director of Corporate Services
G. Morgans, Director of Education & Children's Services
A. Williams, Director of Place and Infrastructure
P.R. Thomas, Assistant Chief Executive (People Management & Performance)
L.R. Jones, Head of Administration and Law
D.W. John, Head of Environmental Infrastructure
G. Morgan, Head of Democratic Services
L. Jenkins, Cabinet Support Officer
S. Rees, Simultaneous Translator
E. Bryer, Democratic Services Officer

Also Present (Virtually):

J. Morgan, Director of Community Services
R. Griffiths, Head of Place and Sustainability
R. Morris, Members Support Officer
M. Runeckles, Members Support Officer

Chamber - County Hall, Carmarthen. SA31 1JP and remotely - 10.00 - 11.20 am

Note: These minutes are subject to confirmation at the next meeting.

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors D.M. Cundy, S.A. Curry, B. Davies, M. Donoghue, N. Evans, R.E. Evans, S. Godfrey-Coles, T.M. Higgins, P. Hughes, R. James, B.W. Jones, D. Jones, D. Nicholas, B.D.J. Phillips, E. Rees, M. Thomas and J. Williams.

2. DECLARATIONS OF PERSONAL INTERESTS.

Councillor	Minute Number	Nature of Interest
C. A. Davies	Agenda Item 10.1 - Question by Councillor Hefin Jones to Councillor Alun Lenny, Cabinet Member for Resources.	Her husband is a tenant farmer.
K. Madge	Agenda Item 6.1 - Statutory Director of Social Care Services Annual Report 2022/23	Daughter works in Social Services.
M. Palfreman	Agenda Item 6.1 - Statutory Director of Social Care Services Annual Report 2022/23	Undertakes work as a consultant for public bodies (including this authority) advising on issues relating to the provision of Health and Social Care services. Cllr Palfreman had been granted dispensation by the Standards Committee allowing him to speak and submit written representation but not vote.
B.A.L. Roberts	Agenda Item 6.1 - Statutory Director of Social Care Services Annual Report 2022/23	Daughter works in Social Care.
P.T. Warlow	Agenda Item 6.1 - Statutory Director of Social Care Services Annual Report 2022/23	Wife works in Social Care.

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3. CHAIR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS (IF ANY)

The Chair referred to the recent passing of former Councillor Joy Williams and on behalf of the Council extended her sincere condolences to her family and friends.

The Chair advised that she had attended a number of events since last Council including the White Ribbon day event in Ammanford, the reopening of the recently renovated Parc Howard Museum and the opening of the enhanced sports facilities at Amman Valley Leisure Centre.

At the Chair's invite, the following Councillors addressed the Council:

- Councillor Hazel Evans congratulated the volunteers at Towy Gateway who undertake the gardening work at Parc yr Escob in the museum in Abergwili. The volunteers recently received the Kings Award for voluntary services.
- Councillor Jane Tremlett congratulated the Delta Wellbeing Team who had achieved four out of five awards at the Welsh National Care Awards and the Home Care Team who had also won an award.

4. ANNOUNCEMENTS BY THE LEADER, CABINET MEMBERS AND THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE (IF ANY)

The Council received the following two Cabinet Member announcements:

Cllr Ann Davies, Cabinet Member for Rural Affairs, Community Cohesion & Planning Policy provided Council with an update on two issues.

Following on from the landslide from the old coal heap in Tylorstown back in February 2020, Welsh Government undertook a review and Audit of all 2500 disused coal tips in Wales, 170 of which were in Carmarthenshire. The Cabinet Member for Rural Affairs, Community Cohesion & Planning Policy advised that there were 5 Coal Authority categories assigned by the coal tip safety taskforce and that there was one privately owned site that was assessed to be in Category C based in Pontamman, Ammanford that would be subject to annual inspections to ensure its continued safety.

The Cabinet Member for Rural Affairs, Community Cohesion & Planning Policy then went on to share the news that the Authority had recently been awarded the Sustainable Food Places bronze award in recognition of the County's commitment towards creating a sustainable, inclusive and resilient County-wide food system. She extended her thanks and congratulations to Alex Cook on leading this work and also to Augusta Lewis.

Following on from the Autumn statement made by the Chancellor Jeremy Hunt, Cllr Alun Lenny, Cabinet Member for Resources provided a summary of the Council's revenue position. He advised that as predicted the Chancellor had

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chosen not to use some the £25b funding to help public services despite the financial pressures on services such as education and social care. This would result in a real term reduction in funding from London to Welsh Government and from Cardiff to local councils. Councillor Lenny added that it would be another fortnight before the Authority would find out how much the Annual Revenue Support Grant (RSG) provisional settlement from Welsh Government would be. This grant equates to around 75% of income towards the day-to-day running of services and every 1% amounts to £3m.

Councillor Lenny stated that Cabinet would meet on the 22nd December, with a view of going out to public consultation immediately afterwards and that a series of seminars would be held with members, and also an Insight meeting with secondary school pupils. It was stated that currently there was a budget gap of £22m before efficiency measures and Council Tax increase.

An all-Wales meeting of council leaders and senior officers in Cardiff heard that the council tax increases being considered at this stage by individual Welsh councils ranged from 5% to over 10% but that the council tax increase in Carmarthenshire should be at the lower end of that range.

5. TO APPROVE AND SIGN AS A CORRECT RECORD THE MINUTES OF THE COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON THE 8TH NOVEMBER, 2023

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting of Council held on the 8th November, 2023 be signed as a correct record.

6. TO CONSIDER THE RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE CABINET IN RESPECT OF THE FOLLOWING ITEM:-

6.1. STATUTORY DIRECTOR OF SOCIAL CARE SERVICES ANNUAL REPORT 2022/23

[Note: Councillors K. Madge, M. Palfreman, B.A.L. Roberts, and P.T. Warlow having earlier declared an interest, re-iterated their declaration on this item and remained in the meeting for its consideration].

The Council was informed that the Cabinet, at its meeting held on the 30th October 2023 (minute 9 thereof refers) had considered the Annual Report of the Director of Social Services on the performance of social care services in the county for the year 2022/23. The report comprised an overview of performance in 2022/23 as well as an assessment on future provision, together with strategic priorities for 2024/25.

There was a statutory requirement for the Director of Social Services to report annually to Council on the delivery of services and performance as well as plans for the improvement of the whole range of social services. It was noted that the Health & Social Services Scrutiny Committee had endorsed the report at its meeting on the 4th October 2023.

Note: These minutes are subject to confirmation at the next meeting.

Council members thanked the Director of Community Services for his dedication to the service and hard work in providing a comprehensive report and paid tribute to the staff working within the portfolio.

The Cabinet Member for Social Care and Health responded accordingly to the queries raised.

UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED that the following recommendation of the Cabinet be adopted:

“that the Annual Report of the Statutory Director of Social Services on the Performance of Social Care Services in Carmarthenshire 2022/23 be approved.”

7. TO RECEIVE THE REPORT OF THE MEETING OF THE CABINET HELD ON THE:-

7.1. 30TH OCTOBER, 2023

In reference to Minute 12, of the Cabinet Meeting held on the 30th October, 2023 regarding the Notice of Motion Referred from Council (13th September 2023) on the Shadows Depression Support Group the Cabinet Member for Health and Social Services advised that staff were continuing to work with Shadows and had written to the Health Board who had advised that they were currently undertaking a review of all mental health services across the County.

RESOLVED that the report of the meeting of the Cabinet held on the 30th October 2023 be received.

7.2. 13TH NOVEMBER, 2023

RESOLVED that the report of the meeting of the Cabinet held on the 13th November 2023 be received.

8. TO CONSIDER THE FOLLOWING NOTICE OF MOTION:-

8.1. NOTICE OF MOTION SUBMITTED BY COUNCILLORS JOHN JAMES AND ANN DAVIES

Council considered the following Notice of Motion submitted by Councillor John James and Ann Davies:-

This Council condemns the heinous mass slaughter of innocent people in Israel on October 7th. Council is also horrified by the scale and consequences of the ongoing military retaliation in Gaza. We therefore call on the international community to:

Note: These minutes are subject to confirmation at the next meeting.

- i. Unite to deliver the humanitarian response needed to safeguard innocent lives devastated by this conflict, and ensure that access is given to food, water, medicines, and the power source which are all urgently needed.
- ii. Seek an immediate ceasefire to end the current human suffering.
- iii. Support the call from communities throughout the world for **ALL** hostages to be released and returned home to their families.
- iv. Work with Israeli and Palestinian representatives to bring an end to this current conflict and negotiate a permanent peace settlement which delivers security and a peaceful long-term future to this area based on the principle of a two-state solution.

The motion was duly seconded.

The proposer and seconder of the Motion were afforded the opportunity of speaking in support thereof and outlined the reasons for its submission, as set out in the Motion.

The following amendment to the motion was proposed by Councillor Gary Jones and was duly seconded:

- v. “Reaffirms Israel’s and Palestine’s right to exist and recognises that denying Israel’s right to exist is a form of anti semitism, as made clear in the IHRA’s definition of anti semitism. Recognising both Israel’s and Palestine’s right to exist is an essential step towards peace via a two-state solution”

The Proposer and Secunder of the Amendment were afforded the opportunity of speaking in support thereof and outlined the reasons for its submission, as set out in the Amendment.

Prior to opening the debate on the amendment, the proposer and seconder of the motion, confirmed that they were happy to accept the amendment as submitted, and agreed that the substantive motion be put forward for consideration.

A number of statements were made in support of the substantive motion.

Following votes it was

RESOLVED that the Substantive Motion, be supported.

9. PUBLIC QUESTIONS (NONE RECEIVED).

The Chair advised that no questions from the public had been received.

Note: These minutes are subject to confirmation at the next meeting.

10. QUESTIONS BY MEMBERS:-

10.1. QUESTION BY COUNCILLOR HEFIN JONES TO COUNCILLOR ALUN LENNY, CABINET MEMBER FOR RESOURCES

[Note: Councillor C. A. Davies, having earlier declared an interest in this item, re-declared her interest and left the meeting during the deliberations.]

Question by Councillor Jones:

“In setting out the likely entry criteria for the future Sustainable Farming Scheme, Welsh Government ministers, and the First Minister himself, recently reaffirmed the likely requirement for farming enterprises to have 10% of their farmed land under tree cover, and a further 10% as habitat land. In addition, there is a strong possibility that farming businesses will need to implement a range of carbon sequestration methods on land they manage to mitigate their own emissions, and /or will look to undertake habitat management work in line with support schemes to ensure sustainability.

Local authorities also have ambitions in relation to afforestation, along with aspirations and targets for emissions reduction and mitigation.

Will the Cabinet Member for Resources provide reassurance that Carmarthenshire County Council will NOT seek to use land that forms part of farmed council holdings for afforestation projects to achieve its own ambitions or meet its own targets, and ensure that farming and primary production enterprises run by tenants on the council’s rural estate have the best possible chance to be sustainable and continue to make a valuable contribution to our rural communities in this county?”

Response by Councillor Alun Lenny – Cabinet Member for Resources:-

Thank you Chair and thank you Hefin for the question. Different to the previous matter, this is a matter that we do have complete control over. To provide context and remind members, the Council does own nearly 2,500 acres of land on 23 farms – and that has been for more than a century. In the past there has been a tendency to let farms to new tenants as they become vacant, with little regard for land use.

Now, I grew up on a small farm, working the land until I was 24 years old – back in the age of small bales but agriculture has changed considerably since then and continues to do so. Therefore, the council is now discussing the use of every farm individually as the tenancy comes to an end, by consulting and considering how we can be sustainable to the new tenant and how we can be of benefit to the rural community. There is one, for example, we have started a pilot project with other partners to grow vegetables and fruit – as we’ve heard earlier this morning.

We also want to create woodland on various land owned by the Council to meet the target of mitigating carbon and the effect it has on the environment. Because

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what's at stake of course is the future of humankind. In a powerful speech at COP28 King Charles warned this: *"The world is dreadfully far off track on addressing climate change and unless we rapidly repair and restore nature's harmony and balance, our economy and survivability will be imperilled."* I never thought I'd be quoting the King in this Chamber!

Planting trees is one small part of restoring nature's harmony, but that is not by destroying entire farms by large companies for commercial profit. To answer Hefin's question plainly, this council that administers 23 farms on behalf of the people of Carmarthenshire, wants to do its utmost to ensure that tenants and their families have every opportunity to make a decent living on sustainable farms. If that means transferring mitigating rights to the tenant like planting a woodland and taking other mitigation measures then that's fine. I hope that answers the question Chair.

There was no supplementary question.

11. TO APPROVE THE FOLLOWING CHANGE TO MEMBERSHIP OF COMMITTEES:-

11.1. THE UNAFFILIATED MEMBERS HAVE NOMINATED COUNCILLOR JOHN JAMES TO TAKE THEIR VACANT SEAT ON THE PLACE, SUSTAINABILITY AND CLIMATE CHANGE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED that the Unaffiliated Members nomination for Councillor John James to take their vacant seat on the Place, Sustainability and Climate Change Committee be approved.

12. MINUTES FOR INFORMATION (AVAILABLE TO VIEW ON THE WEBSITE)

The Chair stated that the minutes outlined on the agenda under 12.1 – 12.8 were available for information on the Council website.

13. THE REPORT RELATING TO THE FOLLOWING ITEM IS NOT FOR PUBLICATION AS IT CONTAINS EXEMPT INFORMATION AS DEFINED IN PARAGRAPHS 14 OF PART 4 OF SCHEDULE 12A TO THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972 AS AMENDED BY THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT (ACCESS TO INFORMATION) (VARIATION) (WALES) ORDER 2007. IF, FOLLOWING THE APPLICATION OF THE PUBLIC INTEREST TEST, THE COUNCIL RESOLVES PURSUANT TO THE ACT TO CONSIDER THIS ITEM IN PRIVATE, THE PUBLIC WILL BE EXCLUDED FROM THE MEETING DURING SUCH CONSIDERATION.

UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED, pursuant to the Local Government Act 1972, as amended by the Local Government (Access to Information) (Variation) (Wales) Order 2007, that the public be excluded from the meeting during consideration of the following items as the reports contained exempt information as defined in paragraph 14 of Part 4 of Schedule 12A to the Act.

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**14. CWM ENVIRONMENTAL LTD - RESOURCE RECOVERY FACILITY (RRF)
REBUILD COSTS AND LOAN REQUEST**

Following the application of the public interest test it was **UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED**, pursuant to the Act referred to in Minute Item 13 above, to consider this matter in private, with the public excluded from the meeting as disclosure would be likely to place the business named in the report at an unfair disadvantage in relation to their commercial competitors.

Council considered a detailed report in relation to the establishment of a loan facility to CWM Environmental Ltd to enable the company to rebuild and equip a Resources Recovery Facility following the fire at the site on 24th April 2021.

RESOLVED:

- 14.1 To agree to the funding facility as detailed in the report;**
- 14.2 that should the opportunity arise for the company to acquire re-furnished plant, that it submits exception reports to the Council's Director of Corporate Services in accordance with Contract Procurement Rules**

CHAIR

DATE

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