

# COUNTY COUNCIL

**TUESDAY, 10 MARCH 2020**

**PRESENT:** Councillor K. Madge (Chair)

## **Councillors:**

S.M. Allen	L.R. Bowen	K.V. Broom	C.A. Campbell
J.M. Charles	D.M. Cundy	S.A. Curry	C.A. Davies
W.R.A. Davies	T.A.J. Davies	G. Davies	H.L. Davies
I.W. Davies	J.A. Davies	K.Davies	S.L. Davies
E. Dole	D.C. Evans	H.A.L. Evans	L.D. Evans
R.E. Evans	W.T. Evans	A.L. Fox	S.J.G. Gilasbey
C.J. Harris	P. Hughes-Griffiths	A.D. Harries	T.M. Higgins
J.K. Howell	J.D. James	R. James	D.M. Jenkins
G.H. John	C. Jones	B.W. Jones	D. Jones
G.R. Jones	H.I. Jones	A. Lenny	M.J.A. Lewis
K. Lloyd	S. Matthews	A.S.J. McPherson	E. Morgan
D. Nicholas	B.D.J. Phillips	J.G. Prosser	B.A.L. Roberts
E.M.J.G. Schiavone	A.D.T. Speake	L.M. Stephens	B. Thomas
D. Thomas	G.B. Thomas	G. Thomas	J. Tremlett
A.Vaughan Owen	D.T. Williams	D.E. Williams	J.E. Williams

## **Also Present:**

W. Walters, Chief Executive  
J. Morgan, Director of Community Services  
C. Moore, Director of Corporate Services  
G. Morgans, Director of Education & Children's Services  
R. Mullen, Director of Environment  
L.R. Jones, Head of Administration and Law  
K. Thomas, Democratic Services Officer

**Chamber, County Hall, Carmarthen, SA31 1JP - 10.00 - 11.00 am**

## **1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors F. Akhtar, J. Edmunds, P. Edwards, P. Hughes, A. James, J. Jenkins, T.J. Jones, A.G. Morgan, S. Najmi, S. Phillips, D. Price, H. Shepardson and E.G. Thomas

## **2. DECLARATIONS OF PERSONAL INTERESTS.**

There were no declarations of personal interests.

## **3. CHAIR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS.**

The Chair advised that Councillor S Davies was making a collection at the meeting in support of the Llanelli Visual Impaired Bowls Team.

The Leader of the Council provided an update on the coronavirus and the work being undertaken by the Council, public bodies and the Local Resilience Forum in preparing for a potential outbreak within the County.

**4. TO APPROVE AND SIGN AS A CORRECT RECORD THE MINUTES OF THE COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON THE 12TH FEBRUARY, 2020**

**UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED** that the minutes of the meeting of Council held on the 12<sup>th</sup> February, 2020 be signed as a correct record.

**5. PUBLIC QUESTIONS (NONE RECEIVED).**

The Chair advised that no public questions had been received.

**6. QUESTIONS BY MEMBERS:-**

**6.1. QUESTION BY COUNCILLOR BILL THOMAS TO COUNCILLOR GLYNOG DAVIES - EXECUTIVE BOARD MEMBER FOR EDUCATION AND CHILDREN**

“In July last year, Carmarthenshire County Council unanimously agreed a motion “to identify ways to move to the supply of milk in re-usable glass bottles instead of plastic in our primary schools”.

Ceredigion County Council recently announced that their schools are going to stop using 400,000 plastic bottles.

Will the Executive Board Member for Education and Children publish a detailed plan with timescales for implementing the unanimous instruction from members of this County Council so that empty plastic bottles will not have to be recycled by our primary schools in such large volumes?”

**Response by Councillor Glynog Davies, Executive Board Member for Education and Children:-**

Thank you for the question. It is something that we have referred to many times. It is a matter that we have discussed here in the Chamber. As the question refers specifically to Ceredigion County Council, I think it's important to state that our current milk contract in Carmarthenshire is a different one to the one that's in Ceredigion. Both agreements are separate. Our contract is for all the milk which goes to every school. So, every drop of milk that goes to any work within the school it comes under this contract. It's not just the milk for the pupils only. The milk which at the moment is set in plastic bottles. The contract that we have comes to an end in August 2021. So, basically, August next year. So, we have a year and five months of this contract left, and we are tied into that contract until then. We cannot do anything until then.

Ceredigion did a very interesting piece of work, a task and finish type piece of work, to review the milk provision, the free milk provision. But, we are also aware, as a county that Ceredigion at the moment is looking at milk dispensers and I think we should also look possibly at the new developments which are in this area. Ceredigion are consulting with larger schools to introduce milk from a dispenser. It will be cold milk as it comes from the fridge and I'm sure, the same as myself, if you can remember back to our

school days when we had the milk during the summer term it was in the sun and it was warm. So there is something to say about receiving milk that is really cold, which is much more acceptable. Now, this milk dispenser, from what I can understand, holds one pergal at a time. So a pergal, basically, it's approximately 24 pints and so therefore can provide 70 – 72 portions of milk, so a third of a pint that each child receives from those small plastic bottles at the moment. Ceredigion have also applied to the Welsh Government for a grant. There are grants available to buy these milk dispensers. It would be a grant from the Circular Economy Capital Fund. Those grants are available.

As a county we are involved with the WRAP Project, and that's the acronym which basically means Waste and Resources Action Programme. We are consulting thoroughly on what's happening and the developments in this area. The project is looking at the single use plastics and that is the controversial plastic, the plastic that is thrown away after only being used once, and we are all of course accepting that that is damaging, it's dangerous plastic. We are also looking at the milk contract in relation to the free school milk. Milk is provided for free. As well as that, we receive documentation and advice on how to apply for grants to implement these changes in future.

This movement that's in existence called WRAP has advised us that delivery options would differ from authority to authority depending for example on the location of the supply chain. A key message in our discussion with WRAP is that plastic isn't necessarily the problem, that is the advice that we are now being given and more focus is needed on whether the plastic is made from recyclable material or not. Further discussions would then be required with our current supplier with a possibility of a case study being carried out here in Carmarthenshire.

The current suppliers have confirmed that they would not be able to provide milk in glass bottles. They have said that clearly to us that it is not possible to do that but, there are other options, as I mentioned, available. I think it is important that we look at every possible option that would be able to meet our aim. I mentioned the milk dispensers and this pergal for larger schools or, for smaller schools 2 litre cartons. They would be possible. I mentioned of course the grants which are available and you can claim from two bodies, milk for children under 5 years old and then separate claims for pupils between 5 and 7 years old. We will have to have a way of managing how much milk is given to each child and there's a maximum of course in relation to the milk that children can receive every day. And, of course, the schools would have to wash the cups or the beakers, the staff would have to do that work. There is a grant for children between 5 and 7 years old. It's an administration grant so, there would be assistance available for the schools and schools who are using the pergals would be able to get some training. They need to clean these dispensers and they need to know how to do that and that is very important in relation to food safety.

We want to liaise further with neighbouring authorities to see how they intend to overcome some of these problems or issues that I did mention and then go back to our supplier to see what is possible within a year and five months. Once this work has been completed, and of course the work with WRAP, and that is very important as well, we'll be able to produce a bespoke plan for Carmarthenshire, a plan after being completed I would be very happy to share with you. But, at the moment, I believe that it is important for us to look at all possible options so that we can reach that aim of getting rid of these single use plastics. Thank you very much.

#### **Supplementary Question by Councillor Bill Thomas:**

It's good to hear the Welsh Government's funding is helping Ceredigion with their plans to implement this and also it's helping this Council, Carmarthenshire, with some of its plans as well so that's good news that Welsh government funding is being used for this purpose. Obviously we can learn from what Ceredigion is doing and how they are getting on with their plans and benefit from their experience. You mentioned the containers would be very important and what containers would be used in the schools and I think it was mentioned in our debate on this Notice of Motion last year and that Trostre steel works have said that they would be able to supply tin cups for the schools which will be re-usable and recyclable material. So, one of the reasons for not moving on seems to be that it's the contract and the supplier and we have a contract until August 2021. That gives us another opportunity. We need to be talking in detail to those suppliers, and thank you for your indulgence Chair. So I'll come to a question. My original question when I submitted it had about three questions in it but I was told I can only submit one question. When will we have this detailed plan so we can go back to the schools because schools, the original eco committee in Ysgol y Felin who raised this with me have now moved on, there's a new committee. I hope it's not the next committee. So when will we have this plan.

**Response by Councillor Glynog Davies, Executive Board Member for Education and Children:-**

Chair, I thought I'd mentioned it clearly enough that the work is taking place now, we are researching into every possible option. We haven't stopped. It's important that we look at all the developments. I am going to say one thing that I did mention previously. Maybe some of you would say well we said glass bottles. I'm going to repeat chair what was mentioned. If we use numerous times and glass is regularly recyclable, but the down side of glass is that it's heavy and fuel usage is significantly increased due to the extra payload on delivery vehicles. We should also note that the sterilisation process using water, energy and chemicals, the end to end carbon footprint of glass versus plastic has not been fully assessed but one study showed that glass performs worse overall. A recent BBC article included a quote from a spokesperson from WRAP for glass to be the better environmental option from a carbon perspective our research shows that any bottle needs to be re-used at least twenty times. In practice, glass bottles survive around eighteen times so, it is important for us to look at all the facts and look at all the developments. But to answer your question Bill, we are working on it now.

**6.2. QUESTION BY COUNCILLOR DOT JONES TO COUNCILLOR GLYNOG DAVIES - EXECUTIVE BOARD MEMBER FOR EDUCATION AND CHILDREN**

"In August 2019 I received an email stating that the school catchment review would commence in September of last year.

Can an update be given on the work and consultations that has been completed to date please."

**Response by Councillor Glynog Davies, Executive Board Member for Education and Children:-**

We are all aware that every school has a catchment and I'm sure you, like myself, have asked the question how did this school catchment area come into being. Well, originally, they were formed in order to ensure that there were enough pupils

to support every school, to maintain every school, to make sure that there were children who were living close by that were there to attend that school. Every school has a designated catchment area which it serves and here in Carmarthenshire we use catchment areas as part of our schools admissions system and also to implement our schools transport policy. A full review was undertaken of our catchment areas in 2012 and it's now timely, and I do believe it's appropriate that we update them. In order to do this work an officer has been appointed, work has begun and this officer is going to lead on this work, but it is a very large piece of work, a very complicated piece of work.

In order to review the situation in full this county as we know is a widespread one, a large county geographically and we have lots of schools and we need to look very carefully at the linguistic context. We have religious schools. All of our schools are very different so, we need to look at it very carefully and all the arrangements in place. We need to look at the dynamic nature of the education footprint across the county. As I mentioned, and I'm very pleased to say this, that I did want to see this work taking place, this work has begun, consultations have been held with the school transport department in order to understand the current arrangements and the potential changes that there may be. Also taking place, there is an ongoing geographic analysis of pupil data for all primary and secondary schools. This will help to understand the patterns of school attendance in relation to the current catchment boundaries.

School catchment areas are heavily contingent on the review of our MEP. Now you've often heard me speak of the Modernising Education Programme. It's an important programme for us here in Carmarthenshire, and we've gained a great deal from that programme, and that review is currently happening. The MEP review may influence changes to the education map in our county. This needs to be completed before consultation starts with our schools. We must have, we need, the results of that review. Also, there will be a very thorough consultation on any changes which will be proposed to those catchment areas, plenty of opportunity to give opinions and this will be part of the school admission process and this happens yearly and it happens in January, so it's not going to happen next until January 2021, which is next January, and then will be implemented the following September. I propose that the consultation with schools will not take place until we've completed the MEP review. It's important that the proposals that come up from that are considered. It's important that the content is discussed with us and that will be a general review of school catchments. Thank you.

There was no supplementary question.

## **7. SETTING THE COUNCIL TAX FOR THE FINANCIAL YEAR 2020/21**

Council considered the Director of Corporate Services' report setting out the financial details relevant to the setting of the Council Tax for the 2020/2021 financial year together with the Council Tax amounts in respect of the different Council Tax Valuation Bands, as applicable to each of the individual Community and Town Council areas.

It was noted that the recommendations contained within the report were based on the final settlement details received from the Welsh Government and the precepts

notified to the County Council by the Dyfed Powys Police and Crime Commissioner and the Town and Community Councils.

**RESOLVED** that in order for the Council to comply with legislative requirements, the report and recommendations of the Director of Corporate Services on the setting of the Council Tax for the financial year 2020/21 be adopted.

**8. TO CONSIDER THE RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE EXECUTIVE BOARD IN RESPECT OF THE FOLLOWING ITEMS**

**8.1. PRESS AND MEDIA PROTOCOL**

The Council was informed that the Executive Board, at its meeting held on the 20<sup>th</sup> January, 2020 (minute 7 refers) had considered a report on the adoption of an updated Press and Media Protocol to replace the existing protocol adopted by Council in June, 2015. The new Protocol reflected changes in the media environment to assist the Marketing and Media Team to manage press and media communications and relationships on the Council's behalf whilst also providing guidance to elected members and Staff.

Reference was made to the section within the report relating to requests for photography and filming on council premises. The Chief Executive confirmed the wording would be amended to clarify the taking of photographs on council land by local members as part of their role

**RESOLVED** that the recommendation of the Executive Board be accepted and the Press and Media Protocol be adopted

**8.2. (DRAFT) STRATEGIC EQUALITY PLAN 2020-2024**

The Council was informed that the Executive Board, at its meeting held on the 3<sup>rd</sup> February, 2020 (minute 10 refers) had considered a Draft Carmarthenshire County Council Strategic Equality Plan 2020-2024 produced in accordance with the requirements of the Equality Act 2010 that replaced the separate duties on race, disabilities and gender equality. The Council noted that the General Duty of the Act aimed to ensure public authorities and those carrying out a public function considered how they could positively contribute to a fairer society through advancing equality and good relations in their day-to-day activities

**UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED** that the following recommendations of the Executive Board be accepted:-

**"The (Draft) Strategic Equality Plan for implementation from April 2020 be approved;**

**The (Draft) Strategic Equality Objectives and the development of a detailed action plan to underpin those objectives be approved"**

**9. TO RECEIVE THE REPORT OF THE MEETING OF THE EXECUTIVE BOARD HELD ON THE 24TH FEBRUARY 2020**

**UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED** that the report of the meeting of the Executive Board held on the 24<sup>th</sup> February, 2020 be received.

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**CHAIR**

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**DATE**