

Document Pack

County Council

Wednesday, 12 February 2020

PRESENT: Councillor K. Madge (Chair)

Councillors:

F. Akhtar, S.M. Allen, L.R. Bowen, K.V. Broom, C.A. Campbell, J.M. Charles, S.A. Curry, C.A. Davies, W.R.A. Davies, T.A.J. Davies, H.L. Davies, I.W. Davies, S.L. Davies, E. Dole, J.S. Edmunds, P.M. Edwards, 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, T.M. Higgins, J.K. Howell, P.M. Hughes, A. James, J.D. James, R. James, D.M. Jenkins, J.P. Jenkins, G.H. John, B.W. Jones, D. Jones, G.R. Jones, H.I. Jones, T.J. Jones, A. Lenny, M.J.A. Lewis, K. Lloyd, A.S.J. McPherson, E. Morgan, A.G. Morgan, S. Najmi, B.D.J. Phillips, D. Price, J.G. Prosser, B.A.L. Roberts, E.M.J.G. Schiavone, H.B. Shepardson, A.D.T. Speake, L.M. Stephens, B. Thomas, D. Thomas, E.G. Thomas, G.B. Thomas, G. Thomas, J. Tremlett, A. Vaughan Owen, D.T. Williams, D.E. Williams and J.E. Williams

The following Officers were in attendance:

W. Walters, Chief Executive
J. Morgan, Director of Community Services
G. Morgans, Director of Education & Children's Services
Mrs R. Mullen, Director of Environment
P.R. Thomas, Assistant Chief Executive (People Management & Performance)
L.R. Jones, Head of Administration and Law
K. Davies, Sustainable Development Manager
J. Jones, Head of Regeneration
S Morgan, Strategic Asset Manager
L Morris, Senior Press Officer
M. Evans Thomas, Principal Democratic Services Officer
L. Jenkins, Democratic Services Officer

Chamber, County Hall, Carmarthen, SA31 1JP - 10.00 am - 12.40 pm

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors D.M. Cundy, G. Davies, K. Davies, J.A. Davies, A.D. Harries, C. Jones, S. Matthews, D. Nicholas, and J.S. Phillips.

2. DECLARATIONS OF PERSONAL INTERESTS

Councillor	Minute Number	Nature of Interest
K. Lloyd	5 - Public Questions	He has an interest in Carmarthenshire Energy Ltd
C.A. Davies	8.1 - Net Zero Carbon Plan	Her Husband is a tenant farmer

K. Lloyd	8.1 - Net Zero Carbon Plan	He has an interest in Carmarthenshire Energy Ltd
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3. CHAIR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Chair noted that it had been his intention to take part in the Walrus Dip on Boxing Day to raise funds for his chosen charities. Unfortunately, due to illness he was unable to take to the sea. The Chair advised that arrangements had been made for Friday, 14th February at 10:00am at Pembrey Country Park for him to 'take the plunge'.

The Chair advised that arrangements were in place to hold a Charity Dinner on Saturday, 18th April at the Amman Civic Hall, Ammanford.

The Chair thanked the 19 Town and Community Councils who had already donated towards his fundraising appeal.

The Chair advised that Cllr Alun Lenny had published an Autobiography. Cllr Alun Lenny's book "Byw ffwl pelt" was published in December and follows his life story as a journalist, Councillor and Lay Preacher.

4. TO APPROVE AND SIGN AS A CORRECT RECORD THE MINUTES OF THE COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON THE 8TH JANUARY 2020

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting of the Council held on the 8th January 2020 be signed as a correct record,

5. PUBLIC QUESTIONS

(NOTE 1: Cllr. K. Lloyd had previously declared an interest in this item)
(NOTE 2: In accordance with Council Procedure Rule 2(3) the Chair varied the order of business to allow questions 5.2 and 5.13 to be taken first.)

5.1. QUESTION BY MR D SMITH TO CLLR C CAMPBELL, EXECUTIVE BOARD MEMBER FOR COMMUNITIES AND RURAL AFFAIRS

"Has the County Council a forward plan to increase the amount of renewable energy generated on Council owned land? In this connection has it identified sites and examined the possibilities provided by decentralised battery storage options?"

Response by Councillor Cefin Campbell, Executive Board Member for Communities and Rural Affairs:-

"You will see from our action plan to become net zero carbon that we recognise that no Local Authority or public body in Wales or across the UK, certainly in the foreseeable future, will be able to become non carbon. We will always have some carbon emissions so what we need to do as public bodies is to try and find a way of offsetting those carbon emissions to become net zero. So, specifically to answer your question, we are currently looking at various opportunities for

increasing the amount of renewable energy we generate. This includes revisiting potential sites previously identified on Council owned land to establish whether these are now economically viable. I would also be interested in working collaboratively with Town and Community Councils to see whether we could do similar projects on land owned by them as well. As you know the Council already has one 500kw wind turbine at Nantycaws. There are potential opportunities for more wind turbines, solar and hydro projects plus battery storage as well. Personally, I am keen for the Council to look at developing renewable energy projects. Not only would that be good in terms of climate change but also at the moment many of these projects take money and the profits out of Carmarthenshire. If we could run some of those projects ourselves the profit could be reinvested back into our communities. One final point, Carmarthenshire is a part of the City Deal project and we have as one of the major projects in City Deal a project called Homes as Power Stations and developing battery storage is one of the key elements of that project.”

Mr Smith asked the following supplementary question:-

“Has the Welsh Assembly indicated the size of budget they will be making available to you to implement this strategy?”

Councillor Campbell responded as follows:-

“The simple answer is no.”

5.2. QUESTION BY MR N BIZZELL-BROWNING TO CLLR D JENKINS, EXECUTIVE BOARD MEMBER FOR RESOURCES

“Is the County Council investing in Human Resources to help in the climate emergency? i.e.

- To what extent have the council considered introducing remote (home) working, ie zero travel related carbon etc?
- How many new jobs has the County Council created specifically to deal with the crisis?
- What percentage of existing employee hours have been diverted to the emergency?
- What training programs have been planned so that council employees, clients and service providers understand the existential threats facing us, for example Carbon Literacy Training? (<https://carbonliteracy.com/>) “

Response by Councillor David Jenkins, Executive Board Member for Resources:-

“The first thing I’ll say is that although we passed a Notice of Motion back in County Hall here a year ago to do with achieving zero carbon for 2030, we had already been working towards a net zero carbon, as set by the Welsh Government, for 2050. So what we’ve done is we have brought the timescale forward, so that work has been going on for some time. To answer your question specifically, the simple answer is yes and we have been doing so for several years. The Authority’s Transform, Innovate and Challenge (TIC) team, have been looking at a number of initiatives to reduce the dependency on incurring mileage wherever possible. To this end, I can confirm that 81% of our office-based staff are

now equipped with laptops which enable them to work in an agile way and we are looking to promote further use of technology such as Skype for example. To deliver on this agenda, we have been able to second a number of officers into the TIC team, who have the right skills to help us respond to this very challenging agenda.

All our main administrative buildings are now equipped with hot-desking facilities which will assist with reducing the need to travel, which by default, will reduce CO2 emissions. Linked to this, we have undertaken a comprehensive Agile Working Development Programme to assist managers and staff with the transition to agile working.

These initiatives have seen a significant reduction in mileage of over one hundred thousand miles over the last year alone. Whilst this is a good result, we are not complacent and as an Authority we are looking to introduce more electric/hybrid cars to supplement our existing fleet of electric cars that we have at both Parc Myrddin and Parc Dewi Sant. So this year you will see these electric/hybrid vehicles not just in Carmarthen, but in Ammanford and Llanelli too.

These are just a small number of examples of what we are doing as part of our strategic approach to Climate Change and we recognise that we are uniquely placed to lead and mobilise action to address Climate Change and make a difference through our own activities and through leading partnerships.

We have been committed for a number of years to reduce energy in our own buildings, schools and Council managed social housing stock by supporting low carbon and renewable energy sources and by providing more sustainable transport options and perhaps more importantly, by raising awareness amongst the public and providing advice on what people can do. To this end, we have created a post of Carbon Reduction Officer who will promote corporate projects to assist with the Council's response to Climate Change, such as energy efficiency and renewable energy schemes.

Since the Notice of Motion was passed last year we have, as promised, developed a Net Zero Carbon Plan that sets out a clear route to us becoming a net zero carbon Authority by 2030.

Mr Bizzell-Browning asked the following supplementary question:-

"What percentage of Council employees have the facility to work from home?"

Councillor Jenkins responded as follows:-

"I did say in my report that 81% of our office based staff are now equipped with laptops to enable them to work in an agile manner, so they can work from home or wherever, as appropriate."

5.3. QUESTION BY MS K LANGDON TO CLLR C CAMPBELL, EXECUTIVE BOARD MEMBER FOR COMMUNITIES AND RURAL AFFAIRS

The Chair advised that Ms Langdon was unable to attend today's meeting and had requested that he ask the following question on her behalf:-

"What are the Council doing to encourage (a) a common approach to biodiversity, sustainable conservation and sharing of best practice. And (b) encouraging

community education, action and involvement (which is surely a key part of the biodiversity process)?”

The Chair advised that a written response would be conveyed to Ms Langdon.

5.4. QUESTION BY MS S SYLVAN TO CLLR C CAMPBELL, EXECUTIVE BOARD MEMBER FOR COMMUNITIES AND RURAL AFFAIRS

“In 2018 we faced horrendous flooding in Carmarthenshire leading to homelessness and death. We are being told that extreme weather conditions like this will become the new normal as the climate breaks down. Does the council have a climate crisis fund and risk assessment for the area? How much money is in the fund and can it be deployed to counter climate threats?”

Response by Councillor Cefin Campbell, Executive Board Member for Communities and Rural Affairs:-

Severe coastal flooding has been identified as one of the highest risks identified within the Dyfed Powys Local Resilience Forum. That Forum comprises many public bodies and other agencies and utilities as well. It has developed a Risk Matrix to identify the various risks linked to various crises and events. Certainly severe coastal flooding is classified as “very high” and other types of severe weather such as storms and river flooding score “high” on the Matrix as well. So Carmarthenshire County Council, along with our partners in the Local Resilience Forum, have contingency plans to respond to these types of emergencies. Carmarthenshire County Council also has tried and tested arrangements to lead in the recovery of communities following disasters and we need to just remember the fantastic work that our team of officers did following Storm Callum recently when many areas of Carmarthenshire were flooded and I’m thinking in particular of Carmarthen town itself and the village of Pontweli where many homes and businesses were flooded and people were made homeless for quite some time. So we have a resilient team able to respond quickly to emergencies of that nature. The second part of your question asks about funding. Well, there is no direct Council funding allocated to deal with natural incidents like this so departmental budgets or Council reserves are used to deal with the initial incidents and the recovery process following on from them.

For large disasters, in certain circumstances, Welsh Government can provide some financial assistance under the Emergency Financial Assistance Scheme. Now this scheme makes discretionary payments and provides emergency financial assistance to Local Authorities. So if the scheme is invoked following an emergency, the Welsh Government will only cover the revenue consequences of an emergency within the immediate aftermath of the incident itself. In addition, Authorities affected will be expected to meet all eligible expenditure up to the level of its threshold. Thresholds are calculated by Welsh Government at 0.2% of the Authority’s annual budget requirement and apply to the whole financial year. So if we have many incidences in that one financial year, it doesn’t matter. It’s just financial assistance for one financial year not for each incident. The current threshold for Carmarthenshire is £714,000.

Ms Sylvan asked the following supplementary question:-

“I am just wondering, do you think it would be wise to have a separate fund?”

Councillor Campbell responded as follows:-

It is certainly something that we could consider and wouldn't rule out but because the emergencies very often involve the operation of many different departments in the Council, and each department has a set budget, it is very difficult to allocate finances from one given budget because it involves many budgets across the board. It would be very difficult practically to do that. It's something that we could certainly look at but I think we are responding very well at the moment because we are using our reserves and using the budget that we have and if necessary we use the Welsh Government Emergency Funding as well. So we haven't been found wanting in any of the emergencies that we have dealt with so far but it is certainly something that we might consider."

5.5. QUESTION BY MS C STRANGE TO CLLR C CAMPBELL, EXECUTIVE BOARD MEMBER FOR COMMUNITIES AND RURAL AFFAIRS

"How much of the Council's Net Zero Action plan (summarised at Appendix 1 in the draft) predates the declaration of an emergency?"

Response by Councillor Cefin Campbell, Executive Board Member for Communities and Rural Affairs:-

"As Councillor David Jenkins mentioned earlier on, we have been doing a lot of work already on reducing carbon emissions, so yes a lot of the good work that we have done predates the action plan that is coming before the Council later on this morning. For example, so far the Council has reduced its carbon emissions from its non-domestic buildings by 38% since 2005/06, reduced its carbon emissions from its street lighting by 65% since 2011/12, reduced its carbon emissions from its fleet mileage by 19% since 2012/13 and business mileage by over 36% over the same period. So we've done a lot of really, really good work before we declared a climate emergency exactly one year ago but we are still looking at adopting proactive programmes to further reduce our carbon emissions and you will see details of those programmes in our action plan. So naturally there are many more actions that we can carry out but the difference between previous programmes and those actions now contained in the Plan is the commitment to be a net zero carbon Local Authority by 2030. That is now focussing our minds as the real target that we want to achieve to meet, so that gives us a clear aim. Previously we were doing it because we thought it was important but now we have a real target to meet."

Ms Strange asked the following supplementary question:-

"In light of the urgency to introduce the various emergency measures outlined in the zero action plan, how much collaboration and support is there between Carmarthen Council and councils elsewhere which are also attempting to introduce similar measures?"

Councillor Campbell responded as follows:-

"Once we hopefully will pass this action plan today that will give us the green light to collaborate and have discussions with other Local Authorities in the region. We are already doing that with the City Deal programme but also other public bodies in Carmarthenshire but not only public bodies but also Town and Community Councils, Sports Associations, voluntary organisations because at the end of the day we can only achieve that aim by working together. It means everyone in this Chamber and everyone living in Carmarthenshire, regionally and nationally as

well. We will, once we have this approval today, start the process of initiating discussions with other key organisations outside of the County Council.”

5.6. QUESTION BY MR M REED TO CLLR C CAMPBELL, EXECUTIVE BOARD MEMBER FOR COMMUNITIES AND RURAL AFFAIRS

“Regarding carbon free motoring, there may be a significant and measurable impact on tourism if the council fail to install the correct infrastructure. How many electric and hydrogen car charging points have already been installed in Carmarthen or are planned for installation in 2020?”

Response by Councillor Cefin Campbell, Executive Board Member for Communities and Rural Affairs:-

“Tourism has been identified as a significant growth industry for Carmarthenshire with the sector contributing around £430 million to the local economy every year. So the Council is obviously keen to promote Carmarthenshire as a tourist destination therefore we recognise the importance of future proofing our highway network to not only support tourism but also our social, economic and environmental ambitions. As such we were the first Authority in Wales to introduce electric cars into our fleet back in 2011/12.

Furthermore, in 2019/20, this financial year, we were successful in obtaining funding from Welsh Government and the Office of Low Emission Vehicles to roll out an ambitious programme of new electric charging infrastructure points. This has allowed us to install some 26 points across 24 public car parks in Carmarthenshire including Llanelli, Burry Port, Ammanford, Carmarthen, Gwendraeth Valley, Llandeilo, Pendine, Llanybydder, Llansteffan, Kidwelly and Llandybie,. These fast chargers will allow us to recharge electric cars and it will take roughly between 3-5 hours. This work builds upon the charge points we have previously installed at Parc Myrddin, Spilman Street, Parc Dewi Sant, Murray Street, Llandovery, Newcastle Emlyn and St Peters Car Park here in Carmarthen. We are currently writing bids for submission to Welsh Government to create a new rapid charge hub at Cross Hands, which we believe will be the first of its kind in Wales. This potentially can charge an electric car in under an hour. And to answer the specific question about hydrogen car charging points, we don't at the moment have hydrogen car charging points but we are looking to create a rapid a rapid car charging point in Cross Hands.”

Mr Reed asked the following supplementary question:-

“What efforts are the Council making to encourage electric buses and how many are there in the district at present?”

Councillor Campbell responded as follows:-

“There is a question coming up later on on buses so forgive me, if you don't mind, could I answer that specific question as a part of the wider question on our buses and public transport which comes up later on?”

5.7. QUESTION BY DR A BELLAMY TO CLLR C CAMPBELL, EXECUTIVE BOARD MEMBER FOR COMMUNITIES AND RURAL AFFAIRS

The Chair advised that Dr. Bellamy was unable to attend today's meeting and had requested that he ask the following question on his behalf:-

"We face a climate crisis of global significance in which "business as usual" will no longer be adequate nor possible. Until now "best value" for land has always been interpreted as the highest financial bid. In the context of the climate emergency, is it time to redefine best value to prioritise value to the local community?"

The Chair advised that a written response would be conveyed to Dr. Bellamy.

5.8. QUESTION BY MS J THOMPSON TO CLLR C CAMPBELL, EXECUTIVE BOARD MEMBER FOR COMMUNITIES AND RURAL AFFAIRS

"In relation to the Council's net zero carbon strategy, I am wondering about biodiversity, including indigenous species that are threatened with extinction. Could you tell me if there is a register of degraded habitats in the county and a risk analysis of indigenous species and what the corresponding action plan is, if any?"

Response by Councillor Cefin Campbell, Executive Board Member for Communities and Rural Affairs:-

"Yes, the question is about biodiversity and as you rightly say, it is very sensible to consider biodiversity in the context of climate change. Consistent with Welsh Government policy the Carmarthenshire Nature Partnership is developing a Carmarthenshire Nature Recovery Action Plan. This plan addresses the conservation and management of the priority [habitats](#) and [species](#) listed in Section 7 of the Environment (Wales) Act 2016. These are also known as habitats and species of principle importance in Wales and the list includes the majority of the semi-natural habitats and associated species that occur in the county e.g. woodlands, heath lands, coastal habitats and along with species such as water vole and the marsh fritillary butterfly. So the actions that the plan will refer to will be based on the approach to the sustainable management of these habitats and natural resources that are being also developed by Natural Resources Wales."

Ms Thompson asked the following supplementary question:-

"Nature Recovery Action Plan - who has responsibility for monitoring and making sure that it actually happens and where can I have a look at it?"

Councillor Campbell responded as follows:-

"So the responsibility lies obviously with Carmarthenshire County Council in partnership with other outside bodies as well, Natural Resources Wales being the obvious one and that is why the Carmarthenshire Nature Partnership involves all of these partners. Again, it's working in collaboration not in isolation because we are sharing good practice, sharing experience, sharing knowledge and information about what is a very complex issue. So I can assure you that we are giving this our full attention because that fragile link with the eco system is so important and if we get that wrong it endangers our very existence so we are giving that top priority."

5.9. QUESTION BY MS S WEAVER TO CLLR C CAMPBELL, EXECUTIVE BOARD MEMBER FOR COMMUNITIES AND RURAL AFFAIRS

The Chair advised that Ms Weaver was unable to attend today's meeting and had requested that he ask the following question on her behalf:-

"Given recent research findings (Science 05 July 19: Vol 365, Issue 6448, pp 76 - 79) that a trillion trees could be planted globally to mitigate two thirds of anthropogenic carbon emissions to date - without encroaching on crop land or urban areas - and that this is the cheapest and most powerful method of all proposed solutions to the climate emergency: what plans does the council have to support community tree planting in the next year by making land and funding available?"

The Chair advised that a written response would be conveyed to Ms Weaver.

5.10. QUESTION BY MS D SMITH TO CLLR C CAMPBELL, EXECUTIVE BOARD MEMBER FOR COMMUNITIES AND RURAL AFFAIRS

"Does the council know of further potential to sequester carbon in Carmarthenshire (soil/peat/trees -) which it can encourage - and how can we help?"

Response by Councillor Cefin Campbell, Executive Board Member for Communities and Rural Affairs:-

"So, bog habitats and peaty soils, when managed correctly, sequester carbon. That means it offsets carbon, it captures the carbon release. The Carmarthenshire Bogs Project and the Caeau Mynydd Mawr Marsh Fritillary Project, which you will probably have heard of, both work on these habitats, with the aim to improve their condition for biodiversity and their ability to sequester carbon. In addition work to the bog at Llyn Llech Owain Country Park in Gorslas has taken place to improve its water retention and carbon sequestration. So people can also help on a wider level as well, all of us and everyone out there, by not buying peat-based compost and encouraging their local Town and Community Councils to use non-peat-based products in any planting schemes they might have. So corporately we are doing a lot but individually we can also reduce the pressures on the purchase of peat by not buying peat-based soil."

5.11. QUESTION BY MS D GROOM TO CLLR C CAMPBELL, EXECUTIVE BOARD MEMBER FOR COMMUNITIES AND RURAL AFFAIRS

"As agriculture in the UK is massively subsidised, I should like to understand why the County Council is spending money in its 'Moving Carmarthenshire Forward' plan to boost food production indiscriminately when we understand that one of the most effective actions that consumers can take is to eat less meat."

Response by Councillor Cefin Campbell, Executive Board Member for Communities and Rural Affairs:-

"The eating of meat is a personal choice and I don't wish to get into an ethical argument with you about meat consumption. However, what the Moving Rural Carmarthenshire Forward report recognises is that the agriculture sector in Carmarthenshire provides the backbone of our rural communities, not just in economic terms but also in terms of its social, environmental and cultural contribution. We are talking about living communities. We also realise that the

way that agriculture is funded and has been heavily subsidised, as you so rightly say, is very likely to change as a result of us leaving the European Union, something that the County Council has little or no influence upon, and in turn this is likely to change the face of agriculture and in the future, if it is adversely affected it could have a seriously detrimental effect on the resilience and future sustainability of our rural communities. I don't think that anyone in this Chamber would wish that to happen to the unique rural communities that we have here in Carmarthenshire and in other parts of Wales.

The Council has not committed to spend money to boost food production indiscriminately as you mentioned and I maybe would take issue with you on that as we have never implied that we would do that indiscriminately in the report, but rather we would like to support the local agricultural sector to diversify and seek opportunities in terms of local sustainable food production and seasonal consumption across the whole range of food types, be that meat, dairy or plant based products. We want to encourage locally produced and locally consumed food products and one of the things we are looking at, along with other public service partners in Carmarthenshire, is how we can adapt our procurement methods so that we can purchase more locally produced products thus reducing food miles and the waste in our supply chains."

Ms Groom asked the following supplementary question:-

"I agree with everything you have said actually. I want to support the farmers but it's clear that the move towards veganism is accelerating which will eventually take a heavy toll on our livestock producers. I wonder whether the Council is considering how to encourage and help these farmers to transition from livestock to ecologically sound food production by directing funding to support transition?"

Councillor Campbell responded as follows:-

"We have a very close relationship with the Farmers Unions in Carmarthenshire and I think they recognise very well the challenges that they face moving forward. They realise the subsidies they have had may not be at the same level. They also recognise the hard work that they need to do as well to meet the challenges of climate change. Farmers know that and they want to diversify but it doesn't mean that they should disband all the practices that have been built up over many centuries and passed on from generation to generation. I would be really happy to discuss this with you at a future date. And I suppose in terms of the point you made regarding veganism, I still regard that as a personal choice and I think for those who wish to become vegans or are vegans, many of them do it for moral reasons but also for climate change reasons and I suppose what we've heard in the press recently is the reference to methane emissions. The greenhouse gases that cause global warming, there are three main gases, methane is one of them, hydrogen dioxide is the other and carbon dioxide. Methane disappears from the environment after about 12 years so it's not the most serious of gases but if farmers change their farming methods and practices then methane emissions can be reduced so that is a discussion, without getting too technical, I am happy to have with you some time again."

5.12. QUESTION BY MR P HUGHES TO CLLR C CAMPBELL, EXECUTIVE BOARD MEMBER FOR COMMUNITIES AND RURAL AFFAIRS

“I am interested to know how many of each diesel, petrol, and electric vehicles Bwcabus has in its fleet and what plans the council has to go fully electric?”

Response by Councillor Cefin Campbell, Executive Board Member for Communities and Rural Affairs:-

“The Bwcabus scheme is a very important project that we have. It provides public service transport to parts of rural Carmarthenshire and it's been running for ten years. The operation at the moment uses five vehicles which were the most technologically suitable and advanced products at the time of purchase and complied with the latest emissions standards at the time.

The Authority, as we say in our action plan, is currently reviewing options for the future running of the scheme which includes the replacement of these vehicles. Options are being explored in terms of suitable products that meet operational requirements and sustainable energy sources. One of the key objectives of the scheme is to provide a quality transport solution that encourages people to travel by utilising more sustainable modes of transport such as public and community transport. Now we have a long way to go because I think the latest statistic I saw says that only about 6% of the population use public transport. So because it is heavily subsidised that is an issue in itself but also we need to encourage more people to use the public transport options when those are available.”

Mr Hughes asked the following supplementary question:-

“How many diesel, petrol and electric vehicles have you in each category?”

Councillor Campbell responded as follows:-

“At the moment we don't have any of these Bwcabus buses as electric vehicles but, as I mentioned, we are reviewing our options moving forward and we are looking at maybe purchasing some electric vehicles. I know some voluntary organisations are currently doing this. They are running electric powered people carriers. This again is an option for us to look at in rural communities. When the life of these buses comes to an end and that is very soon, we are investigating the possibility of looking at an electric fleet but at the moment they are diesel and petrol. I can't give you the exact split but I can give that to you later on. We have five vehicles and at the time of purchase they were the most technologically suitable on the market.”

5.13. QUESTION BY REV PROF D JENKINS TO CLLR M STEPHENS, DEPUTY LEADER OF THE COUNCIL

“The current Summary Introduction to the Local Development Plan (<https://www.carmarthenshire.gov.wales/media/1216121/ldp-summary-introduction-english-final.pdf>) does not mention climate. A more detailed version mentions climate change http://www.cartogold.co.uk/CarmarthenshireLDP/english/text/05_strategy-and-strategic-policies.htm#Ch5_3 will but there is no flesh yet on the bones of strategy or policy. How will the plan reflect the declaration of a climate emergency; will the Council garner public views via a Citizens Assembly?”

Response by Councillor Mair Stephens, Deputy Leader of the Council:-

“Your question has been so appropriate in its timing and coincides with the current consultation on the LDP. I certainly note that the documents that you have referred to within the question are perhaps not the most recent of the LDP publications. The summary introduction document was prepared at the start of the deposit of the revised LDP production and while others referred to in the more detailed version are in fact the current adopted plan. However, thank you for taking the time to read them and understand them and know that both those documents form the basis and a great deal of the context of direction and I thank you for everything you have done to date.

I have said many times in this chamber that whenever we go through the various stages of the LDP process, which is long and seemingly arduous, we are continually refining and making it more robust as further evidence is gathered and inputted into the plan. Perhaps it is worth noting at this stage the type of engagement and consultation that has been going on to date and, believe you me, that has been far, far more than has happened in the production of any LDP to date. So, as well as the Advisory Group consultation which consists of members who have brought issues from across the county to the table for discussion, there has been a key stakeholder forum made up of a cross section of people which include people from statutory organisations like the NHS, the NRW and neighbouring Authorities, to comments from Community and Town Councils and Councillors, representatives of the various voluntary organisations that we have in Carmarthenshire and also representatives from the community covering a wide range of interests and, as I have always spoken about, they put their requirements into the plan. We have also met with Community and Town Councils so that there is a more local viewpoint that can be received and indeed so that they can tell us what sort of development is acceptable and, dare I say indeed, unacceptable in their areas. Those have been inputted and are being taken aboard on what is happening. We have also discussed with developers and agents in order to try to ensure that the delivery of this plan at the end of the day is something we can work with, to be proud of for the future of Carmarthenshire.

Part of that plan involves looking at the issues that we have within our own control. It is those things that we know that we have already got an integrated Community Plan, we have got plans for the rural areas. We have got this plan which has generated an awful lot of this discussion, the net zero plan. There are all those plans. How we want to move forward within this Council over a five year period as an Administration. All those are incorporated into this overall plan and indeed is something which can sometimes be very much of a balancing act but it is a balancing act that we will do. But it just proves that we are consulting widely with an awful lot of people all the time. That does not disregard the things that we have been doing with social media and the website and all that.

And indeed, in November 2018 this Council resolved to endorse the Deposit Revised LDP that is now available for public consultation and is available until the 13th March. Once again this has been consulted upon and as I speak there are Roadshows around the county that are asking for people’s comments and views on what is happening around the area. This is to encourage engagement and to ensure that the comments on the consultation is taken on board. The Deposit Plan contains a full range of policies providing for the future of the county and its communities through to 2033. It also identifies the location and the amount of growth for those areas and things that need to be protected.

The Deposit LDP specifically includes a range of policies which reflect and contribute to the climate change agenda. These include a Strategic Climate Change Policy and a series of specific policies ranging from Renewable Energy to

Green Infrastructure. The Deposit Plan and supporting documents including the Sustainability Appraisal can be seen on our website or at the Hwbs, Customer Service Centres and public libraries across the county. As part of this consultation we very much welcome any views or comments on any part of the Plan and whether that is local or on a wider scale and we will take those views forward. Thank you very much for asking the question and thank you for ensuring that the process that we have is going to be something that will produce a robust plan. We are in the middle of a consultation process and indeed it is open to the wider community. Are we going to have a Citizens' Assembly? The answer to that at the moment is no but at on the other hand we welcome all the views we can have from people far and wide on our draft revised LDP."

Rev. Prof. Jenkins asked the following supplementary question:-

"To bring it right up to date then paragraph 9.32 of the Deposit Plan specifically refers to climate and it seems to me that far from being pervasive throughout the Local Development Plan document it's somewhat pigeon holed. Given what the IPCC has said about the nature of the emergency, can't we do away with that long, arduous process that you've just been talking about and act like this was an emergency? A Citizens' Assembly would short circuit it. Don't you think that a Citizens' Assembly might be more efficient in the current circumstances than a process which was designed for different times."

Councillor Stephens responded as follows:-

"I can certainly see where you are coming from, we are obviously two sides of the same coin. We are very, very much open, as I have said, to formal discussions and, as you know, you and I have had discussions in another forum on where we are going and what we are doing. Climate and climate change does not necessarily have to have the word climate in it. There is an awful lot of work within this LDP that actually states that we are ensuring that people have solar panels, we are ensuring that they have electric charging points. You know, those practical things that are not necessarily included under the word climate. It happens and it is happening and indeed that is exactly where we are. We will have those discussions and we will be taking on board. But at this moment in time, we are where we are."

5.14. QUESTION BY MS G JENKINS TO CLLR C CAMPBELL, EXECUTIVE BOARD MEMBER FOR COMMUNITIES AND RURAL AFFAIRS

"According to Professor Sir Ian Boyd, former chief scientific adviser to the UK government, half of the nation's farmland needs to be transformed into woodlands and natural habitat to fight the climate crisis and restore wildlife. In that context, what plans have the council made for rewilding?"

Response by Councillor Cefin Campbell, Executive Board Member for Communities and Rural Affairs:-

"The simple answer is that we have no plans for rewilding, however, we are looking at options for woodland creation on the land that we own and manage and it already manages several sites across the county primarily for biodiversity, that is as a County Council, from the Morfa Berwig Local Nature reserve on the edge of Llanelli to Ynys Dawela Local Nature Park in Brynaman.

As part of its Section 6 Environment Act duty the Council is expected to consider the impact of its land management practice on the natural environment and how

these can be adapted to maintain and enhance biodiversity and promote ecosystem resilience.

The emerging Revised LDP, which we have heard about already this morning from Councillor Mair Stephens, also provides support for proposals for the creation and protection of new woodland, forests, tree belts and corridors where they seek to promote the delivery of national and local climate change and decarbonisation ambitions.

So the simple way of answering your question is no we have no plans but we are doing a lot of other exciting things to look at woodland development and so on.”

Ms Jenkins asked the following supplementary question:-

“I appreciate that you currently are being quite honest in saying that you don’t have any plans but if the Revised LDP proposals are talking about rewilding in a sense additional woodlands etc, would it not be appropriate to consider the 24 farms, the 22 parks, as well as the marginal land that you have as a Council and make plans to rewild those.”

Councillor Campbell responded as follows:-

“I think that there is a great debate about rewilding and what rewilding means, it means different things to different people. We all know about George Monbiot’s idea of rewilding which is to re-introduce wild animals like wolves, bears and wild boars. For many people that’s what they mean by rewilding. Personally, I wouldn’t support that because we are at a point where we are. The eco system has developed to a point where it is now with that very fragile balance being protected between those who farm and conserve the land and those who want to change the nature of our land and I think it is keeping that balance is what we need to do. We have living communities to protect here in Carmarthenshire alongside wildlife communities and that balance between them has always been preserved by the guardians of the land, namely our farmers whose experience in maintaining quality food production side by side with protecting our natural habitat has been developed over centuries and passed on from generation to generation. I entirely agree with you that with the land that we do own and the parklands that we have we will actively look at ways of planting as many trees on that land as is possible because they do sequester carbon, as many of you have rightly pointed out already. But we need to have that balance as well between living communities and forestation and woodland and that is where I am coming from is to keep that balance. The peat bogs and the woodlands and the forestation programmes are only one answer to the carbon offsetting. We have other ideas as well which I have already mentioned around renewable energy projects. It is having the right mix of projects that will neutralise our carbon emissions and certainly utilising the farmland and the parklands that we have for tree planting is certainly something we will investigate moving forward.”

5.15. QUESTION BY MR D REED TO CLLR C CAMPBELL, EXECUTIVE BOARD MEMBER FOR COMMUNITIES AND RURAL AFFAIRS

“I wanted to ask what major changes have occurred since the adoption of the Sustainable Risk Assessment (SRA) template that contribute to alleviating the climate emergency?”

Response by Councillor Cefin Campbell, Executive Board Member for Communities and Rural Affairs:-

“This is a really important question for us in Carmarthenshire where we are known as a food producing county. The Sustainable Risk Assessment tool is used to identify and capture sustainable gains on procurement exercise valued above £25,000, ultimately allowing the Council to make better buying decisions in relation to sustainability. This is a Welsh Government template and covers a number of areas which help contribute to the Council’s Net Zero Carbon Plan. The Risk Assessment includes:-

- decreasing transport impacts;
- minimising packaging and waste;
- using sustainably-sourced materials;
- protecting green spaces and biodiversity;
- decreasing use of toxic chemicals, solvents and ozone-depleting substances;
- reducing the need for energy & using energy more efficiently;
- as mentioned in the response to a previous question, adapting procurement regulations to source more locally produced food and drink products is a priority for us because we are already engaging with public sector bodies in Carmarthenshire about developing a programme for sourcing more food and drink locally which is going to reduce obviously the food miles and also supporting the sustainability of local businesses as well.

So specific sustainable projects are underway to further support this agenda in Carmarthenshire, for example the Council is working with WRAP under a Welsh Government programme to promote the use of recycled content and re-use in the public sector through procurement.

Welsh Government are in the final stages of rolling-out a ‘Decarbonisation Dashboard’ as part of the Atamis programme (the Welsh Government appointed spend analytics portal). This will be available in March of this year and it is designed to provide a high-level picture of an organisation’s carbon emissions linked to procurement expenditure with contractors, suppliers or service providers and this will give us a base line, a starting point for our decarbonisation action planning. We are really looking forward to having this dashboard programme from the Welsh Government.”

Mr Reed asked the following supplementary question:-

“There is quite a lot of information for me to process there. Is there any tangible examples that you can give that the SRA have used within Carmarthen within the food industry?”

Councillor Campbell responded as follows:-

“I can’t specifically now give you examples but what I can tell you as a Local Authority you will know that we have become single use plastic free. We have also become a paperless County Council as well. But in terms of actual food, the procurement of food has always been in terms of, we have been constrained by European regulations and I suppose one small benefit of leaving the European Union is that these regulations are now going to be possibly relaxed which will allow us to procure more food locally. We haven’t been able to do that as far as we have wanted in the past but certainly it gives us an opportunity now and we are

engaging as I mentioned with public bodies in Carmarthenshire to actively look at procuring more food, drink and services as well locally in Carmarthenshire to support the business community and to keep the pound in Carmarthenshire. That circular pound is so important to us moving forward.”

5.16. QUESTION BY MS C LAXTON TO CLLR C CAMPBELL, EXECUTIVE BOARD MEMBER FOR COMMUNITIES AND RURAL AFFAIRS

The Chair advised that Ms Laxton was unable to attend today’s meeting and had requested that he ask the following question on her behalf:-

“Considering that in addition to well-known concerns, council contractors are known to use Glyphosate inappropriately and that they don’t always use safety equipment, is it time to ban its use?”

The Chair advised that a written response would be conveyed to Ms Laxton.

5.17. QUESTION BY DR A LAXTON TO CLLR C CAMPBELL, EXECUTIVE BOARD MEMBER FOR COMMUNITIES AND RURAL AFFAIRS

“How does the acreage of solar panels in Carmarthenshire compare to that of other counties?”

Response by Councillor Cefin Campbell, Executive Board Member for Communities and Rural Affairs:-

“On page 8 of our Action Plan you will have seen a hyperlink to the Welsh Government report entitled ‘Energy Generation in Wales’ which was produced in 2018 but it was published in 2019 and sets out the energy generation capacity of Wales. Various renewable energy generation data is provided per Local Authority and this is useful because we can compare ourselves with other Local Authorities. A total solar Photo Voltaic capacity of 977.5 MW was installed in Wales. This ranged from 6.7 MW in Merthyr Tydfil, being the smallest, to 189.7 MW in Pembrokeshire. Carmarthenshire had the second highest solar PV capacity in Wales at 107.7 MW. So we are second in that league table at the moment. So, based on the assumption that each MW of solar PV capacity covers the same land area, so when we compare like with like in terms of land area, Carmarthenshire has the second highest acreage of solar PV panels compared to other counties in Wales, so I think we are doing pretty well.”

Dr. Laxton asked the following supplementary question:-

“That’s a very encouraging answer. What is the Council doing to encourage further development of solar panels notwithstanding the good progress made already?”

Councillor Campbell responded as follows:-

“I did mention this earlier on, my ambition and certainly the Administration’s ambition to invest more in renewable energy projects moving forward. As I said, we have one wind turbine already. We are actively looking at ways of getting some finance to maybe develop more and solar panels as well are certainly something we are looking at. So what I intend discussing with officials is that we can set up a small group to look at the way we can move this agenda forward so that we can produce more of our own energy through renewable sources going

forward because it is vitally important for us to do that in terms of reaching the target we have set ourselves to become net zero carbon in ten years' time."

5.18. QUESTION BY MR B KLEIN BRETELER TO CLLR C CAMPBELL, EXECUTIVE BOARD MEMBER FOR COMMUNITIES AND RURAL AFFAIRS

"In relation to the granting of a licence to extract 110,000 tonnes of coal from the existing Glan Lash coal mine in Shands Road Llandybier. Notwithstanding that the Council will have no authority to insist on the exact quantity of coal that could be sold for burning or non-burning markets.

In light of the County Councils' declaration of a climate emergency on the 20th of February, 2019, Not 12 twelve months ago, does the council agree that granting a licence for the extension of the coal mine would be detrimental to the health of people in the local community, the health and bio diversity of the remaining woodlands in Carmarthenshire and increase the carbon footprint within Carmarthenshire and is the granting of planning permission for the extraction of fossil compatible with the declaration of a climate emergency and compliant with CCC policy and commitments under the Environment (Wales) Act 2016?"

Response by Councillor Cefin Campbell, Executive Board Member for Communities and Rural Affairs:-

"The Council is considering a planning application for this development, as you know. It means that there is a certain protocol that we have to follow as Councillors. It means that the application cannot be pre-judged and this issue will be covered when the application is considered by the Planning Committee in due course. The Council cannot therefore comment until that application is placed before the Planning Committee for determination.

Personally, I would expect our planning officers and members of the Planning Committee to give regard to our Net Zero Carbon Plan when deliberating on this particular application."

Mr Klein Breteler asked the following supplementary question:-

"So would the Council be willing to hold or be part of a People's Assembly or a Citizens' Assembly which all members of the surrounding community would have been door-knocked and personally invited to give their valid reasons for or against such licence and would the Council take the response of these people seriously and submit this response to the Welsh Assembly Government when considering the licence extension?"

Councillor Campbell responded as follows:-

"Personally, I would have no problems in the Community Council for example in Llandybier in holding a Citizens' Assembly to discuss this very application. It is what democracy is about and I would have no problems in anyone holding public meetings to discuss contentious issues like this. A Citizens' Assembly is one of those options so that is something you could take back and consider. But at the end of the day we have a Planning Committee. It is a quasi-legal committee and it is made up of elected members. Now, in many ways you could argue that we are a Citizens' Assembly because we have been elected by the citizens of Carmarthenshire. But I do take your point and it is something you may want to do locally and you could certainly feed back any feelings that people locally have on this issue into the Planning Committee process itself."

5.19. QUESTION BY MR R THOMSON TO CLLR C CAMPBELL, EXECUTIVE BOARD MEMBER FOR COMMUNITIES AND RURAL AFFAIRS

The Chair advised that Mr Thomson was unable to attend today's meeting and had requested that he ask the following question on his behalf:-

"To evaluate the net zero carbon strategy there will be a need to measure the change in renewable energy output, requiring an inventory of power sources. For example, how many roofs provide solar power in Carmarthenshire and what is the power output?"

The Chair advised that a written response would be conveyed to Mr Thompson.

5.20. QUESTION BY MS H GRIFFITHS TO CLLR C CAMPBELL, EXECUTIVE BOARD MEMBER FOR COMMUNITIES AND RURAL AFFAIRS

The Chair advised that Ms Griffiths was unable to attend today's meeting and had requested that he ask the following question on her behalf:-

"Is the Dyfed Pension Fund now disinvested from the fossil fuel industry? In particular has it disinvested from Blackrock whose Investments in ExxonMobil, Chevron, Royal Dutch Shell and BP were responsible for 75% of Blackrock's \$90bn losses over the last decade (reported in 2019)."

The Chair advised a written response would be conveyed to Ms Griffiths.

5.21. QUESTION BY MR B DOYLE TO CLLR C CAMPBELL, EXECUTIVE BOARD MEMBER FOR COMMUNITIES AND RURAL AFFAIRS

The Chair advised that Mr Doyle was unable to attend today's meeting and had requested that he ask the following question on his behalf:-

"Having spent decades religiously recycling and recently finding out that it may quite well have been shipped all the way to Malaysia, only to end up being dumped in a river and eventually making its way to the ocean. There it threatens huge amounts of marine life and humanity with contaminated food chains. It would have been better sent to landfill. So, is there any way that people can gain some insight into where and how our recycled items are processed?"

The Chair advised that a written response would be conveyed to Mr Doyle.

At the conclusion of the debate the Chief Executive agreed that the written responses would be published with the minutes of the meeting.

The Chair thanked the questioners for submitting their questions and for their attendance at the meeting.

6. QUESTIONS BY MEMBERS

The Chair advised that no questions from Members had been received.

7. TO CONSIDER THE FOLLOWING NOTICE OF MOTION:

7.1. NOTICE OF MOTION SUBMITTED BY COUNCILLOR FOZIA AKHTAR

Council considered the following Notice of Motion submitted by Councillor Fozia Akhtar :-

That Carmarthenshire Council.

- Believe that more needs to be done to improve diversity within our workforce.
- Commit's to working with community groups to understand the barriers that exist for individuals BAME (Black Asian and Minority Ethnic).
- Call's on the Executive Board to create an Advisory Panel to consider what actions can be taken to increase diversity in the workplace.

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.

A number of statements were made in support of the Motion. Members were advised that if the motion was supported the matter would be referred to the Executive Board.

UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED that the Motion be supported.

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

8.1. NET ZERO CARBON PLAN (EXECUTIVE BOARD 3RD FEBRUARY 2020)

(NOTE: Cllrs. K. Lloyd and C.A. Davies had previously declared an interest in this item)

The Council was informed that the Executive Board at its meeting held on the 3rd February 2020 (minute 8 refers) had considered a report which set out a plan for the Authority to become net zero carbon. A Notice of Motion unanimously supported by County Council on the 20th February 2019 required that a clear plan for a route towards being net zero carbon be developed within 12 months.

RESOLVED that the following recommendation of the Executive Board be adopted: -

- (1) the Net Zero Carbon Plan outlining a route towards becoming a net zero carbon local authority by 2030 be adopted, and**
- (2) delegated authority be granted to Officers to make typographical or factual amendments as necessary to improve the clarity and accuracy of the Net Zero Carbon Plan.**

8.2. CWM ENVIRONMENTAL LTD - LOAN FUNDING REQUIREMENT (EXECUTIVE BOARD 3RD FEBRUARY 2020)

The Council was informed that the Executive Board at its meeting held on the 3rd February 2020 (minute 6 refers), had considered a report on the securing of an appropriate funding facility for CWM Environmental Ltd. The loan was required in order to finance the Company's office relocation to Nantycaws, the settlement of any end of lease payments that may fall due following the vacation of the current accommodation at Cillefwr together with the acquisition of additional land adjoining the Nantycaws Site.

UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED that the following recommendation of the Executive Board be adopted:-

To agree to a funding facility as follows:

- 1. Total loan facility £800k**
- 2. Duration of arrangement – 10 years for the land acquisition, 5 years for the buildings related costs.**
- 3. Interest at 1% above the rate set by the PWLB for 10 and 5 years respectively reflecting the security that will be available to the Council.**
- 4. Funding facility to be operated on a draw-down arrangement – funds only drawn when required.**
- 5. Approval of the release of funding is to be delegated to the Director of Corporate Services in conjunction with the Executive Board member for Resources, with the facility to be administered as follows:**
 - a) Release of funding only when**
 - i) Approved by the Company Board and endorsed by the CWM Environmental Ltd Shareholder group.**
 - ii) Director of Corporate Services satisfied that the loan repayments are provided for within the Company's Business Plan and are affordable.**
 - b) The conclusion of the detailed loan agreement to be delegated to the Director of Corporate Services.**

9. TO RECEIVE THE REPORTS OF THE MEETINGS OF THE EXECUTIVE BOARD HELD ON THE FOLLOWING DATES:-

9.1. 6TH JANUARY 2020

UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED that the report of the meeting of the Executive Board held on the 6th January 2020 be received.

9.2. 20TH JANUARY 2020

UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED that the report of the meeting of the Executive Board held on the 20th January 2020 be received.

CHAIR

DATE