

COUNTY COUNCIL

WEDNESDAY, 8 NOVEMBER 2023

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

Councillors (In Person):

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

Councillors (Virtually):

D.M. Cundy	S.A. Curry	A. Davies	T.A.J. Davies
C. Davies	LI.M. Davies	M. Donoghue	A. Evans
D.C. Evans	H.A.L. Evans	N. Evans	R.E. Evans
S. Godfrey-Coles	A.D. Harries	R. James	G.H. John
B.W. Jones	A.C. Jones	D. Jones	G.R. Jones
A.G. Morgan	D. Owen	B.D.J. Phillips	E. Rees
S.L. Rees	E.M.J.G. Schiavone	R. Sparks	F. Walters
P.T. Warlow	D.E. Williams	J. Williams	

Also Present (In Person):

W. Walters, Chief Executive
C. Moore, Director of Corporate Services
J. Morgan, Director of Community 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
G. Morgan, Head of Democratic Services
L. Jenkins, Cabinet Support Officer
S. Rees, Simultaneous Translator
R. Griffiths, Head of Place and Sustainability
K. Thomas, Democratic Services Officer

Also Present (Virtually):

R. Morris, Members Support Officer

Chamber - County Hall, Carmarthen. SA31 1JP and remotely - 10.00 am - 1.20 pm

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

(Note:

- At 12:54pm the Council's attention was drawn to Council Procedure Rule (CPR) 9 – Duration of Meeting and, as the meeting would have been underway for three hours at 1:00pm, and it was resolved to suspend standing orders, in accordance with CPR 23.1, to enable the remaining business on the agenda to be considered.]

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors L. Bowen, A. Davies, B. Davies and P. Hughes.

2. DECLARATIONS OF PERSONAL INTERESTS.

Councillor	Minute Number	Nature of Interest
H. Shepardson	6 – Presentation by Chief Fire Officer Roger Thomas, Mid and West Wales Fire Authority	Member of the Fire Authority
K. Broom	6 – Presentation by Chief Fire Officer Roger Thomas, Mid and West Wales Fire Authority	Member of the Fire Authority
E. Williams	6 – Presentation by Chief Fire Officer Roger Thomas, Mid and West Wales Fire Authority	Member of the Fire Authority
G. Thomas	6 – Presentation by Chief Fire Officer Roger Thomas, Mid and West Wales Fire Authority	Member of the Fire Authority
E. Thomas	9.3 – Conservation Area Appraisals	Lives within the Llandeilo Conservation Area
J. Tremlett	9.3 – Conservation Area Appraisals	Lives within the Laugharne Conservation Area
A Lenny	9.3 – Conservation Area Appraisals	Lives within the Carmarthen Conservation Area
H.A.L. Evans	9.3 – Conservation Area Appraisals	Lives within the Newcastle Emlyn Conservation Area
C.A. Jones	9.3 – Conservation Area Appraisals	Lives within the Llanstephan Conservation Area
Andrew Davies	9.3 – Conservation Area Appraisals	Lives within the Brecon Beacons Conservation Area
D. Phillips	9.3 – Conservation Area	Lives within the

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

	Appraisals	Llanboidy Conservation Area
D. Jones	9.3 – Conservation Area Appraisals	Has the Caeau Mynydd Mawr Marsh Fritillary Butterfly Project in the area

3. CHAIR’S ANNOUNCEMENTS (IF ANY)

- The Chair advised that she had attended the Launch of the Poppy Day Appeal in the Council Offices at Carmarthen.
- The Chair outlined the Council’s support for the White Ribbon Day to be held on the 25th November 2023 raising awareness of domestic abuse and local services available to help victims and survivors.
- At the Chair’s invite, the following Councillors addressed the Council:-
 - Councillor Linda Evans raised awareness to this year’s Christmas Toy Box Appeal and highlighted that this year many children and families would be impacted upon by the rising costs of living and therefore, encouraged Members to contribute to the Appeal and raise its awareness within their wards.
 - Councillor John Jenkins advised that the meeting of the Council that day would be his last meeting having made the decision to stand down as a Councillor with Carmarthenshire County Council due to family and work commitments. He reflected on his time as a county councillor since being elected to the Elli Ward in Llanelli in 2004. He expressed his appreciation to elected members and officers of the Council for their guidance and assistance over that time and also extended his best wishes for the future. He also commented on the honour of being elected by the people of the Elli Ward to represent them on the Council.

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

The Council received the following two Cabinet Member announcements:

- Councillor Alun Lenny, Cabinet Member for Resources, referred to the forthcoming Autumn Statement announcement by the UK Chancellor, which would be followed in December 2023 by the Welsh Government’s announcement on the level of Revenue Support Grant for Welsh Local Authorities for 2024/25. He commented on the severe financial pressures being faced by local authorities both in England and Wales and that he had written to the Chancellor in that regard urging him to provide sufficient funding to the Welsh Government, through the Barnett formula, to enable it, in turn, to provide additional funding for Local Government in Wales to continue to maintain essential services.

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

- Councillor Glynog Davies, Cabinet Member for Education and the Welsh Language, echoed the sentiments raised by Councillor Lenny and specifically referred to the impact financial constraints were having on the provision of education services. Specifically, the impact of the £40m reduction of funding to the Council's Modernising Education Provision programme which was also facing rising construction and maintenance costs. As a result of those pressures, he advised the current programme was unsustainable and was being re-examined and would be submitted to Council for its consideration in due course.

5. TO APPROVE AND SIGN AS A CORRECT RECORD THE MINUTES OF THE COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON THE 11TH OCTOBER 2023

It was noted that Councillor K. Davies should have been included within the list of members attending the meeting the Council meeting virtually on the 11th October 2023.

UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting of Council held on the 11th October 2023 be signed as a correct record.

6. PRESENTATION BY CHIEF FIRE OFFICER ROGER THOMAS, MID AND WEST WALES FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE.

[Note: Councillors K. Broom, H. Shepherdson, G.B. Thomas and E. Williams having earlier declared an interest, re-iterated their declaration on this item and remained in the meeting for its consideration.]

The Chair welcomed to the meeting the Chief Fire Officer, Mr Roger Thomas, Mrs Sarah Mansbridge, Mid and West Wales Fire and Rescue Service's Section 151 Officer together with Councillor Gwynfor Thomas, Chair of the Fire Authority.

The Chief Fire Officer and the Section 151 Officer gave an overview of the work of the Fire and Rescue Service detailing the work of the Fire Service and including the current operational and financial challenges.

The presentation was followed by a question and answer session.

The Chair thanked the Chief Fire Officer, Section 151 Officer and the Chair of the Fire Authority for their attendance at the meeting and for the presentation.

7. RE-APPOINTMENT OF CO-OPTED MEMBERS OF STANDARDS COMMITTEE TO A FURTHER TERM OF OFFICE

The Council considered a report on re-appointing Mrs Daphne Evans and Mrs Julie James onto the Standards Committee for a further term of office. It noted that whilst both the members had been appointed by Council in 2017 for a 6year term, expiring on the 12th December, 2023, Regulation 21 of the Standards Committee (Wales) Regulation 2001 provided for the re-appointment of members for a further term of office of no more than 4 years without the need for the post to be re-advertised.

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

UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED that Mrs Daphne Evans and Mrs Julie James be appointed to a further 4 year term of office on the Council's Standards Committee for the period 12th December 2023 – 12th December 2027.

8. COMPOSITION OF THE COUNCIL'S SCRUTINY, REGULATORY AND OTHER COMMITTEES AND THE APPOINTMENT OF MEMBERS TO SERVE UPON THEM

In line with the requirements of the Local Government and Housing Act 1989 and the Local Government (Committees and Political Groups) Regulations 1990, as amended, the Council considered a report detailing the outcome of a review of the composition of the Council's Scrutiny, Regulatory and other Committees following notification received that:-

- Councillor John James was no longer to be treated as a member of the Labour Group,
- Councillor Emyr Rees had left the Labour Group and,
- The Disbandment of the Housing Review Panel.

As a result of the above review, it was noted that the disbandment of the Housing Review Panel would result in a reduction in the number of Committee seats on the Council from 168 to 160

UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED, as a result of the changes to the overall political composition of the Council and the disbandment of the Housing Review Panel, that:

8.1 The number of Committee Seats on the Council be reduced to 160, split as follows:

- Scrutiny – 67
- Regulatory and Other - 93

8.2 The Changes to the number of seats held by the Labour Group, Plaid Cymru Group and Unaffiliated Members, as detailed within Tables 2 and 3 of the report be adopted.

8.3 In accordance with Corporate Procedure Rule CPR 2(2) the changes in Committee Members as a result of resolution 8.2 above (as detailed within the report) be approved.

8.4 In accordance with Part 6 of the Local Government (Wales) Measure 2011 to note that the existing arrangements for the allocation of the 5 Scrutiny Chairs remains unchanged.

9. TO CONSIDER THE RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE CABINET IN RESPECT OF THE FOLLOWING ITEMS:-

**9.1. ANNUAL MONITORING REPORT 2022/23 - ADOPTED
CARMARTHENSHIRE LOCAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN (2006 -2021)**

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

The Council was informed that the Cabinet, at its meeting held on the 16th October 2023 (minute 10) had considered the Annual Monitoring Report 2022/23 relating to the Adopted Carmarthenshire Local Development Plan (2006-2021) prepared in accordance with the provisions of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 and the Local Development Plan (LDP) Regulations 2005. It was noted that in accordance with the Council's Statutory Duty, the Annual Monitoring Report would be submitted to the Welsh Government and published on the Council's website by the 31st October 2023.

RESOLVED that the following recommendation of the Cabinet be adopted:

“that the Annual Monitoring Report for the Adopted Carmarthenshire Local Development Plan (LDP) be endorsed and officers be authorised to make typographical or factual amendments as necessary to improve its clarity and accuracy”

9.2. CARMARTHENSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL'S DRAFT ANNUAL REPORT FOR 2022-23

The Council was informed that the Cabinet, at its meeting held on the 30th October 2023 (minute 6) had considered the Draft Annual Report 2022/23 on the Council's Corporate Strategy 2022-27, published in accordance with the requirements of both the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 to publish an Annual Report on its Well-being objectives and under the Local Government and Elections Act (Wales) 2021 to report on its performance on a self-assessment approach. It was noted the report aimed to meet both the above requirements in the one document and included information relating to the four Well-being Objectives and Core Business Enablers and assessed progress made during the year.

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

“that the Carmarthenshire County Council's Draft Annual Report for 2022-23 be approved”.

9.3. CONSERVATION AREA APPRAISALS

[Councillors Andrew Davies, H.A.L. Evans, C.A. Jones, D. Jones, A. Lenny, D. Phillips, J. Tremlett and E. Thomas having earlier declared a personal interest in this item, remained in the meeting and voted.]

The Council was informed that the Cabinet, at its meeting held on the 30th October 2023 (minute 8) had considered a report regarding Conservation Area Appraisals that built on work undertaken to review ten of the designated Conservation Areas across the County and the subsequent preparation and consultation of the appraisals for each of the identified Conservation Areas. It was noted the report outlined the process and feedback received as part of the associated formal public consultation, setting out the final draft conservation area

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

appraisals and any recommended amendments to the Conservation Areas themselves together with detailing the next steps in relation to the regulatory process required to formally amend the Conservation Areas.

In response to a request received for parts of the Furnace area in Llanelli, associated with Alexander Raby an eighteenth century ironmaster, to be declared a conservation area, it was noted officers would liaise with the member who raised the issue.

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

“8. 1- that the outcome of the Conservation Area Appraisals and the recommended amendments to Conservation Area Boundaries be approved,

8.2 – to authorise officers to undertake regulatory processes necessary to formally amend the Conservation Area boundaries as recommended”.

10. TO RECEIVE THE REPORT OF THE MEETING OF THE CABINET HELD ON THE 16TH OCTOBER 2023

RESOLVED that the report of the meeting of Cabinet held on the 16th October, 2023 be received.

DURATION OF MEETING

At 12:54 pm the Council’s attention was drawn to Council Procedure Rule (CPR) 9 – Duration of Meeting and, as the meeting would have been underway for three hours at 1:00pm, it was therefore

RESOLVED to suspend Standing Orders to allow the remaining items on the agenda to be considered.

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

11.1. THE LABOUR GROUP HAS NOMINATED COUNCILLOR DERYK CUNDY TO REPLACE COUNCILLOR KEVIN MADGE ON THE CORPORATE PERFORMANCE AND RESOURCES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED that the Labour Group’s nomination for Councillor D. Cundy to replace Councillor K. Madge on the Corporate Performance and Resources Scrutiny Committee be approved.

11.2. THE LABOUR GROUP HAS NOMINATED COUNCILLOR LEWIS DAVIES TO TAKE ITS VACANT SEAT ON THE EDUCATION, YOUNG PEOPLE AND THE WELSH LANGUAGE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

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

UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED that the Labour Group's nomination for Councillor L. Davies to take its vacant seat on the Education, Young People, and the Welsh Language Scrutiny Committee be approved.

11.3. THE LABOUR GROUP HAS NOMINATED COUNCILLOR CRISH DAVIES TO REPLACE COUNCILLOR ROB EVANS ON THE HEALTH AND SOCIAL SERVICES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED that the Labour Group's nomination for Councillor Crish Davies to replace Councillor R. Evans on the Health and Social Services Scrutiny Committee be approved.

12. TO ELECT THE CHAIR OF THE DEMOCRATIC SERVICES COMMITTEE FOLLOWING A VACANCY MID TERM

The Council, in accordance with Council Procedure Rule 4 (2) the Council considered two nominations received for the election of Chair of the Democratic Services Committee following a mid-term vacancy.

Following a vote, it was

RESOLVED that Councillor M. Cranham be appointed Chair of the Democratic Services Committee.

13. PUBLIC QUESTIONS (NONE RECEIVED).

The Chair advised that no public questions had been received.

14. QUESTIONS BY MEMBERS:-

14.1. QUESTION BY COUNCILLOR JOHN JAMES TO COUNCILLOR ANN DAVIES, CABINET MEMBER FOR RURAL AFFAIRS, COMMUNITY COHESION & PLANNING POLICY

Question by Councillor James:

"The recent announcement by Dwr Cymru that many of its wastewater treatment plants are currently illegally spilling untreated sewage into rivers and the sea by not adhering to their permits has greatly alarmed the residents of Carmarthenshire.

Taking into account the proactive steps already taken by this Council regarding the concentration of phosphorus in our waters here in Carmarthenshire; What is Carmarthenshire County Council doing to Challenge Dwr Cymru on this illegal practice, and will you, Cllr. Davies, contact Dwr Cymru to discuss what measures they intend introducing to ensure that such neglect of our environment and to the health and well-being of our residents does not happen again".

Response by Councillor Davies:

Thank you John for the question.

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

I can assure you and all the Councillors that I am very disappointed to see that over 223 breach discharge contents have happened in Wales since 2018 and these have a detrimental impact on the biodiversity of rivers and shouldn't happen in the 21st century. I note that NRW have given a warning to Dwr Cymru and enforcement notices and I have written to the Chair of Dwr Cymru to ask for a formal response and on the report to ask why so many breaches happened in Garnswllt and Llannon and the impact on this estuary in Carmarthen and this is not good enough. The answer, as I'm sure that you will all realise, is investment.

As Cabinet Member for Rural Affairs, Community Cohesion and Planning Policy and Chair of the Tywi Nutrient Management Board I have met with Dwr Cymru / Welsh Water to press for urgent need for long-term investment. I welcome therefore the submission of Dwr Cymru's business Plan to OFWAT for the period 2025-2033 earlier this month. And, if this is approved, it will result in a £3.5bn investment programme reducing the company's impact on the environment and in particular helping to improve river water quality. It's imperative that this work gets started and includes measures to substantially reduce nutrient discharges from waste water treatment to rivers of special areas of conservation and the commencement of a multi AMP programme to stop its network of 2,300 storm overflows causing ecological harm to our rivers. This work will, in itself, help save our rivers from further pollution and ensuring its enjoyment for all our residents here in Carmarthenshire. Thankyou

Supplementary Question by Councillor James: there was no supplementary question.

14.2. QUESTION BY COUNCILLOR TERRY DAVIES TO COUNCILLOR DARREN PRICE, LEADER OF THE COUNCIL

Question by Councillor Davies:

“Will the Leader provide an update in terms of the Stradey Park hotel in the Ffwrnes Llanelli and outline any discussions that he has had with both the UK Government and Welsh Government on the matter”?

Response by Councillor Price:

Thank you Terry for the question

Since the announcement at the beginning of October that the UK Conservative Government had withdrawn their intention to utilise the Stradey Park hotel, the owners of course have stated that they want to reopen the hotel.

Now, I am sure that all members would want to see the site being brought back to use, and I am certainly of the view that this needs to happen sooner, rather than later.

Now, whether the site will be operated by the current owner, or another is not something for us as a council to determine – it is after all a private enterprise, but

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

clearly the longer that the site is left empty, the more the fabric of the buildings will deteriorate, and the greater will be the cost to bring it back up to standard.

Having spoken to a number of people in Llanelli and members over the last few weeks it is clear that local people want to see the site either revert to its former use as a hotel, or developed into another asset which can bring benefit to the town, and for that to happen as quickly as possible. What nobody wants is to see the site remaining derelict for a prolonged period.

Now, with the threat of Home Office use now firmly off the table, we now need clarity from the owners in terms of how they intend to bring the site back to use, and a detailed timetable for any works. It is important for the local community to fully understand the scope of works needed in order to bring the site back to use.

Members will remember that I had written to the Conservative Government urging them to withdraw from the site, and as a result of that letter, I received a further communication from the UK Government only last week. Within that letter, dated on November 1st, the UK Government state that they are now “committed to work with partners on a lessons learned exercise facilitated by the Wales Strategic Migration Partnership.” Now, clearly, this is important, as they had failed in my view to learn the lessons from the Penally camp experience.

Within this council of course, we have started to think quite some time ago about the way in which improvements can be made and, indeed, ever since the Stradey Park story broke back in May, I have been making the argument that there is an alternative way of managing the asylum process here in Wales.

As members are aware, I have consistently stated that local government and the Welsh Government should have a central role in developing an All-Wales approach to emergency asylum accommodation, as opposed to leaving it to a UK Government which very often has no idea of the local context – as we have seen in the case of the Stradey Park hotel.

I raised this over the Summer with both the Minister for Social Justice, Jane Hutt and at WLGA meetings with other Leaders, and it was therefore pleasing that on September 15th, at a WLGA Executive Board meeting, it was agreed by all leaders of local authorities in Wales to formally accept a proposal to develop a new, collaborative, way forward for planning asylum accommodation in Wales. It was pleasing that many of the concerns that we had raised, and the experiences that we had shared, were reflected and addressed in that proposal, which sought to develop a new relationship between the UK Government, Welsh Government and Welsh local government – where there is parity of esteem, as opposed to the UK Government simply telling us locally what is going to happen, with little or no opportunity for local input.

I understand that the Welsh Government has now made that offer to the Conservative Government in London, and I would hope that the Conservative Government would look and take up that offer.

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

From our perspective, here in Carmarthenshire of course, what is frustrating for us, as members, is that these discussions between WG and UK Government hadn't taken place at an earlier stage, because had this more co-operative model been proposed, and was in place, prior to this May, then I am absolutely convinced that we would not have had to endure what we've had to endure in Llanelli.

Members will be aware that the Police and Crime Commissioner, Dafydd Llewelyn, has estimated that the cost to the police force of the Stradey Park fiasco has been in excess of £300k for Dyfed Powys Police. He is seeking reimbursement, and has written to the Home Secretary, Suella Braverman to make that point.

I can confirm this morning Chair, that I too will be making a claim for reimbursement from the Conservative Government for costs incurred by this authority due to the fiasco over the past six months.

Officers of this authority have spent over 2,700 hours, yes 2,700 hours, dealing with this issue. In addition, we have also lost income due to the cancelled marriage ceremonies and resulting loss of income of course to registrars, for example. This comes at a time of significant budget strain, as we have heard earlier this morning, and officers have been pulled away from their primary duties in order to deal with this mess.

In total, nearly £230k of costs have been incurred as a direct result of the Conservative Government's flawed proposal, and I believe that there is a duty on the Conservative Government to reimburse this authority for those costs.

Chair, the grit and determination shown by so many over recent months is to be commended, and I'd like to take this opportunity to thank members, officers, partners and local residents for their co-operation and efforts over recent months. What is clear is that we need to harness that energy, to turn that frustration into positive action, and ensure that everyone is on the same page, as we all take steps to make Llanelli the prosperous, sustainable, welcoming and successful town that we know it can be.

As always Chair, I will endeavour to keep members updated on developments at the Stradey Park, and with regards to further discussions with both the UK and Welsh Governments on this agenda.

Thank you

Supplementary question by Councillor Davies: There was no supplementary question.

14.3. QUESTION BY COUNCILLOR MEINIR JAMES TO COUNCILLOR ALED VAUGHAN OWEN, CABINET MEMBER FOR CLIMATE CHANGE, DECARBONISATION AND SUSTAINABILITY

Question by Councillor James:

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

“In response to the Declaration of a Climate Emergency in 2019, does the Council intend to decarbonise our light vehicle fleet?”

Wouldn't setting a meaningful timetable and targets send a clear message to the residents of Carmarthenshire that we take our responsibilities seriously, and give us an opportunity to showcase the cost savings and benefits of an electric fleet to businesses and organisations within our County?”

Response by Councillor Vaughan Owen:

Thankyou very much Councillor James and your question does raise a vital issue that affects not only the environment but also our health and well-being. It's about the urgent need to decarbonise our public fleet of vehicles. This is not just an issue of environmental concern. It's essential for our future.

Scientists and organisations around the world have been sounding the alarm, including the fire service today in his presentation, and the message is clear the lifetime of oil is no longer sustainable for the sake of our climate and public health. Organisations such as the Inter-Government Panel on Climate change, the IPCC, and the World Health Organisation have provided irrefutable evidence that our continued dependence on fossil fuels is causing serious damage to our planet and our own health. We can't deny our dependency on oil.

For us, as an authority, we have fully committed to playing our part and have set an ambition to be net zero by the end of the decade. The largest carbon footprint comes from our non-domestic buildings and some really innovative steps are being taken to reduce energy demand in the form of electricity and heat. as has been noted in the Annual Report and 20% of the emissions come from our fleet and we have to do things differently in this area quickly.

So, I can announce that by working together Cllr Edward Thomas we have mandated that, from this week forward, all new fleet across the authority must have the presumption in favour of Electric Vehicles. Clearly, an assessment will support every decision based on the technical requirements, the economic costs and savings, the environment and health benefits and the practicality of deployment.

This decision now shapes the way forward for a new fleet strategy that is fit for purpose and addresses the challenges and opportunities ahead.

In the last meeting of the Climate and Nature Emergency Advisory Panel, members agreed to undertake a deep dive into fleet and transport across the authority. We are lucky to have knowledgeable and passionate members from across the chamber who will be able to gather evidence from experts and others that have started the journey and together we will shape an exciting bold new fleet strategy that will be scrutinised and hopefully enhanced by the Place and Sustainability Scrutiny committee. The insight of both the panel and scrutiny will provide recommendations to the Cabinet on practical measures to accelerate the transition, setting ambitious targets and driving us closer to the net zero goal.

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

We need to step away from doing less bad in better ways.

We need to step away from incremental changes in the wrong places and find out the boundaries of what is possible.

But it is not like we are starting from a standing start, currently about 17% of our cars are Ultra Low Emission Vehicles but, regionally, we have been on the front foot when it comes to the larger fleet, including three refuse lorries and the 8 EV Traws Cymru buses that run from Carmarthen to Aberystwyth.

These have given us such an insight and learning around Electric Vehicle technology and capability - imagine a bus that can do 230miles on a single charge and then recharge in 90 mins

We have also built design and construction skills within the county while developing the charging station at Nant y Ci.

For every local authority is presented with unique geographical challenges, each with its own set of obstacles and opportunities, but working collaboratively we can deploy the right vehicle to the right place and learn, fail and share so that this country can significantly decarbonise the public fleet. We are already part of an all Wales purchasing agreement that can look at funding options, the economies of scale means significantly reducing costs and also reducing the lead in time for vehicles. We are in the process of ordering 20 electric light commercial vehicles.

Our action plan with the Public Service Board Partners will see us working more collaboratively across the county when it comes to the charging infrastructure. Each organisation is on its own decarbonising journey but enabling each partner to access one another's charging network will accelerate the business case for fleet de-carbonisation.

But also, this is about how we enable society to decarbonise the way it travels. Having a fleet of Ultra Low Emission Vehicles should be something we would want to share with others. We have already invested heavily in a charging network across the county, and we are looking at innovative ways to develop on-street charging. The transition to low carbon transport must be fair and equitable and who knows, we might start thinking even further outside the box and commit to some of our pool cars to be available for as community car club vehicles and make greater use of night-time charging tariffs. Promoting the positive aspects of a decarbonisation in the fleet, reducing carbon emissions, improving air quality, debunking some mis-information being promoted by those still heavily invested in oil and gas, are all things we must do in parallel with switching our fleet.

Now is the moment to embrace the green revolution, we accelerate along this journey, we mustn't look in the rear view mirror and say, this is how we have always done it, in fact we should be looking back and say, can you believe how we used to do things?

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

The road before us is uneven and uncertain but decarbonising the fleet is like paving the way to a sustainable future where every vehicle represents a step towards a cleaner and greener path.

Supplementary question by Councillor James: There was no supplementary question.

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

The Chair stated that the minutes outlined on the agenda under 15.1 – 15.10 were available for information on the Council website.

CHAIR

DATE

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