

COUNTY COUNCIL

WEDNESDAY, 6 MARCH 2024

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

Councillors (In Person):

| | | | |
|--------------|---------------------|-----------------|-----------------|
| K.V. Broom | J.M. Charles | M.D. Cranham | D.M. Cundy |
| C.A. Davies | G. Davies | H.L. Davies | M. Donoghue |
| A. Evans | H.A.L. Evans | L.D. Evans | N. Evans |
| R.E. Evans | W.T. Evans | T.M. Higgins | J.K. Howell |
| P.M. Hughes | P. Hughes-Griffiths | J.D. James | M. James |
| H. Jones | A. Lenny | N. Lewis | K. Madge |
| M. Palfreman | D. Price | S.L. Rees | H.B. Shepardson |
| R. Sparks | D. Thomas | E.G. Thomas | G.B. Thomas |
| M. Thomas | J. Tremlett | A. Vaughan Owen | |

Councillors (Virtually):

| | | | |
|------------------|-----------------|-------------|--------------------|
| S.M. Allen | L.R. Bowen | S.A. Curry | A. Davies |
| W.R.A. Davies | T.A.J. Davies | B. Davies | K. Davies |
| L. Davies | S.L. Davies | T. Davies | D.C. Evans |
| S. Godfrey-Coles | A.D. Harries | J.P. Hart | R. James |
| G.H. John | B.W. Jones | A.C. Jones | D. Jones |
| G.R. Jones | M.J.A. Lewis | A. Leyshon | A.G. Morgan |
| D. Owen | B.D.J. Phillips | E. Rees | E.M.J.G. Schiavone |
| E. Skinner | F. Walters | P.T. Warlow | D.E. Williams |
| J. Williams | | | |

Also Present (In Person):

W. Walters, Chief Executive
J. Morgan, Director of Community Services
C. Moore, Director of Corporate Services
G. Morgans, Director of Education & Children's Services
A. Williams, Director of Place and Infrastructure
P.R. Thomas, Assistant Chief Executive (People Management & Performance)
L.R. Jones, Head of Administration and Law
R. Hemingway, Head of Financial Services
G. Morgan, Head of Democratic Services
L. Jenkins, Cabinet Support Officer
S. Rees, Simultaneous Translator
A. Wood, People Services Manager
D. Hall-Jones, Member Support Officer
K. Thomas, Democratic Services Officer

Also Present (Virtually):

E. Evans, Principal Democratic Services Officer
J. Hawker, Digital Support Officer
M. Runeckles, Members Support Officer

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

Chamber - County Hall, Carmarthen. SA31 1JP and remotely - 10.00 - 11.57 am

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE.

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors P. Cooper, C. Davies, LL. M. Davies, D. Nicholas and J. Seward

2. DECLARATIONS OF PERSONAL INTERESTS.

| Councillor | Minute Number | Nature of Interest |
|-------------------|--|---|
| J.M. Charles | 8 – Pay Policy Statement 2024/25 | Close family members work for the Authority Son works in a school |
| D.M. Cundy | 8 – Pay Policy Statement 2024/25 | He has relatives who work for the Council |
| A. Davies | 8 – Pay Policy Statement 2024/25 | A member of his family works for the Authority |
| B. Davies | 8 – Pay Policy Statement 2024/25 | His wife works for the Health Dept of the County Council |
| C.A. Davies | 8 – Pay Policy Statement 2024/25 | Her sister works for the Authority |
| S.L. Davies | 10.1 – Notice of Motion Submitted by Councillors R. James and D. Jones | Works for Dolen Teifi. If any transportation issues arise. She has dispensation to speak. |
| T. Davies | 8 – Pay Policy Statement 2024/25 | A family member works for the Authority |
| T.A.J. Davies | 8 – Pay Policy Statement 2024/25 | His sister-in-law works as a Head of Service |
| A. Evans | 8 – Pay Policy Statement 2024/25 | My mother works for the Authority |
| D.C. Evans | 8 – Pay Policy Statement 2024/25 | His wife works for the Authority as part of the Call Centre |
| N. Evans | 8 – Pay Policy Statement 2024/25 | Her daughter works for the Authority |
| R. Evans | 8 – Pay Policy Statement 2024/25 | His daughter works for the Authority |
| S. Godrey-Coles | 8 – Pay Policy Statement 2024/25 | My partner works for the Local Authority |
| J. Hart | 8 – Pay Policy Statement 2024/25 | He has family members working for the Authority |
| T. Higgins | 8 – Pay Policy Statement 2024/25 | Her niece works in the Library |
| P.M. Hughes | 8 – Pay Policy Statement 2024/25 | A member of his family works for the Authority |
| A.C. Jones | 8 – Pay Policy Statement 2024/25 | A member of the family works in Social Services |

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|----------------|----------------------------------|---|
| H. Jones | 8 – Pay Policy Statement 2024/25 | A number of his close friends and family work for the Authority |
| A. Leyshon | 8 – Pay Policy Statement 2024/25 | His daughter works in the Library |
| M.J.A. Lewis | 8 – Pay Policy Statement 2024/25 | Her niece works for the Education Authority |
| K. Madge | 8 – Pay Policy Statement 2024/25 | His daughter works in Social Care |
| M. Palfreman | 8 – Pay Policy Statement 2024/25 | He has a number of friends working for the Authority |
| W.E. Skinner | 8 – Pay Policy Statement 2024/25 | He has a niece working in Education |
| E. Rees | 8 – Pay Policy Statement 2024/25 | His brother works for the Authority |
| B.A.L. Roberts | 8 – Pay Policy Statement 2024/25 | Daughter works in Social Care |
| F. Walters | 8 – Pay Policy Statement 2024/25 | Members of her family work for the Authority |

NOTE: The Chief Executive declared an interest in agenda item 8 – Pay Policy Statement 2024/25 - on behalf of all officers present in the meeting, both physically and virtually, and advised that they would leave the meeting for consideration of this item. The Democratic Services Officer team would remain to provide assistance to the Chair.

3. CHAIR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS.

The Chair reported that she had the previous week, together with Councillor Edward Thomas, visited a lady in Llandeilo celebrating her 112th birthday.

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

The Cabinet Member for Rural Affairs, Community Cohesion and Planning Policy advised the Council that the consultation periods relating to Green Gen's Towy/Teify Pylon Line and the Welsh Government's Sustainable Farming scheme were coming to an end and she urged members to feed into the process for both those consultations.

5. TO CONSIDER NOMINATIONS FOR THE CHAIR OF COUNCIL FOR THE 2024-25 MUNICIPAL YEAR

RESOLVED that Councillor H.L. Davies be nominated Chair Elect of Carmarthenshire County Council for the 2024/25 Municipal Year.

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

6. TO CONSIDER NOMINATIONS FOR THE VICE-CHAIR OF COUNCIL FOR THE 2024-25 MUNICIPAL YEAR

RESOLVED that Councillor D. Jones be nominated Vice-Chair Elect of Carmarthenshire County Council for the 2024/25 Municipal Year.

7. SETTING THE COUNCIL TAX FOR THE FINANCIAL YEAR 2024/25

The Council received a report, presented by the Cabinet Member for Resources, setting out the financial details relevant to the setting of the Council Tax for the 2024/2025 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 brought together the authority's budget requirement and the precepts for the Police Authority and the Town and Community Councils into the consolidated Council Tax amounts in respect of the individual Council Tax Valuation bands.

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 2024/25 be adopted.

8. PAY POLICY STATEMENT 2024/25

[NOTE:

1. Councillors J.M. Charles, D.M. Cundy, A. Davies, B. Davies, C.A. Davies, T. Davies, T.A.J. Davies, A. Evans, D.C. Evans, N. Evans, R.E. Evans, S. Godfrey-Coles, J. Hart, T. Higgins, P.M. Hughes, R. James, A.C. Jones, H. Jones. A. Leyshon, M.J.A. Lewis, K. Madge, M. Palfreman, W.E. Skinner, E. Rees, B.A.L. Roberts, and F. Walters had earlier declared interests in this item and, left the meeting;
2. All officers in attendance were deemed to have a personal interest in this item and left the meeting prior to its consideration with the exception of the Democratic Services Manager, Democratic Services Officer and officers who were facilitating the webcasting of the meeting.
3. As the Cabinet Member for Organisation and Workforce had declared an interest in this item and left the meeting, the Leader of the Council presented the report on his behalf)
4. As the Chair of Council, Councillor B.AL. Roberts, had declared an interest in this item, the Vice Chair chaired the meeting during the report's consideration.

The Leader of the Council, on behalf of the Cabinet Member for Organisation and Workforce, presented the report which outlined that under the provisions of the

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Localism Act 2011, all Local Authorities were required to prepare a Pay Policy Statement which must be agreed and published by the 1st April every year. The Statement required the approval of full Council and had to set out the Authority's policies for the financial year relating to the remuneration of its Chief Officers, its lowest paid employees and the relationship between the remuneration of its Chief Officers and its employees who were not Chief Officers.

It was reported that the politically balanced Pay Policy Advisory Panel had had input into the formulation of the Pay Policy Statement and its recommendations had been incorporated into the final document for approval by County Council that day. It was reported that at its meeting the previous year, the Panel had requested that options be put forward for reviewing the existing NJC pay model and removing grade overlaps, particularly at the bottom of the pay scale. In accordance with that request, a separate paper (attached to the report) detailed 2 proposals for removing the overlaps between Grades A to D and A to E together with costings. The Pay Panel, at its meeting on the 20th February 2024, had considered both options, in the context of the challenging financial climate, and agreed to introduce proposal 1 (i.e. to remove the overlaps from Grades A to D inclusive) in April 2025, if financially viable to do so. That recommendation was to be discussed at the forthcoming Trade Union Joint Consultative Forum in April 2024.

Council was further advised that in addition to the commitment already given in relation to the Foundation Living wage rates of pay, the Authority was also minded to revise its apprenticeship pay to reflect the rate for the job. If adopted, that would help address the Council's commitment to support its lowest paid members of staff with some apprentices receiving up to an additional £6k per annum. In so doing, it would also assist in improving recruitment and attract more applicants to join the Council as an apprentice in support of the Cabinet's Vision Statement, together with marketing the Council as an attractive employer for apprentices, school leavers and graduates and focus on reducing the migration of young people out of Carmarthenshire and the rural areas.

Finally, the Panel had also approved the removal of the additional 10% pay allowance for JNC Heads of Service fulfilling statutory roles.

RESOLVED that the Pay Policy Statement 2024/25 be approved in compliance with Section 38(1) of the Localism Act 2011.

[Following the vote, the members who had declared an interest and had left the meeting were readmitted to the meeting together with the officers and Cllr. B.A.L. Roberts took the Chair].

9. TO RECEIVE THE REPORT OF THE MEETING OF THE CABINET HELD ON THE 19TH FEBRUARY 2024

In response to a question on the Revenue Budget Strategy and the current deficit budgets being faced by a number of primary and secondary schools within the County, the Council was advised that the situation with school budgets was

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particularly fluid at the moment and would become clearer as they set their budgets over the coming weeks.

RESOLVED that the report of the meeting of the Cabinet held on the 19th February, 2024 be received.

10. TO CONSIDER THE FOLLOWING NOTICE OF MOTION:-

10.1. NOTICE OF MOTION SUBMITTED BY COUNCILLORS ROBERT JAMES AND DOT JONES

(NOTE: Councillor S.L. Davies had earlier declared an interest in this item)

Council considered the following Notice of Motion submitted by Councillors Rob James and Dot Jones:-

"School bus services are essentially for ensuring our pupils can safely travel to school and help alleviate congestion from the thousands of individual car journeys each day.

In February, local members were informed that the L23, L24 and L27 bus services in Llanelli had been cancelled when the local provider took the difficult decision to withdraw their provision. This is not an isolated case neither in Carmarthenshire nor Wales, yet it is imperative that we take action to ensure that every children has the right and access to school bus services in Carmarthenshire.

This Council:

- Calls on the Cabinet to develop a new plan for ensuring that every pupil in Carmarthenshire has the right and ability to access reliable school bus services.
- Believes that an emergency summit should be held with the remaining private providers to assess the viability of all routes and consider whether there are opportunities to bring routes back.
- Calls on the Welsh Government to urgently publish their newest review on the Learner Travel Measure and lobby for pupils living within 3 miles of a comprehensive school to also be supported to travel on a bus to school"

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 and against the Motion

RESOLVED that the Motion be not supported.

11. PUBLIC QUESTIONS (NONE RECEIVED).

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

The Chair advised that no public questions had been received.

12. QUESTIONS BY MEMBERS:-

12.1. QUESTION BY COUNCILLOR ROB JAMES TO COUNCILLOR EDWARD THOMAS - CABINET MEMBER FOR TRANSPORT, WASTE AND INFRASTRUCTURE SERVICES

“Could the Council please state how many roads in Carmarthenshire, previously designated as 30mph roads, have been changed to 20mph both as a number and percentage; and what is this Authority’s stance on supporting enforcement of the policy?”

Response by Councillor Edward Thomas – Cabinet Member for Transport, Waste and Infrastructure Services

The introduction of Welsh Government’s legislation The Restricted Roads (20mph Speed Limit)(Wales) Order 2022 obliged local authorities to implement default 20mph speed limits on all restricted roads in Wales in place of the previous 30mph default limit. Restricted roads are legally defined within the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984 as roads with a system of street lighting in place. This generally applies to the majority of roads within Carmarthenshire’s towns and most villages. To implement the new default limit, larger urban areas and settlements, local authorities had to change only the speed limit signs on the boundary of the area to automatically include all of the restricted roads within. However, there is complexity within this to acknowledge.

There are a number of roads, for example the A484 from Llanelli through Carmarthen and on to Newcastle Emlyn, which now have numerous sections of 20mph through settlement areas such as Sandy Road, Burry Port, Carmarthen town and Newcastle Emlyn, but higher speed limits between the settlements. As a consequence, one single road may have many lengths which have defaulted from 30mph to 20mph. To answer the question, an analysis of data within our mapping system indicates there to be 2567 lengths of road with street lighting defaulted to 20mph. However, it should also be acknowledged that of these 2567 lengths, at least 300 lengths of road were already subject to 20mph restrictions prior to the legislation in the Llanelli area alone. Where existing 20mph limits were previously in place by virtue of a Traffic Regulation Order, the Orders had to be revoked to enable the wider legislation restriction to take precedence. In total 76 Traffic Regulation Orders had to be revoked which each Order covering single or groups of streets.

One of the key aims of the County Council in implementing the legislation was to provide consistency for road users. In a number of instances, particular roads had streetlighting only over part of its length. This typically occurred towards the settlement boundary where development extended beyond the limit of the street lighting. In such cases, a Traffic Regulation Order was required to extend the 20mph limit to the commencement of the settlement area so that road users were presented with a clear understanding that they were entering into an urban

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environment. There were 417 lengths of road treated in this way through a Traffic Regulation Order.

Local authorities in Wales were advised by Welsh Government that they could make exceptions of the default 20mph limit to retain a 30mph in particular circumstances and Welsh Government provided guidance for local authorities to follow when assessing the potential for certain roads to be exceptions. Within Carmarthenshire, Orders were created for 278 lengths of road which effectively retained a 30mph limit, which equates to 7.3% of the former 30mph roads. Welsh Government is currently reviewing its guidance to local authorities on setting exceptions to the legislation.

And what is the Authority's stance on supporting enforcement of the policy?

The relationship between traffic speed and risk is well evidenced and Welsh Government suggest that the new 20mph speed limits will result in a 40% reduction in vehicle collisions. Compliance with the new limits is a key factor and with that so is enforcement which helps encourage compliance. Local authorities are not empowered to enforce speed limits and within Carmarthenshire the power is within the remit of Dyfed Powys Police and the GoSafe Partnership. The County Council does support the encouragement of motorists to adhere to posted speed limits through educational initiatives which are particularly targeted towards school sites and community-based projects.

Supplementary Question by Councillor James

Based on what has been said by the Deputy Minister, do you believe that Carmarthenshire Council has utilised its exemption policy correctly, and the Dyfed Powys Police has stated that signage needs to be clear to enforce the policy so is there a plan in place from the Council to ensure that all damaged signage is going to be replaced if any enforcement is going to take place?

Response by Councillor Edward Thomas – Cabinet Member for Transport, Waste and Infrastructure Services

I can assure the member that we will replace any damaged signs so that it is clear what the speed limits within those areas are.

13. TO ELECT THE CHAIR OF THE COMMUNITIES, HOMES AND REGENERATION SCRUTINY COMMITTEE FOLLOWING A VACANCY MID-TERM

UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED that Councillor R.E Evans be elected Chair of the Communities, Homes and Regeneration Scrutiny Committee.

14. TO APPROVE THE FOLLOWING CHANGES TO MEMBERSHIP OF COMMITTEES AND COUNCIL PANELS PROPOSED BY THE LABOUR GROUP:-

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

RESOLVED that the following changes proposed by the Labour Group to the membership of Committees and Panels be approved:

- **Councillor Michael Thomas to take the vacant seat on the Planning Committee.**
- **Councillor P. Cooper to take the vacant seat on the Dyfed Pension Fund Committee.**
- **Councillor Tina Higgins to take the vacant seat on the Constitutional Review Working Group.**

CHAIR

DATE

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