

COUNTY COUNCIL

WEDNESDAY, 8 MAY 2024

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

Councillors (In Person):

K.V. Broom	J.M. Charles	P. Cooper	D.M. Cundy
C.A. Davies	B. Davies	G. Davies	H.L. Davies
L. Davies	T. Davies	M. Donoghue	A. Evans
L.D. 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	M.J.A. Lewis	K. Madge
M. Palfreman	D. Price	S.L. Rees	H.B. Shephardson
R. Sparks	D. Thomas	E.G. Thomas	M. Thomas
J. Tremlett	A. Vaughan Owen	S. Williams	

Councillors (Virtually):

S.M. Allen	L.R. Bowen	M.D. Cranham	S.A. Curry
A. Davies	W.R.A. Davies	T.A.J. Davies	C. Davies
LI.M. Davies	S.L. Davies	D.C. Evans	H.A.L. Evans
N. Evans	R.E. Evans	J.P. Hart	R. James
G.H. John	A.C. Jones	A.G. Morgan	D. Nicholas
D. Owen	B.D.J. Phillips	E.M.J.G. Schiavone	J. Seward
E. Skinner	G.B. Thomas	P.T. Warlow	D.E. Williams
J. Williams			

Also Present (In Person):

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

Also Present (Virtually):

D. Hall-Jones, Member Support Officer

Chamber - County Hall, Carmarthen. SA31 1JP and remotely - 10.00 - 11.10 am

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors K. Davies, S. Godfrey-Coles, B.W. Jones, D. Jones, G.R. Jones, N. Lewis, A. Leyshon and F. Walters.

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

2. DECLARATIONS OF PERSONAL INTERESTS.

There were no declarations of personal interest.

3. CHAIR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS (IF ANY)

- The Chair reflected on yet another very busy month for her and her Consort and referred to her attendance at Llandeilo Literary Festival.
- The Chair, on behalf of the Council welcomed Councillor Steve Williams to his first meeting having recently been elected to represent the Elli Ward.
- The Chair congratulated Llanelli Wanderers RFC on their Division 1 Cup final at the Principality Stadium Cardiff April.
- Councillor Handel Davies congratulated Llandovery RFC for their recent WRU Challenge Cup title win. The third time for them to win the cup.
- Councillor Edward Thomas congratulated Llandeilo RFC Under 18s for their unbeaten record of 10 out of 10 games and for winning the WRU Clubs Under 18 Cup at the Principality Stadium. The Senior team was also congratulated on their unbroken record of 13 games.
- The Chair, on behalf of the Council congratulated Gill Adams, who was presented with the Butler Trust Award by HRH The Princess Royal at a ceremony in London in recognition for her dedication to youth justice and wider role as Principal Manager of Youth Support Service in Carmarthenshire.
- The Chair, on behalf of the Council, conveyed condolences to the families of three former Carmarthenshire Councillors, namely Ivor Jackson who represented the Llandovery Ward, Ieuan Jones who represented the Llandeilo Ward and Ryan Bartlett who represented Betws Ward. A minute's silence was held in their memory.

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

There were no announcements made.

5. TO APPROVE AND SIGN AS A CORRECT RECORD THE MINUTES OF THE COUNCIL MEETINGS HELD ON THE:-

5.1. 28TH FEBRUARY 2024

It was raised that the declaration by Cllr Fiona Walters under minutes 2 and 9.1 was incorrect, the interest was declared by Cllr Linda Evans.

RESOLVED that subject to the above amendment, the minutes of the meeting of Council held on the 28th February, 2024 be signed as a correct record.

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

5.2. 6TH MARCH 2024

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting of Council held on the 6th March, 2024 be signed as a correct record.

6. **RECRUITMENT TO THE POST OF DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION, CHILDREN & FAMILY SERVICES (AND STATUTORY CHIEF EDUCATION OFFICER.)**

The Council received a report, presented by the Cabinet Member for Education and Welsh Language on the Recruitment to the Post of Director of Education, Children & Family Services (and Statutory Chief Education Officer) of which provided detailed information on the post and the Temporary Acting up arrangements if required.

Council was informed that the current Director of Education, Children & Family Services would be leaving the Council with effect from 31st October 2024.

Therefore, the Council would need to approve the arrangements to appoint a new Director of Education, Children & Family Services that incorporates the statutory role of Chief Education Officer. It was reported that the post of Chief Education Officer was a designated statutory post under S.532 of the Education Act 1996, which imposes a duty on the Council to appoint an officer as its Chief Education Officer.

Interim arrangements would be required by way of undertaking an internal expressions of interest exercise to seek applications from qualified individuals with relevant experience should the appointment of the new Director not be in place prior to the departure of the current incumbent.

Council noted that is there was no requirement in Law to require a qualified Teacher to fulfil the statutory duty, however this qualification requirement was included as a desirable criterion.

RESOLVED that

- 6.1 the Job Profile and Person Specification appended to the report be approved.**
- 6.2 the proposed interim arrangements be implemented, should they be required.**

7. **APPOINTMENT OF INTERIM MONITORING OFFICER**

The Council received a report, presented by the Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Homes, noting the recommendation of the Appointments Committee 'B' held on the 17th April 24, and designate Mr Steve Murphy as the Council's Monitoring Officer on an interim basis, following the retirement of the current Head of Administration & Law (and Monitoring Officer) on the 31st May 2024.

- It was noted that the appointment was necessary to ensure that the Council:

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

- Complied with the requirements of Section 5 of the Local Government and Housing Act 1989 and to carry out the statutory role and responsibilities of Monitoring Officer under that Act.
- Ensured that interim arrangements were maintained to meet statutory requirements pending the appointment to the permanent post. It was anticipated that the permanent recruitment process would be concluded in July 2024.
- Ensured a Monitoring Officer was in place to cover the statutory and constitutional roles as set out in Article 11 (Functions of the Monitoring Officer) of the Council's Constitution.

Council extended thanks to L. R. Jones for her dedication and support during her employment with the Authority.

RESOLVED to note the recommendation of the Appointments Committee 'B' held on the 17th April 2024, and designate Mr Steve Murphy as the Council's Monitoring Officer on an interim basis, following the retirement of the current Head of Administration & Law (and Monitoring Officer) on the 31st May 2024.

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

8.1. (DRAFT) STRATEGIC EQUALITY PLAN 2024-2028 (Cabinet 18/03/2024)

Council was informed that the Cabinet, at its meeting held on 18th March, 2024 (minute 6 refers) had considered the (draft) Strategic Equality Plan 2024-28 which had been prepared to outline how the Council would meet its duties under the Equality Act 2010 and the Specific Duties for Wales and builds on the Council's previous plans. The Authority was required to publish the new plan in April 2024.

The Equality Act 2010 brings together and replaces previous legislation and simplifies/strengthens the law, making it easier for people to understand and comply with. Most of the Act came into force on 1st October 2010. Specific Duties had been introduced for Public Bodies in Wales and the development of a Strategic Equality Plan is one of those duties.

The Cabinet Member for Rural Affairs, Community Cohesion and Planning Policy advised that when preparing the new plan a number of different elements were considered and engagement work with other organisations and Local Authorities and partners in the PBS. It was noted that the plan was a work in progress and would be reviewed and updated as additional reports such as the Welsh Government Disability Action Plan became available.

The Cabinet Member for Rural Affairs, Community Cohesion and Planning Policy in response to a query regarding the amount of data that related to all of Wales rather than to just Carmarthenshire and the plea for the collection of more local

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data, provided assurance that local data would be used as and when it became available.

It was asked that the actions around the monitoring of emerging community tensions and working with key partners could be expanded to include specific mention to both County and Community Councillors and if assurance could be given that members would be given the opportunity to formally raise issues from within their communities. Additionally, it was asked if appropriate advice and support could be provided in identifying potential risks and in developing and implementing remedial measures with the communities. In response, The Cabinet Member for Rural Affairs, Community Cohesion and Planning Policy advised that the Community Cohesion team based in Carmarthen were always available for all members to speak to and approach for advice.

RESOLVED that:

8.1.1 the Strategic Equality Plan be approved;

8.1.2 the Strategic Equality Objectives be agreed.

9. TO RECEIVE THE REPORTS OF THE MEETINGS OF THE CABINET HELD ON THE:-

9.1. 4TH MARCH 2024

RESOLVED that the report of the meeting of the Cabinet held on the 4th March, 2024 be received.

9.2. 18TH MARCH 2024

RESOLVED that the report of the meeting of the Cabinet held on the 18th March, 2024 be received.

9.3. 25TH MARCH 2024

RESOLVED that the report of the meeting of the Cabinet held on the 25th March, 2024 be received.

9.4. 15TH APRIL 2024

RESOLVED that the report of the meeting of the Cabinet held on the 15th April, 2024 be received.

10. NOTICES OF MOTION

The Chair advised that no Notices on Motion had been received.

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

11. PUBLIC QUESTIONS

The Chair advised that no public questions had been received.

12. PRESENTATION OF PETITION

The Chair invited Ms Liz Hurley to present the petition in the following terms, together with supporting remarks:-

'We the undersigned, request immediate action from Carmarthenshire County Council to reinstate public toilets in Burry Port Town, said toilet block must be accessible to wheelchair users, disabled and elderly persons, and those with babies or young children. The structure must be protected from vandalism, with appropriate management and cleaning regime so as to restore pride in our town and welcome tourists. We request that the Town Council and relevant community groups are involved from the planning stage through to the re-opening of the public conveniences.'

The Cabinet Member for Transport, Waste and Infrastructure responded to the petition and confirmed that the issue referred to in the petition was an executive function and consequently Council was only able to refer the matter to the Cabinet for consideration.

UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED that in accordance with Corporate Procedure Rule 10.14 the petition be referred to the Cabinet for consideration.

13. QUESTIONS BY MEMBERS:-

13.1. QUESTION BY COUNCILLOR JOHN JAMES TO COUNCILLOR ALED VAUGHAN OWEN - CABINET MEMBER FOR CLIMATE CHANGE, DECARBONISATION AND SUSTAINABILITY

"Recent research from the Local Government Association revealed that two thirds of councils in England are not confident of achieving their Net Zero Carbon targets within their target timescales whilst the Welsh Local Government Association is working on a climate change transition and support programme to seek to help the public sector meet the Welsh Government's 2050 Net Zero Carbon target.

Given this information, as well as acknowledging the overall severe financial pressures faced by Local Authorities, reaching Net Zero targets has become even more challenging than ever.

Where does this Council currently stand in relation to its current objectives and the ultimate goal of achieving the more ambitious 2030 Net Zero Carbon target?"

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

Response by Councillor Aled Vaughan Owen – Cabinet Member for Climate Change, Decarbonisation and Sustainability

I thank Councillor James for raising this question today. As a Local Authority, we made a promise to our residents and to future generations - a declaration of a climate emergency and a commitment to become net zero by 2030.

We understand how urgent this is, we recognise the important role that we have as a Local Authority have to play as we mitigate against the impacts of climate change and preserving biodiversity and we recognise the challenges ahead us. The financial pressures of achieving such an ambitious goal particularly when we are working with the Conservative Government in London that were defeated in court last week - for the second time - for not doing enough to meet its targets for cutting greenhouse gas emissions.

As a reminder, we agreed in our plan in 2020 to focus on 4 key areas – our non-domestic buildings, our street lighting, our fleet mileage and our business mileage. I can confirm that we are currently at around 36% less carbon emissions since our pre Covid base line year. I am sure you would agree that this is a substantial reduction. But we are not slowing down, I am proud of the tremendous work that has been done by dedicated officers to focus on our fleet which contributes about 19% of our emissions. In the last few months alone supported by our Climate and Nature Advisory Panel, made up of members from across this chamber, we have increased our electric vehicle fleet by 40 vehicles and set into policy the presumption for electric vehicles in all future purchases.

But we are mindful that we as a Local Authority do not have all the levers needed to become net zero unless governments at all levels decide to close that gap between rhetoric and reality and set us on a course towards a just transition to a more sustainable future with appropriate funding mechanisms.

But we won't sit back, and only focus on that scope of what we originally perceived as Net Zero, we are now transferring our learning to other areas within the Council and mainstreaming climate and nature into all decisions we take. You only need to look at our corporate plan, our transformation strategy or even our procurement strategy, all have climate and nature embedded in the ways of working. No longer are they nice to haves or fringe benefits, they are the way we do business.

Consider our new homes, built to the highest possible environmental standards, learning from the designs of passive house level schools that we have built, retrofitting our aging stock to provide the best possible housing standard for tenants - reducing bills and looking after the planet.

We are now finalising training modules on carbon literacy to all Carmarthenshire County Council employees. Imagine over 8000 staff in one organisation fully trained, understanding the challenges ahead and being able to contribute to the urgent action needed around climate and nature emergencies.

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Yes, there are challenges ahead but unlike what some people would advocate - it's not a reason to give up rather to get up and do the right thing.

Supplementary Question by Councillor John James

What is our on-going and long-term strategy for engaging and involving the residents of Carmarthenshire in realising this Council's commitment towards a low carbon future?

Response by Councillor Aled Vaughan Owen – Cabinet Member for Climate Change, Decarbonisation and Sustainability

Thank you Councillor James. Collaboration is key, so by working together across sectors, industries and communities we can achieve significant progress. By action on the greatest challenges facing humanity. And I am pleased to say that on a national level we are working alongside partners such as the WLGA and Welsh Government to support the National Climate Action Wales Programme to engage with the public. .

Shortly, we will publish our Local Area Energy Plan for Carmarthenshire which has been co-developed with the public and private sector, regulators, and community to set us on a trajectory to decarbonise the whole County's energy system over the next decade. This will be a further springboard on which to involve our communities.

However, over the last year we have funded about £7.5 million in community projects based on climate, nature and circular economy. Imagine the impact this will have on the villages and towns of Carmarthenshire.

Our regeneration team have supported over 24 businesses installing renewable energy technologies and saving hundreds of tonnes of carbon each year with more and more businesses submitting expressions of interest every week.

But as a Council, our most powerful assets we have is us, the elected members. Imagine the ability to inspire our communities to address the climate and nature emergency through policy making and leading by example. However less than half of us have taken up the opportunity to improve our carbon literacy through the training on offer. If any other member in this chamber wishes to do the course, please contact me after the meeting so we can arrange.

And as we continue on this journey, let us keep in mind the legacy we are building for future generations. Our actions today will shape the world they inherit tomorrow. Let us be remembered not for the challenges we faced, but for the boldness of our ambition and the determination in which we pursued it.

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

14. TO APPROVE THE FOLLOWING CHANGES TO MEMBERSHIP OF COMMITTEES AND COUNCIL PANELS:-

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

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

- **Councillor Anthony Leyshon to replace Councillor Deryk Cundy on the Communities, Homes & Regeneration Scrutiny Committee**
- **Councillor Janet Williams to take the vacant seat on the Education, Young People and Welsh Language Scrutiny Committee**
- **Councillor Tina Higgins to take the vacant seat on the Appointments A Committee**
- **Councillor Nysia Evans to take the vacant seat on the Appointments B Committee**
- **Councillor Philip Warlow to take the vacant seat on the Standards Committee**
- **Councillor Deryk Cundy to take the vacant seat on the Swansea Bay City Region Joint Scrutiny Committee**
- **Councillor Deryk Cundy to take the vacant seat on the South West Wales Corporate Joint Committee – Governance & Audit Sub Committee**
- **Councillor Deryk Cundy to take the vacant seat on the South West Wales Corporate Joint Committee –Overview & Scrutiny Sub Committee**
- **Councillor Philip Warlow to take the vacant seat on the Pay Policy Advisory Panel.**

14.2. TO APPROVE THE FOLLOWING CHANGES TO MEMBERSHIP OF COMMITTEES AND COUNCIL PANELS PROPOSED BY THE UNAFFILIATED MEMBERS:-

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

- **Councillor Steve Williams to take the vacant seat on the Corporate Performance and Resources Scrutiny Committee**
- **Councillor Steve Williams to take the vacant seat on the Health and Social Services Scrutiny Committee**
- **Councillor Michael Cranham to take the vacant seat on the Appeals Committee**
- **Councillor John James to take the vacant seat on the Governance & Audit Committee**
- **Councillors John James and Steve Williams to take the vacant seats on the Planning Committee**

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

14.3. TO APPROVE THE FOLLOWING CHANGES TO MEMBERSHIP OF THE MID AND WEST WALES FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITY:-

RESOLVED that the following changes to the membership of the Mid and West Wales Fire and Rescue Authority be approved:

- **Councillor Tina Higgins to replace Councillor Rob Evans as one of the Labour Group representatives.**
- **Councillor Emlyn Schiavone to replace Councillor Gareth Thomas as one of the Plaid Cymru Group representatives.**

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

The Chair stated that the minutes outlined on the agenda under 15.1 – 15.19 were available for information on the Council website.

CHAIR

DATE

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