

COUNTY COUNCIL
WEDNESDAY, 9 OCTOBER 2024

PRESENT: Councillor H. L Davies (Chair) (In Person)

Councillors (In Person):

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

Councillors (Virtually):

S.M. Allen	A. Davies	C.A. Davies	T.A.J. Davies
C. Davies	K. Davies	LI. M. Davies	S.L. Davies
W.T. Evans	S. Godfrey-Coles	J.P. Hart	T.M. Higgins
J.D. James	R. James	G.R. Jones	A. Leyshon
A.G. Morgan	E. Rees	E.M.J.G. Schiavone	J. Seward
F. Walters	P.T. Warlow	D.E. Williams	J. Williams
S. Williams			

Also in attendance:

Mrs Daphne Evans, Vice Chair – Standards Committee (Item 6).
Mr David MacGregor, Chair – Governance and Audit Committee (Item 7).

Also Present (In Person):

W. Walters, Chief Executive;
J. Morgan, Director of Community Services;
G. Morgans, Director of Education & Children's Services;
A. Williams, Director of Place and Infrastructure;
S. Murphy, Head of Law, Governance and Civil Services;
G. Morgan, Head of Democratic Services;
C. Higginson, Media Manager;
L. Jenkins, Cabinet Support Officer;
S. Rees, Simultaneous Translator;
D. Hall-Jones, Member Support Officer;
J. Owen, Democratic Services Officer.

Also Present (Virtually):

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

Chamber, County Hall, Carmarthen, SA31 1JP and remotely: 10:00am – 12:20pm

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for Absence were received from Councillors Liam Bowen, Suzy Curry, Deian Harries, Gareth John and Edward Thomas.

2. DECLARATIONS OF PERSONAL INTERESTS.

Councillor	Minute Number	Nature of Interest
Martyn Palfreman	10.1 - Notice of Motion submitted by Councillors Alex Evans and Louvain Roberts	He runs a Health and Social Care Consultancy. Cllr Palfreman has been granted a dispensation to speak but not vote at meetings of Carmarthenshire County Council in relation to the provision of social care services in Carmarthenshire and across the South West Wales Region.
Jason P. Hart	12.1 - Question by Councillor Deryk Cundy to Councillor Glynog Davies, Cabinet Member for Education and Welsh Language	Partner works at Heol Goffa School.

3. CHAIR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

- The Chair announced that he, together with his Consort had attended a number of events over the last month which included the Monmouthshire Civic Service and the Gorslas Festival. In addition, he had the privilege of meeting His Royal Highness Prince William at Swiss Valley Primary school on a surprise visit to meet the pupils and teachers.
- The Chair stated that he had attended the opening of the Neath Summer Fair.
- The Chair reported that he was delighted to be asked to attend Bethania Chapel, upper Tumble to open the medal presentation ceremony for 103-year-old war veteran Basil Smith. Mr Smith was duly presented with his belated medals of honour, 83 years after leaving the Royal Air Force.
- The Chair explained that he had the unique opportunity of meeting the Welsh Olympians and Paralympians at the Senedd in Cardiff to pay tribute and acknowledge their combined successes and performances in Paris.
- The Chair stated that a lovely evening was had at the Chairman's Dinner held at Llandovery Rugby Club with guest speaker Mr Garry Owen. The Chair extended a special thanks to his fellow Councillors who had supported his chosen charities; Latch and Prostate Cymru by attending

the evening which had raised £4,000 so far, a great start to the fundraising campaign.

- To conclude, the Chair announced that he had recently visited the 'Bwyd Sir Gar Partnership' at Bremenda Isaf Farm and as President, visited 'Ardd Allanol' of Ysgol Bro Dinefwr before enjoying the evening concert at Eglwys Teilo Sant, Llandeilo
- Councillor Glynog Davies, Cabinet Member for Education and Welsh Language following the approval of the Chair, took the opportunity to provide a heartfelt farewell to Mr Gareth Morgans, Director of Education on his retirement at the end of October. Expression of thanks was extended to Mr Morgans for his unwavering commitment and dedication whilst working with the Council. The work he had undertaken for education in Carmarthenshire was invaluable and both officers and Councillors had benefited from his knowledge and advice. Best wishes were extended on his future retirement.
- Councillor Kevin Madge, following approval by the Chair, provided a warm tribute to former Councillor Terry Davies, affectionately known as Terry Coch following his recent passing.

4. ANNOUNCEMENTS BY THE LEADER, CABINET MEMBERS AND THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE

The Chair advised that he had not been notified of any announcements.

5. TO APPROVE AND SIGN AS A CORRECT RECORD THE MINUTES OF THE COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON THE 11TH SEPTEMBER 2024

The following amendments were raised:-

Minute 2 – Declaration of Interest:-

- In respect of all the Declarations of Interest relating to the Winter Fuel Allowance, it was advised that the wording to be amended to 'received'.
- To correct the minutes to reflect Councillor Shepherdson's Declaration of interest that he was in receipt of the Winter Fuel Allowance.

RESOLVED that subject to the amendments raised being made, the minutes of the meeting of the Council held on the 11th September, 2024 be signed as a correct record

6. STANDARDS COMMITTEE ANNUAL REPORT

The Council received the Standards Committee Annual Report for 2023/24 for approval. The Vice Chair of the Standards Committee, Mrs Daphne Evans presented the report in the absence of Mrs Mary Dodd, Chair of the Standards Committee highlighting the salient points. The report provided information regarding the activities of the standards Committee during the year and provided an assessment as to whether the Group Leaders on the Council had complied with their duties under the 2021 Act to:

1. Take reasonable steps to promote and maintain high standards of conduct by the members of their group and;
2. Co-operate with the Council's Standards Committee in the exercise of the Standards Committee's functions.

RESOLVED that the Standards Committee Annual Report 2023/2024 be approved.

7. GOVERNANCE & AUDIT COMMITTEE ANNUAL REPORT 2023/24

The Council received the Governance and Audit Committee Annual Report for 2023/24 for approval. The report, presented by the Chair of the Governance and Audit Committee Mr David MacGregor, had been developed to provide assurance on the work of the Governance & Audit Committee in ensuring transparency, accountability, and effective governance.

In presenting the first of such reports, Mr MacGregor acknowledged the current budget challenges the Council faced and highlighted that the Committee provided independent scrutiny of the authority's financial and non-financial performance, its exposure to risk as well as overseeing the financial reporting process.

It was emphasised that the challenges in respect of the future budget was a real concern and the work of the Governance and Audit Committee would continue to work with officers, auditors and Councillors in undertaking its duty.

RESOLVED that the Standards Committee Annual Report 2023/2024 be approved.

8. TO CONSIDER THE RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE CABINET IN RESPECT OF THE FOLLOWING ITEMS

8.1. ANNUAL TREASURY MANAGEMENT AND PRUDENTIAL INDICATOR REPORT 2023-2024

The Council was reminded that, at its meeting held on the 1st March 2023 (minute 5.3 thereof refers), had approved the Treasury Management Policy and Strategy for 2023-24. This report, following the recommendation to be approved by Cabinet at its meeting on 16th September 2024 (minute 6 refers) provided the Council's Annual Treasury Management and Prudential Indicator Report for the 2023-24.

RESOLVED that the following recommendation of the Cabinet be adopted:

“that the Annual Treasury Management and Prudential Indicator Report for 2023-24 be approved.”

9. TO RECEIVE THE REPORT OF THE MEETING OF THE CABINET HELD ON THE 16TH SEPTEMBER 2024

UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED that the report of the meeting of the Cabinet held on the 16th September, 2024 be received.

10. TO CONSIDER THE FOLLOWING NOTICES OF MOTION:-

10.1. NOTICE OF MOTION SUBMITTED BY COUNCILLORS ALEX EVANS AND LOUVAIN ROBERTS

[NOTE: Mr M. Palfreman, having earlier declared an interest in this item, in accordance with his dispensation, remained in the meeting but did not partake in the voting thereof.]

Council considered the following notice of motion submitted by Councillors Alex Evans and Louvain Roberts:-

‘This council objects to the decision made by Hywel Dda University Health board to cut the Minor Injuries Unit (MIU) at Prince Phillip Hospital in Llanelli from a 24/7 service to one that will only operate from 8am until 8pm for the next 6 months, starting from the 1st of November.

Having already lost its A&E service, a full-time MIU is the very least that the largest town in West Wales should expect in urgent care provision from Hywel Dda.

Also, the scaling back of this service could have a detrimental effect on urgent care waiting times for residents across Carmarthenshire, with residents of Llanelli and its wider area having to travel to Glangwili Hospital in Carmarthen over the coming months to access urgent care.

This council calls on Hywel Dda to urgently explore all options to fully staff the MIU at Prince Phillip Hospital and restore a 24/7 service. This Council also calls on Welsh Government and the Welsh Cabinet Secretary for Health and Social Care to intervene on behalf of the residents of Llanelli if necessary.’

The motion was duly seconded.

The proposers 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 representations were made in support of the Motion.

UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED that the Motion be supported and referred to the Cabinet.

10.2. NOTICE OF MOTION SUBMITTED BY COUNCILLORS ALUN LENNY AND DENISE OWEN

‘Council considered the following notice of motion submitted by Councillors Alun Lenny and Denise Owen:-

Chancellor urged to put local council funding back on a firm foundation

Carmarthenshire County Council congratulates the Rt Hon Rachel Reeves MP on becoming the first woman to be appointed as Chancellor of the Exchequer in the UK Government.

We can empathise with her on taking on this challenging role as local councils who’ve had to cope with a disproportionate share of spending cuts during 14 years of ruthless Conservative Govt austerity. Carmarthenshire CC alone, due to chronic government under-funding, is now £120m worse off, in real terms, than we were a decade ago.

This is an extremely worrying time for all councils and their staff, with many now teetering on the brink of financial disaster. UNISON general secretary Christina McAnea has warned that “countless essential services and very many vital jobs are at risk, with terrible consequences for communities across Britain.”

We urge the Chancellor in her forthcoming autumn budget to put local government funding back on a sustainable foundation, by drawing on the £10b available due to the Bank of England’s decision to slow down the pace of its quantitative tightening programme.

Urgent extra revenue funding (via the Barnett Formula for Wales) is needed for such essential services as:

Social Care – for a population which includes an increasing percentage of older people who need residential and community care

Children’s Services – facing unprecedented demand and critical financial pressures

Schools – struggling, or failing, to live within allocated budgets, resulting in impact on staffing levels and curriculum delivery

Highways – deteriorating following a decade’s year-on-year cuts in maintenance budgets, as evidenced by the increasing number of pot holes on our roads.

We further urge the Chancellor to provide for inflationary pressures on local government budgets, and to ensure that pay settlements which are set centrally should be fully funded by central government’.

The motion was duly seconded.

The proposers 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 representations were made in support of and against the Motion.

RESOLVED that the Motion be supported and referred to the Cabinet.

11. PUBLIC QUESTIONS

The Chair advised that no public questions had been received.

12. QUESTIONS BY MEMBERS:-

12.1. QUESTION BY COUNCILLOR DERYK CUNDY TO COUNCILLOR GLYNOG DAVIES, CABINET MEMBER FOR EDUCATION AND WELSH LANGUAGE

[NOTE: Councillor J.P. Hart, having earlier declared an interest in this item, left the meeting during the deliberation and voting thereof.]

‘Regarding the original estimated Capital Spend on Heol Goffa which was originally set at £17 million pounds, £4.25 million being provided from the Carmarthenshire County Council’s Education Capital budget of £20.5 million and £12.75 million being provided by the Welsh Government to make up the difference, will this Administration still spend the ring fenced money of £4.25 million on projects to support High Dependency Need children in Education or will they use this money for other Capital Education projects that do not support our High Dependency Needs children.’

Response by Councillor Glynog Davies – Cabinet Member for Education and Welsh Language

Deryk, as you are aware and we have heard again this morning, I have asked an independent expert to review ALN provision in the Llanelli area. David Davies has started this work and is meeting with a range of key stakeholders to inform his advice to us as Cabinet. He will provide us with costed options in relation to the delivery of services to Llanelli’s learners, including a new school.

I’m unclear in regard to the description Cllr Cundy’s used, that is High Dependency Needs Children - that isn’t a term we use in the Education Department. As a Local Authority, we provide a range of services to meet the diverse needs of all learners with ALN. We have a four-phase model with the first tier being the universal provision provided by all schools, the 2nd is access to additional support and specialist advice and the 3rd and 4th accessing specialist settings which meet the needs of our most complex learners.

We provide specialist support for a wide range of needs, for example, Autism, Hearing Impairment, Specific Learning Difficulties, Profound and Multiple Learning Difficulties, Speech, Language and communication.

In terms of the Capital available, you will know that we have a funding envelope to deliver our projects. That funding envelope must support the needs of over 1,100 schools and a duty to deliver value for money. I have made numerous statements in this Chamber and the Cabinet and the emphasis here is on money again.

Therefore, I have asked the Government to answer the question and in relation to more money, the Welsh Government confirmed that they will only fund 75% of inflation costs.

Thank you for the question, but we will be providing once we've had the report and we will discuss it and we will present what is required.

Supplementary Question by Councillor Deryk Cundy

I am not sure if you have actually answered the question. You did not answer the question, so I would rather you answer the question in the first place.

Response by Councillor Glynog Davies – Cabinet Member for Education and Welsh Language

I have answered the question as I thought it should be answered. You should know about the review. The review is happening and nothing will be planned until we receive that report.

12.2. QUESTION BY COUNCILLOR MARTYN PALFREMAN TO COUNCILLOR EDWARD THOMAS, CABINET MEMBER FOR TRANSPORT, WASTE AND INFRASTRUCTURE SERVICES

In the absence of Councillor Edward Thomas, at the request of Councillor Martyn Palfreman, the question was withdrawn.

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

13.1. RESOLVED THAT COUNCILLOR DAI NICHOLAS TAKE THE INDEPENDENT GROUP'S VACANT SEAT ON THE CORPORATE PERFORMANCE AND RESOURCES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

14. MINUTES FOR INFORMATION

The Chair stated that the minutes outlined on the agenda under 14.1 – 14.5 were available for information on the Council website.

CHAIR

DATE