

Cabinet

Monday, 8 November 2021

PRESENT: Councillor E. Dole (Chair)

Councillors:

G. Davies, H.A.L. Evans, L.D. Evans, P.M. Hughes, P. Hughes-Griffiths, D.M. Jenkins and L.M. Stephens

The following Officers were in attendance:

W. Walters, Chief Executive

J. Morgan, Director of Community Services

C. Moore, Director of Corporate Services

P.R. Thomas, Assistant Chief Executive (People Management & Performance)

J. Jones, Head of Regeneration

L.R. Jones, Head of Administration and Law

R. Mullen, Director of Environment

G. Morgans, Director of Education & Children's Services

S. Rees, Simultaneous Translator

C. Jones, Principal Procurement Officer

M. Evans Thomas, Principal Democratic Services Officer

L. Jenkins, Executive Board Support Officer

K. Thomas, Democratic Services Officer

E. Bryer, Democratic Services Officer

Virtual Meeting - 10.00 - 10.50 am

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

The Cabinet extended their sincere condolences to Cllr J. Tremlett on the loss of her son and her husband. As a mark of respect the Cabinet observed a minute silence in memory of Ben and George Tremlett.

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors C.A. Davies and J. Tremlett.

2. DECLARATIONS OF PERSONAL INTEREST

Councillor	Minute Number	Nature of Interest
L.M. Stephens	13 - Empty Property Action Plan	Has an empty residential property.

3. TO SIGN AS A CORRECT RECORD THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE CABINET HELD ON THE 25TH OCTOBER, 2021

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting of the Cabinet held on the 25th October, 2021 be signed as a correct record.

4. QUESTIONS ON NOTICE BY MEMBERS

The Chair advised that no questions on notice had been submitted by members.

5. PUBLIC QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

5.1. QUESTION BY MS SUE WOODWARD TO COUNCILLOR GLYNOG DAVIES, CABINET MEMBER - EDUCATION & CHILDREN

Can the Cabinet now give Ysgol Mynyddygarreg certainty for our future as you can imagine how difficult this period has been with the added uncertainty for our future. We are willing partners to work with the Council and with Ysgol Gwenllian in a soft federation to provide the children of the village with excellent Welsh-medium education rooted in their community. Will you give us this chance?

Response by Councillor Glynog Davies, Cabinet Member for Education & Children:-

“Firstly, Ms Woodward, can I thank you for the question and also your concerns as Chair of Governors over the future of Ysgol Mynyddygarreg. As it happens our last meeting was also on zoom when I was invited to meet yourself and a deputation from the school. I will now thank you publicly for arranging that particular meeting. I, like my fellow members of the Cabinet, and indeed our officers are fully aware of the pressures you mention, the pressures our schools have been under since March 2020. The months since then have been gruelling. The demands on school staff and all parents have been immense, immeasurable. Your question refers to this difficult period. Indeed, such were the circumstances in all of our schools as you appreciate and as a department and as the Administration we did our utmost to ensure the safety – that was so, so important to us – the safety of the entire school population, being learners and staff. This unprecedented time means that many of our plans have been delayed. However, you refer to the added dilemma at Mynyddygarreg with the uncertainty regarding your future. The decision on whether to proceed with the statutory process that considers the long-term future of Ysgol Mynyddygarreg or any other school in the County is not one that the Cabinet takes easily. I, as Cabinet member for Education, and my fellow colleagues take this so, so seriously. We have received many responses to the consultations including the submission of Business Cases with alternative options. My sincerest thanks to all those who have taken the opportunity to present us with those views. The numerous responses received has generated much discussion between Cabinet Members on the current proposals and also the wider Modernising Education Programme which we often refer to as the MEP. Rest assured, Ms Woodward that there have been many, many intense discussions and before the end of this calendar year, it is anticipated that we will have the opportunity to discuss this matter further and decide whether the current proposals proceed to the next stage. Can I add, Ms Woodward, that it is encouraging to read that that you are willing partners to work with the Council and with Ysgol Gwenllian. Thank you very much to you for your question.”

6. ETHICAL EMPLOYMENT IN SUPPLY CHAINS POLICY AND MODERN SLAVERY, ETHICAL EMPLOYMENT IN SUPPLY CHAINS

The Cabinet considered the Ethical Employment in Supply Chains Policy and Modern Slavery, Ethical Employment in Supply Chains Statement.

The Welsh Government contacted all Local Authorities across Wales on the 9th February 2018, requesting the Council's adoption of the Code of Practice – Ethical Employment in Supply Chains. In June 2018 Carmarthenshire County Council formally committed to signing up to the Code and an action plan was produced by the Corporate Procurement Unit and colleagues in Policy and HR to take this forward. As part of the commitment the Authority was required to produce a written policy on ethical employment within the Authority and its supply chains.

It was noted that a Social Partnership and Public Procurement (Wales) Bill was out for consultation which ended on the 23rd April 2021. This proposed Bill was looking to ensure the delivery of Fair Work through Procurement and to place duties on contracting authorities to explore options for delivering fair work. The proposal was to look at the inclusion of fair work practice questions and living wage, including due diligence on overseas supply chains, Employee voice and representation – union recognition, access to workers, collective bargaining; Security and flexibility; Opportunities for access growth and progression; Safe, Healthy and inclusive working environment; Legal rights supported and given substantive effect and Equality and diversity. This Bill placed duties on contracting authorities on the procurement cycle as a whole, not just the “advert to award” stages.

UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED to approve:

- 6.1 the Ethical Employment in Supply Chains Policy and;**
- 6.2. the Council's annual Modern Slavery, Ethical Employment in Supply Chains Statement**

7. VACCINATION POLICY

The Cabinet considered the Authority's new vaccination policy for its staff.

Carmarthenshire County Council's role in assisting with the roll out of the vaccination programme had been overseen by a Vaccination Tactical Group, and this Group was tasked with developing a vaccination Policy for the Authority that set out clearly the Authority's approach to vaccination and the ancillary workforce issues that surrounded it.

The policy had been developed to reflect the changes in guidance and regulation coming from Welsh Government. The Policy was originally scheduled for discussion earlier in the year but was held back pending national advice / guidance relating to mandatory vaccination. To date there had been no decision on this matter, and so the policy strongly encouraged all staff to take up the offer. The policy would be reviewed as and when new guidance was received.

It was discussed and agreed that the policy be extended for 6 months.

UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED that the report be received and referred to Council for approval.

8. USE OF EXISTING FREE PARKING DAYS FOR DECEMBER 2021

The Cabinet considered the report for the extension of free parking in December during 2021 only.

The COVID pandemic had caused disruption to our town centres as adjustments to daily life had been required to keep people safe. Whilst town centres are starting to recover, the disruption since March 2020 had continued to restrict the opportunities for town centres to use many of the free days parking that the Council makes available to support events in town centres across the County.

The Council's current policy provides for five free parking days each year to support town centres. The policy currently excludes the trading period of December. The Council had been approached by some town centres to request that December is included in the offer this year due to the exceptional circumstances caused by the COVID19 pandemic. The Council supported town centres with free parking from March to September last year and with the continuation of the free parking pilots in place at each town. The latest request would help provide further support at this difficult time.

UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED to approve the extension of free parking in December during 2021 only.

9. OMBUDSMAN'S ANNUAL LETTER 2020/2021 CARMARTHENSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

The Cabinet Considered the Ombudsman's Annual Letter 2020/2021 along with the fact sheet and accompanying data.

Each year the Public Services Ombudsman for Wales (PSOW) provides every Welsh Local Authority with a letter in the form of a fact sheet and accompanying data. It is provided to assist in reviewing performance.

UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED to receive the Public Services Ombudsman for Wales Annual Letter 2020/21 (the Letter).

10. CABINET ADVISORY PANELS

The Cabinet considered a report detailing membership changes to the Cabinet Advisory Panels.

The Executive Board at its meeting held on the 26th June 2017 (Minute 11 refers) agreed its Advisory Panels for the life of the current Council. As a result of political balance changes, the figures in respect of some Panels had changed, following discussion with the Political Groups membership amendments had been put forward for consideration.

It was noted there had been a delay in bringing forward these changes due to priority being given to Covid19 matters.

UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED TO APPROVE the membership changes to the Cabinet Advisory Panels as detailed within the report.

11. **ANY OTHER ITEMS OF BUSINESS THAT BY REASONS OF SPECIAL CIRCUMSTANCES THE CHAIR DECIDES SHOULD BE CONSIDERED AS A MATTER OF URGENCY PURSUANT TO SECTION 100B(4)(B) OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT, 1972.**

The Chair advised that there were no items of urgent business.

12. **EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC**

UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED, pursuant to the Local Government Act 1972, as amended by the Local Government (Access to Information) (Variation) (Wales) Order 2007, that the public be excluded from the meeting during consideration of the following items as the reports contained exempt information as defined in paragraph 14 of Part 4 of Schedule 12A to the Act.

13. **EMPTY PROPERTY ACTION PLAN**

[NOTE: Councillor L.M. Stephens having earlier declared an interest in this item re-declared that interest and left the meeting during its consideration].

Following the application of the public interest test it was RESOLVED pursuant to the Act referred to in minute no. 12 above not to publicise the content of the report as it contained exempt information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the Authority holding that information) (Paragraph 14 of Part 4 of Schedule 12A to the Act). The public interest test in respect of this report outweighed the public interest in disclosing the information in order to maintain confidentiality so as to not prejudice the completion of the transaction and the proposed lessee's business interests.

The Cabinet considered the Empty Property Action Plan.

UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED to approve the Empty Property Action Plan.

CHAIR

DATE