

# COUNTY COUNCIL

**WEDNESDAY, 19 JANUARY 2022**

**PRESENT:** Councillor K. Lloyd [Vice Chair in the Chair]

**Councillors:**

F. Akhtar	S.M. Allen	L.R. Bowen	K.V. Broom
C.A. Campbell	J.M. Charles	D.M. Cundy	S.A. Curry
C.A. Davies	W.R.A. Davies	T.A.J. Davies	G. Davies
H.L. Davies	I.W. Davies	J.A. Davies	K. Davies
E. Dole	J.S. Edmunds	D.C. Evans	H.A.L. Evans
L.D. Evans	R.E. Evans	W.T. Evans	S.J.G. Gilasbey
P. Hughes-Griffiths	A.D. Harries	T.M. Higgins	J.K. Howell
P.M. Hughes	A. James	J.D. James	R. James
D.M. Jenkins	J.P. Jenkins	G.H. John	C. Jones
B.W. Jones	D. Jones	G.R. Jones	T.J. Jones
H.I. Jones	A. Lenny	M.J.A. Lewis	
K. Madge	S. Matthews	A.S.J. McPherson	E. Morgan
A.G. Morgan	S. Najmi	D. Nicholas	B.D.J. Phillips
J.S. Phillips	D. Price	J.G. Prosser	B.A.L. Roberts
H.B. Shepardson	E.M.J.G. Schiavone	A.D.T. Speake	B. Thomas
D. Thomas	E.G. Thomas	G.B. Thomas	G. Thomas
J. Tremlett	D.T. Williams	D.E. Williams	

**Also Present:**

W. Walters, Chief Executive  
J. Morgan, Director of Community Services  
P.R. Thomas, Assistant Chief Executive (People Management & Performance)  
C. Moore, Director of Corporate Services  
L.R. Jones, Head of Administration and Law  
N. Daniel, Head of ICT and Corporate Policy; Interim Head of Planning  
A. Williams, Head of Waste and Environmental Services  
S. Davies, Head of Access to Education  
G. Morgan, Head of Democratic Services  
E. Evans, Principal Democratic Services Officer  
M. Evans Thomas, Principal Democratic Services Officer  
S. Rees, Simultaneous Translator  
J. Hawker, Digital Support Officer  
C.J. Warwick, Digital Support Engineer  
L. Jenkins, Executive Board Support Officer  
K. Thomas, Democratic Services Officer  
J. Owens, Democratic Services Officer  
S. Hendy, Member Support Officer  
E. Bryer, Democratic Services Officer [Note taker]

**Virtual Meeting - 10.00 am - 11.30 am**

## 1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors S.L. Davies, P. Edwards, A. Fox, A. Vaughan Williams, J.E. Williams.

## 2. DECLARATIONS OF PERSONAL INTERESTS.

Councillor	Minute Number	Nature of Interest
S.J.G. Gilasbey	8.1 – Receive the report of the meeting of the Cabinet held on the 6th December, 2021.	Has a personal and prejudicial interest in relation to the review of the Primary Education Provision in the Mynyddgarreg and Gwenllian Areas, a matter within Minute Item 12.  Cllr Gilasbey had a dispensation from the Standards Committee to speak on the matter but not vote.
S.J.G. Gilasbey	10 - Question by Cllr. Rob James to Cllr. Glynog Davies.	Schools named in the question are in her ward.
D. Harries	10 – Question by Cllr. Rob James to Cllr. Glynog Davies	Governor of Welsh School / Ysgol Bro Banw

## 3. CHAIR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS.

- The Chair conveyed the sad news that last week Deputy Leader, Councillor Mair Stephens had sadly passed away after a long illness. He expressed his sympathy to the family, particularly her husband Ralph, son Rhys and her mother Dilys.
- Condolences and tributes were also extended by representatives of the political groups. Cllr. Emlyn Dole (on behalf of the Plaid Group), Cllr. Jane Tremlett (on behalf of the Independent Group), Cllr. Kevin Madge (on behalf of the Labour Group), Cllr. Jeff Edmunds (on behalf of the New Independent Group) and Cllr. Shahana Najmi (Welsh Conservative).
- Cllr. Glynog Davies extended his sincere condolences to the family of Joseph Yeandle, a small boy who was suffering from a very rare form of cancer. There had been a big campaign within the area to raise money to take Joseph for innovative treatment in New York. Unfortunately, on the 27<sup>th</sup> December, Joseph passed away. It is intended to host an annual fair in the village (Josephs' Christmas Fair) to raise money for other charitable causes.
- Cllr. Glynog Davies advised Council that several individuals had come to his attention for sporting achievements. Congratulations were extended to Hanna Jones who is one of the first women to have a professional contract with the Welsh Rugby Union. Congratulation were also extended to Natalia John, Alisha Butchers, Ffion Lewis, Hannah Jones, Jasmine Joyce, Ioan

Cunningham and Keira Bevan The contribution of the Councils 5x60 team was also noted.

- The Leader, with the Chair's permission provided an update on the Covid situation in Carmarthenshire. He advised that should the situation continue to improve Wales would move into level 0 but warned that we should remain cautious. It was noted that the recent changes in testing may not be providing a clear picture and that the reduction in numbers had coincided with the changes to the testing regime. Thanks were extended to those who worked additional days and hours over Christmas and New Year in order to support the roll out of vaccinations and to those who continue to work hard on the front line.

**4. TO APPROVE AND SIGN AS A CORRECT RECORD THE MINUTES OF THE COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON THE 8TH DECEMBER, 2021**

**RESOLVED** that the minutes of the meeting of Council held on the 8<sup>th</sup> December, 2021 be signed as a correct record.

**5. STANDARDS COMMITTEE ANNUAL REPORT 2020-21**

The Chair welcomed to the meeting Mrs Mary Dodd, Chair of the Standards Committee, who had been invited to present to Council the Annual Report of the Standards Committee for the 2020/21 period.

Mrs Dodd thanked the Council for the opportunity of presenting the Annual Report on behalf of the Standards Committee and proceeded to provide an overview of the issues addressed by the Committee during 2020/21. Those included Code of Conduct Complaints, Applications for Dispensation and the Code of Conduct Training for Town and Community Councils.

It was noted that only 7 applications for dispensations had been considered by the committee which was a reduction compared to previous years. She reminded members to consider the need for dispensation and to seek advice when required.

The Chair thanked Mrs Dodd for her presentation and for the work undertaken by the Standards Committee.

**RESOLVED** that the Annual Report of the Standards Committee for the period 1<sup>st</sup> April 2020 to 31<sup>st</sup> March 2021 be received.

**6. APPOINTMENT OF LAY PERSONS TO THE GOVERNANCE AND AUDIT COMMITTEE**

Council was informed that the Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021 required one third of the members of the Governance and Audit Committee to be lay persons and for a lay person to be appointed as Committee Chair.

The Governance and Audit Committee had considered a report on arrangements for the appointment of Lay Persons to the Committee at its meeting held on the 17th December 2021 and was making a recommendation to the Council on the composition of the Committee going forward.

The Chair of the Governance and Audit Committee advised that the Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021 also stipulated that the chair of the Committee must be one of the elected lay persons and that the changes proposed had already been adopted by some Councils across Wales.

The Chair of the Governance and Audit Committee thanked officers and the vice chair for their support during her period as Chair of the Committee.

The Leader of the Council formally thanked Cllr. Higgins as Chair over the last four and a half years and expressed his gratitude for her work and commitment during this time.

**UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED to approve that the Governance and Audit Committee comprise 12 members i.e. 8 elected members (as currently) and 4 lay persons in order to accord with the new requirement arising from the Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021 for one third of the Governance and Audit Committee membership to be made up of lay persons.**

**7. TO CONSIDER THE RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE CABINET IN RESPECT OF THE FOLLOWING ITEMS**

**7.1. MID-YEAR TREASURY MANAGEMENT AND PRUDENTIAL INDICATOR REPORT - 1ST APRIL 2021 TO 30TH SEPTEMBER 2021**

Council was informed that the Cabinet, at its meeting held on the 20<sup>th</sup> December 2021, had, in accordance with the 2020/21 Treasury Management Policy and Strategy (adopted by Council on the 19<sup>th</sup> February 2020 – Minute 8 refers), approved an update on the treasury management activities from the 1st April 2021 to the 30th September 2021.

The Cabinet Member for Resources stated that the Bank of England's Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) kept Bank Rate unchanged at 0.10% on 24th September 2021. It also made no changes to its programme of quantitative easing at £895bn.

It was highlighted that the MPC had indicated a concern that increases in prices, particularly in gas and electricity prices in October and due again next April could lead to faster and higher inflation expectations and underlying wage growth. This would in turn increase the risk that price pressures would prove more persistent next year than previously expected. The MPC reaffirmed its commitment to the 2% inflation target. Financial markets were pricing in a first increase in Bank Rate from 0.10% to 0.25% in February 2022, but this looked ambitious as the MPC had stated that it wanted to see what happens to the economy, particularly to employment.

**RESOLVED that the following recommendation of the Cabinet be adopted**

**‘that the Mid-Year Treasury Management and Prudential Indicator Report for 1st April 2021 to 30th September 2021 be adopted’.**

**8. TO RECEIVE THE REPORT OF THE MEETING OF THE CABINET MEETING HELD ON THE:-**

**8.1. 6TH DECEMBER, 2021**

[NOTE: Cllr. S.J.G. Gilasbey having earlier declared an interest in this item remained in the meeting for its consideration but did not vote. Cllr Gilasbey had received a dispensation from the Standards Committee to speak but not vote.]

**UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED** that the report of the meeting of the Cabinet held on the 6<sup>th</sup> December, 2021 be received.

**8.2. 20TH DECEMBER, 2021**

**UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED** that the report of the meeting of the Cabinet held on the 20<sup>th</sup> December, 2021 be received.

**9. PUBLIC QUESTIONS.**

The Chair advised that no public questions had been received.

**10. QUESTIONS BY MEMBERS:-**

**10.1. QUESTION BY COUNCILLOR ROB JAMES TO COUNCILLOR GLYNOG DAVIES, CABINET MEMBER FOR EDUCATION & CHILDREN**

“It is our understanding that there has been a large increase in materials and labour costs since the pandemic, with significant implications for your capital programme inc Modernisation Education Programme. Can you confirm whether all the school proposals in last year’s budget will be progressed as originally planned?”

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

“As you all know quite a lot of this was highlighted in our discussion yesterday on the education budget and the review of the MEP programme was also mentioned. The MEP as part of the wider Council budget is monitored and reviewed continually and this is essential. It is important that we as the Cabinet are able to scrutinise our projects and the budget. This programme is extremely important to us and we work well with the government in Cardiff to build schools and recently three new schools were opened namely Rhys Pritchard, Llandovery, Llangadog and Pum Heol. New buildings that are suitable and sustainable accommodation for our learners. Our children in Carmarthenshire deserve this, they deserve the best.

However, I am sure I don't need to remind Councillor James the pandemic has had a significant impact on everything that the Council has been doing with building work coming to end and restrictions to movement. We were forced to relocate staff in order to address priorities as a Council. We have had two extremely challenging years. Costs have increased considerably as a result of the pandemic and also Brexit. We can't forget that. Prices have gone through the roof, to be honest, they've gone higher than that and that's why we took part in a review

by the Welsh Government. A review on costs, on higher costs of our programmes. As a result, Government agreed an increase in the grant allocation in order for us to address some of the additional matters and that we are genuinely thankful for.

This review of the MEP, a review that I personally asked for. Until the review has been completed, I cannot confirm if all the schools and all proposals in last year's budget will be progressed. Because as part of this review we are undertaking a comprehensive review of the programme. We will have to look at sustainable development and net zero carbon, will have to look at budget constraints, inflation in relation to construction. As I've already mentioned, we have to review and re-cost everything that we do. We have to look at the suitability and condition of our buildings and changes to pupil trends.

I'm saying once again, until this review is completed, I cannot confirm if all the proposals regarding schools in last year's budget will be progressed. Thank you Cllr. James."

### **Supplementary Question by Councillor Rob James**

"Fifteen new schools have been identified as part of the draft budget, yet they haven't been submitted to the Welsh Government for funding. Yet capital funding has been allocated next year to be spent on these projects. Do you accept that with your review and with a lack of submission to the Welsh Government that these projects will not be progressed next year?"

### **Response by Councillor Glynog Davies – Cabinet Member for Education & Children:-**

"No, I do not accept that because this review must happen now and I must have the responses of the review before I take any further decisions."

### **10.2. QUESTION BY COUNCILLOR ROB JAMES TO COUNCILLOR GLYNOG DAVIES, CABINET MEMBER FOR EDUCATION & CHILDREN**

"It has been the plan to build new schools in Ammanford for a number of years, with the previous Labour administration allocating capital funding for the project prior to 2015. Could the Cabinet Member provide an update on the new Ammanford schools?"

### **Response by Councillor Glynog Davies – Cabinet Member for Education & Children:-**

"Once again, thanks to Cllr. James. I can't go back to the period before 2015 as it was in 2017 that I joined the Cabinet. Again, I am very aware the plan was originally in Band A and this ran between 2014 and 2019. But, back in 2016, it was decided to move the project to Band B – a year before I became responsible for the portfolio. However, as the plan for Ammanford is developed I'll keep a close eye on everything that's happening.

Basically, we've seen an increase in the number of pupils, partly due to the demand for Welsh primary education in the Ammanford area. This is a good thing.

It was seen the current Bro Banw site and the Welsh School in the town centre was insufficient and it was quite a challenge to find suitable land to cope with that increase. Remember, of course that the number of the children of primary age is considerably large. Over 1000 of them, so we had to consider all kinds of options – and what is suitable for generating a town and the community of Ammanford. Also because of the size of the project we are considering everything as a possible project for MIM, the mutual investment model. I want to emphasise this again, apologies for repeating myself, but maybe not everybody has heard this. But organising primary education in Ammanford is a priority. I have said it in many meetings. It is a priority for myself and it's a priority for the administration and it is within the current MEP. I said this clearly in the Cabinet meeting on the 6th of December. You have just received the minutes. It was a public meeting and members of the opposition are able to be present and join that meeting. I said at that time, completely clearly, that the plans such as Heol Goffa, Bryngwyn, Pembrey, Dewi Sant, Ammanford and Llandeilo would continue at pace. I want to say it once again. These plans will continue quickly. We are developing the projects now. I don't want to say yet how again, how the pandemic has slowed things down because I will just be repeating myself. But everything has been delayed because of it.”

### **Supplementary Question by Councillor Rob James**

“As Glynog has already stated Plaid reduced the priority for Ammanford when they came into power in 2015 from A to B. In the last budget £500,000 was allocated to both schools to draw up proposals with £5 million being allocated for bills this year. It is clear this is not happening as the plans haven't been developed. Can you state how the £500,000 last year was spent and we're still no closer to having new schools in Ammanford?”

### **Response by Councillor Glynog Davies – Cabinet Member for Education & Children:-**

“As I said to Cllr. James, we are developing the project at pace. It's happening now and developing any project costs money. This work is definitely continuing, whatever you want to say. We live in this area and we know that we are serious about new schools for Ammanford Town.”

### **10.3. QUESTION BY COUNCILLOR ROB JAMES TO COUNCILLOR GLYNOG DAVIES, CABINET MEMBER FOR EDUCATION & CHILDREN**

“Could the Cabinet Member indicate whether land has been purchased for the new Ammanford school?”

### **Response by Councillor Glynog Davies – Cabinet Member for Education & Children:-**

“Well Cllr James, I have said this many times in public meetings. The answer is simply yes, land has been purchased.”

## **Supplementary Question by Councillor Rob James**

"I notice that the Cabinet Member hasn't indicated any details on this. Appears that information is already in the public domain with Councillor for Pontaman previously knocking on doors and indicating a petition to stop the purchase of land off Pontaman Road. When will the Council consult on these plans for the land off Pontaman Road?"

## **Response by Councillor Glynog Davies – Cabinet Member for Education & Children:-**

"I was criticised for the way I answered the question. I answered the question that was asked. Had land been purchased? I told you simply that yes, land had been purchased and indeed that land is in Pontaman Road but no decision has been taken yet on which school goes there, but that land is with us ready for development."

## **10.4. QUESTION BY COUNCILLOR ROB JAMES TO COUNCILLOR GLYNOG DAVIES, CABINET MEMBER FOR EDUCATION & CHILDREN**

"Could the Cabinet Member provide an update on the new Ysgol Dewi Sant?"

## **Response by Councillor Glynog Davies – Cabinet Member for Education & Children:-**

"Well, thank you. We have reached the 4th question and now finally Cllr James is asking a question which is relevant to his ward. The ward that he represents.

I would like to say this first of all about Ysgol Dewi Sant, the school was opened, on the 1st of March 1947. I'm sure that you have counted, like myself that this school will be 75 years old, celebrating 75 years of Welsh medium education in Carmarthenshire. It's an important anniversary. But what makes it more important is the fact that this was the first Welsh language school to be opened by any local authority in Wales. History was created here in Carmarthenshire and thanks to the vision of the Councillors at that time and thanks to the campaign in Llanelli which was led by members of the Labour Party. The Labour Party at that time was leading the way and were opening a Welsh school for 34 children. Breaking new ground today, there is just short of 500 children on the register.

Now, the same Labour party that had the vision in 1947 has opposed at every opportunity of the plans of the administration to give a new home to this school. A site, which was chosen not by ourselves as Councillors but by experts.

The children and their teachers would now be in a new school if this administration would have had its way and they would be able to celebrate this birthday in style. Instead of that, they are in an old school, which is unsuitable for the requirements of the 21st century. Thank you Rob. The work of choosing a purposeful site is difficult, but the work is continuing, and we are working hard on this. We are working with the Environment Department. Because all the factors have to be considered, such as transportation and environment, topography, availability etc. This work has to be done thoroughly. That is what is happening at the moment."



## **Supplementary Question by Councillor Rob James**

"I shared the Cabinet Member's opinions when it comes to the importance of Dewi Sant in the area and also being the first Welsh school. There's been two years since he withdrew plans to build a new school despite numerous attempts I have made to push this Council to consult on the new site. Both the school and the community is still in the dark. Now what we're looking for is a firm date on when this consultation will begin, so can you tell the people that are connected with this school when they will hear about the proposals for the new school."

## **Response by Councillor Glynog Davies – Cabinet Member for Education & Children:-**

"It's just so unfair on those children and staff that they still in that building. And once again, I point a finger at you Rob James. Why all this time? I insist that all the elements I have noted are looked at in as much detail as possible in order to avoid, yes avoid any potential opposition in the future. Opposition that will lead to more delays, and that's why work is being done thoroughly and I'm waiting now for Stage 1 of the work to be completed very soon."

## **10.5. QUESTION BY COUNCILLOR ROB JAMES TO COUNCILLOR GLYNOG DAVIES, CABINET MEMBER FOR EDUCATION & CHILDREN**

"Parents, pupils and campaigners ran a successful campaign for both Mynyddygareg and Blaenau to be saved from closure. Both schools could benefit from immediate investment to prove their sustainability going forward. Will you be including capital investment this year to improve the buildings and look at making them 3-11 schools?"

## **Response by Councillor Glynog Davies – Cabinet Member for Education & Children:-**

"Well, you're having my interpretation on this year when I'm answering. Just come back to the Cabinet meeting that was held on the 6<sup>th</sup> December 2021. As I said earlier we have just received the minutes and they have been approved. It was unanimously resolved not to publish a Statutory Notice to discontinue Ysgol Gynradd Mynyddygareg, but this is important - we want to continue with plans to open a new Welsh school in the Kidwelly area. This is desperately needed instead of the one that is there currently (Gwenllian). A school is needed in the area to promote the Welsh language, in the same way we made the same decision regarding Ysgol Y Blaenau. Again, here I said clearly that I want to continue with plans for a new school in the Llandybie area and that was agreed. The decision was delayed on Mynyddygareg and Blaenau and I have spoken with parents and these governing bodies during this time and along with all the other primary schools in Carmarthenshire.

I called, as I've already said this morning for a full review, a comprehensive review of the modernising education programme, the MEP. This will give consideration to the age ranges of the schools. Until the review is completed capital investment for repair and maintenance will be allocated to schools on a prioritised basis and I would like to remind everyone who are governors on governing bodies that as tenants they have responsibility for many aspects of the repair and maintenance of schools. There is an allocation provided in the school budget for such matters. In

addition this year as has happened over the last couple of years, the two schools named will receive over £7000 each in addition as repairs grants and maintenance grant from Welsh Government.”

### **Supplementary Question by Councillor Rob James**

“Both Llandybie and Gwellian are in the design phases and not expecting a new school for a number of years. Mynyddygareg and Blaenau, there is no real investment identified going forward. So finally, wouldn't you just agree that Plaid have spent last seven years threatening school closures, finishing the last Labour administration school programmes are failing tragically to progress any new school improvement.”

### **Response by Councillor Glynog Davies – Cabinet Member for Education & Children:-**

“Would I agree with you? My simple answer Rob – No.”

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

### **11.1. THE LABOUR GROUP HAS NOMINATED COUNCILLOR DOT JONES TO REPLACE COUNCILLOR AMANDA FOX ON APPOINTMENTS COMMITTEE A**

In accordance with Corporate Procedure Rule CPR 2(2)(n) the following nomination had been received from the Labour Group and it was:

**UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED** that the nomination of Councillor D. Jones to replace Councillor A.L. Fox as one of the Labour Group's representatives on Appointments Committee A be approved.

## **12. MINUTES FOR INFORMATION (AVAILABLE TO VIEW ON THE WEBSITE)**

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

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**CHAIR**

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**DATE**