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COUNTY COUNCIL

WEDNESDAY, 21 JUNE 2023

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

Councillors (In Person):

S.M. Allen	K.V. Broom	P. Cooper	C.A. Davies
B. Davies	G. Davies	H.L. Davies	K. Davies
L. Davies	T. Davies	L.D. Evans	S. Godfrey-Coles
J.K. Howell	P. Hughes-Griffiths	J.D. James	M. James
G.H. John	G.R. Jones	H. Jones	A. Lenny
M.J.A. Lewis	A. Leyshon	K. Madge	M. Palfreman
D. Price	E. Rees	B.A.L. Roberts	E.M.J.G. Schiavone
E. Skinner	R. Sparks	D. Thomas	E.G. Thomas
G.B. Thomas	M. Thomas	J. Tremlett	A. Vaughan Owen

Councillors (Virtually):

L.R. Bowen	J.M. Charles	M.D. Cranham	D.M. Cundy
S.A. Curry	A. Davies	T.A.J. Davies	C. Davies
S.L. Davies	M. Donoghue	A. Evans	D.C. Evans
H.A.L. Evans	N. Evans	R.E. Evans	W.T. Evans
A.D. Harries	J.P. Hart	T.M. Higgins	P.M. Hughes
R. James	J.P. Jenkins	B.W. Jones	D. Jones
A.G. Morgan	D. Nicholas	B.D.J. Phillips	S.L. Rees
J. Seward	H.B. Shepardson	F. Walters	P.T. Warlow
D.E. Williams	J. Williams		

Also Present (In Person):

W. Walters, Chief Executive
C. Moore, Director of Corporate Services
J. Morgan, Director of Community 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
C. Higginson, Media Manager
L. Jenkins, Cabinet Support Officer
S. Rees, Simultaneous Translator
A. Edwards, Electoral & Civil Registration Services Manager
M. Runeckles, Members Support Officer
K. Thomas, Democratic Services Officer

Also Present (Virtually):

I.R. Llewelyn, Forward Planning Manager
S. Hendy, Member Support Officer

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

R. Morris, Members Support Officer

Chamber - County Hall, Carmarthen. SA31 1JP and remotely - 10.00 - 11.40 am

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE.

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors A. Davies, Ll.M. Davies, C.A. Jones, N. Lewis and D. Owen.

2. DECLARATIONS OF PERSONAL INTERESTS.

Councillor	Minute Number	Nature of Interest
S. Davies	10.1 – Question from Charlie Evans to Councillor Edward Thomas – Cabinet Member for Transport, Waste and Infrastructure Services	Works for Dolen Teifi – has dispensation to speak but not vote

3. CHAIR’S ANNOUNCEMENTS.

- The Chair stated that she, and her consort, had attended a number of events including amateur theatre productions, mayor making ceremonies in Carmarthen and Burry Port and also the National Urdd Eisteddfod held in Llandovery.
- Councillor H. Davies referred to the recent Urdd Eisteddfod held in Llandovery and extended his appreciation to all those involved in running and supporting the event.
- Councillor D. Thomas congratulated Ffion Davies from Penygroes on being selected to represent Wales as a member of the under 18’s sevens rugby team.
- Councillor A. Vaughan Owen referred to his recent attendance at Cross Hands Cinema to view a production on “Fashion Re-imagined” promoted by the Climate Change Committee of the five roads branch of the Women’s Institute highlighting the impact of the fashion industry on climate change and use of resources and to embrace the concept of a circular economy.
- Councillor L. Bowen congratulated Jonny Clayton from Pontyberem on winning the World Cup of Darts for the 2nd time in three years with his partner Gerwyn Price.

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

The Leader of the Council provided the Council with an update on the current position regarding the Home Office’s decision to use the Strade Park Hotel in Ffwrnes on the outskirts of Llanelli to accommodate asylum seekers. He advised that a verbal update had been received the previous day indicating that from the

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10th July up to 241 individuals would arrive in groups of 50 to be accommodated in 77 rooms at the hotel. He apprised Council of the representations/ concerns made by the Council, and its partners, to the Home Office against this ill-conceived proposal and to its total disregard therefor and lack of consultation and communication. The Council had taken both legal and planning advice on the proposal and was continuing to look at all possible options with a view to preventing the accommodation of asylum seekers at the hotel. He confirmed that when he had more details which he could share publicly, he would share that information with members of the Council.

Councillor M. Palfreman, as a local member, was afforded the opportunity of responding to the Leaders announcement and expressed both his appreciation and continued support for the council's efforts in presenting a robust case to the UK Government against the proposal.

The Cabinet Member for Education and the Welsh Language provided the Council with an update on the recent Eisteddfod held at Llandovery and extended his thanks and appreciation to all involved in making the Eisteddfod a success. He also commended the schools and children from Carmarthenshire taking part in the eisteddfod with 90% of the primary and 100% of the secondary schools being represented.

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

5.1. 10TH MAY 2023

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting of Council held on the 10th May 2023 be signed as a correct record.

5.2. 24TH MAY 2023

The Council's attention was drawn to minute no. 9 relating to the appointment of Chairs and Vice Chairs of Committee / Panels and was advised that the reference to Councillor L. Davies having been appointed Vice Chair of the Appeals Committee was incorrect and it should read Councillor L.M. Davies.

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting of Council held on the 24th May, 2023 be signed as a correct record subject to the above amendment.

6. DRAFT RECOMMENDATIONS- COMMUNITY REVIEW IN COUNTY OF CARMARTHENSHIRE

The Council was reminded that at its meeting held on the 9th February 2023 it had, under the provisions of the Local Government (Democracy)(Wales) Act 2014, approved the commencement of a Community Review to examine existing Town and Community Governance arrangements within Carmarthenshire and to make final recommendations for any appropriate changes. In accordance with that decision, a formal consultation was undertaken between the 13th March and

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24th April and the outcome thereof, as detailed within Appendix A to the report, summarised the responses and proposals for draft recommendations received together with the recommendations put forward by the Electoral registration Officer/Returning Officer.

The Council was advised that subject to its acceptance of the report's recommendations, a second consultation period would need to be undertaken with the outcome to be resubmitted to Council at its October meeting to determine its final recommendations.

RESOLVED that:

- 6.1 the proposals set out in Appendix A to the report be adopted by the Council as Draft Recommendations for the purposes of the Community Review.**
- 6.2 The Draft Recommendations be published for consultation purposes from Monday 26 June to Monday 7th August 2023 inclusive**
- 6.3 The results of the consultation be reported to Council on the 11th October 2023.**

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

7.1. STREET NAMING AND PROPERTY NUMBERING POLICY

The Council was informed that the Cabinet at its meeting held on the 22nd May 2023 (Minute 7 refers) had considered a report on the adoption of a Street Naming and Property Numbering Policy for Carmarthenshire, following consultation on the draft policy considered by Council on the 28th September 2022 (Minute 9.1 refers). It was noted that six responses had been received to the consultation, as detailed in the appendix to the report, none of which, required a specific amendment to be made to the draft policy.

The Cabinet Member in response to representations, advised that she welcomed any examples from members of any issues or inconsistencies on street naming / numbering within their wards which would need to be considered and addressed under the new policy.

RESOLVED that the following recommendation of the Cabinet be adopted:-

“that the Draft Street Naming and Numbering Policy be adopted”.

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

8.1. 24TH APRIL 2023

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RESOLVED that the report of the meeting of Cabinet held on the 24th April, 2023 be received.

8.2. 22ND MAY 2023

RESOLVED that the report of the meeting of Cabinet held on the 22nd May, 2023 be received.

9. TO CONSIDER THE FOLLOWING NOTICE OF MOTION:-

9.1. NOTICE OF MOTION PROPOSED BY COUNCILLORS ALUN LENNY AND EDWARD THOMAS

Council considered the following Notice of Motion submitted by Councillors Alun Lenny and Edward Thomas:-

“Carmarthenshire County Council declares that the deteriorating state of many roads in our county is part of an acute UK-wide problem caused by long term under-funding of local authorities by successive Conservative UK governments since 2010.

Council notes that the extra £200m. recently allocated by Westminster towards ‘the pothole fund’ is just a fraction of the estimated £14b. needed to tackle the local roads repair backlog in Wales and England.

Council also notes with alarm a recent report by the Asphalt Industry Alliance (AIA) which claims that nearly a fifth of the roads controlled by local councils in Wales and England have a life expectancy of less than five years, and will need to be torn up, repaired and resurfaced.

This council therefore calls on:

- The UK Government to start planning now how to allocate at least £14b. in their next budget as an emergency measure to enable local councils to address this severe deterioration of our infrastructure fabric, especially in rural areas, before next winter;
- The Welsh Government to ensure that all funding allocated towards this heading through the Barnett formula is passed on to county councils, and to divert some of the money saved by the recent scrapping of new road schemes in Wales down to the councils to enable them to step up the work of repairing existing non-trunk roads”.

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 statements were made in support of the Motion.

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UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED that the Motion be supported.

10. PUBLIC QUESTIONS.

10.1. QUESTION FROM CHARLIE EVANS TO COUNCILLOR EDWARD THOMAS - CABINET MEMBER FOR TRANSPORT, WASTE AND INFRASTRUCTURE SERVICES.

(NOTE: Councillor S. Davies reiterated her earlier declaration of interest in this item and remained in the meeting during its consideration)

"The Welsh Labour Government has announced it is ending the Bus Emergency Scheme on the 24th July.

Industry body Coach and Bus Operators Cymru which represents small firms, has previously raised fears of 65% to 100% of services being cut.

This would have a devastating impact on our communities- making our most vulnerable residents less able to use our town and village centres; workers less able to get to work; and increase car traffic and congestion in our communities; which appears to be in stark contrast to Labour and Plaid Cymru's Cooperation Agreement net zero and public transport strategies.

What planning- financial, operational and logistical- is Carmarthenshire County Council undertaking to ensure we have the same level of bus services across Carmarthenshire after the 24th July".

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

Your question raises a few points which I'll respond to in order if you don't mind.

Yes, Welsh Government had announced the ending of the Bus Emergency Scheme on the 24th July. However, last Friday, and only last Friday, it was announced that Welsh Government are making £46m available in the form of a Bus Transition Fund for the whole financial year. This funding will keep the strategic Traws Cymru services running. But, it's also very disappointing for us to see that the Deputy Minister has continued with his plans to end the Bus Emergency Scheme despite cross party support opposing the cuts but, we welcome that a lifeline has been extended for the current year.

In this Chamber only a few weeks ago there was agreement across the Chamber opposing any reduction to funding for services. This council has been categorically and consistently opposing the cuts to the Bus Emergency Scheme and this has been raised by myself and the Leader of the Council via the WLGA and the Southwest Wales CJC.

I must say that I cannot fathom the plan the Deputy Minister has – on one hand he seems to want to encourage us out of our cars and onto public transport but doesn't seem to want too much public transport either. Anyway, as I said, we aren't happy with the cuts, but we understand that the reductions in services across Carmarthenshire will be nowhere near the 65%-100% quoted in your question. As I understand it at this present moment, we'll only lose a small number of services, but these discussions are ongoing at a regional basis.

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I agree with your point that regarding the loss of Public Transport 'making the most vulnerable residents less able to use our town and village centres; workers less able to get to work; and increase car traffic and congestion in our communities'. We need to ensure that our residents have access to public transport and, with the current cost of living crisis a car is fast becoming a luxury that some can't afford. We will continue to engage with Welsh Government to ensure that this doesn't happen.

You mention that this is in stark contrast to the Labour and Plaid Cymru Co-operation Agreement but, of course bus subsidies do not form part of that co-operation Agreement. What the Co-operation Agreement does identify is the need to develop metro systems in parts of Wales and the need to move towards Net Zero Carbon.

If you'll allow me to dwell for a second on your reference to 'stark contrast', there's a very stark contrast between six billion pounds and no pounds at all isn't there. Adequate consequential funding would resolve this situation. I refer, of course to HS2, classed as an 'England and Wales project by the Conservative Government – even though it does not cross the border into Wales, so how can it be England and Wales Project. Consequential funding, has been provided in Scotland and Northern Ireland, and should provide according to Welsh Government calculations funding of £6bn under the Barnett Formula. But, the Tory Government continue to consider the route through England as a service to Wales – I can't work that one out. I think we need to look at the maps there. As you can appreciate six billion pounds would enable us to do so much in terms of developing public transport in Southwest Wales and in Carmarthenshire and, I'm sure that you will agree with me that the Tory Government in London have within their gift to right this wrong.

In terms of what we are doing, well that is influenced by the announcement made by the Deputy Minister last week and it appears that on a county level, as I mentioned earlier, we may not see the cuts to services we originally predicted. However, all parties recognise the role of public transport in enabling access to services and are working together to:

1. Explore the implications of a national reduction in funding support,
2. To work up network plans that a reduction of funding will cause and,
3. To present a case for further support as the sector continues the slow process of recovery following the pandemic and other wider economic pressures.

It has been a difficult process. No one wants to see a reduction in services for communities, particularly the vulnerable. Work is ongoing at a regional and national level. I am, however, pleased to advise that due to the efforts of the County Council and other local authorities, via the WLGA, a joint working position has been reached where funding will be provided to the sectors to minimise the risk to services currently operating to the end of the year.

Further work is continuing, as all parties work through the Deputy Minister's announcement of last Friday. It is clear that the Welsh Government need to

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outline a long term funding solution for bus services in Wales and there is a need to develop a clear vision for both rail, bus and community transport in Southwest Wales. As I mentioned earlier, there is a real need for the UK Conservative Government to step up to the plate and provide the people of Wales and Carmarthenshire with a fair allocation of resources to deliver that vision.

Supplementary question by Mr Evans:-

Residents in LLangunnor ad Nantycaws are extremely concerned that in just five weeks' time bus services will be cut. So when will the public be made fully aware by Carmarthenshire County Council of what services will be cut after the 24th July.

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

Thankyou Mr Evans for that supplementary question. I will obviously need to find out about the services for LLangunnor and, as I said, we are working across the region on the effects of this announcement only made last Friday. So, we are working collaboratively together.

11. QUESTIONS BY MEMBERS (NONE RECEIVED).

The Chair advised that no questions by Members had been received.

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

The Chair stated that the minutes outlined on the agenda under 12.1 – 12.6 were available for information on the Council website.

CHAIR

DATE

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