

Minutes of the Meeting of CEREDIGION COUNTY COUNCIL
held at Neuadd y Cyngor, Penmorfa, Aberaeron and remotely via
video-conferencing on Thursday, 20th April, 2023

PRESENT: Councillor Ifan Davies (Chair), Councillors Bryan Davies, Catrin M S Davies, Clive Davies, Euros Davies, Gareth Davies, Gethin Davies, Meirion Davies, Rhodri Davies Endaf Edwards, Elaine Evans, Elizabeth Evans, Eryl Evans, Gwyn Wigley Evans, Keith Evans, Wyn Evans, Keith Henson, Paul Hinge, Hugh Hughes, Chris James, Gwyn James, Ceris Jones, Maldwyn Lewis, Gareth Lloyd, Sian Maehrlein, Ann Bowen Morgan, Caryl Roberts, Mark Strong, Wyn Thomas, Matthew Vaux, Alun Williams and Carl Worrall.

(10.00am - 12.30pm)

Procedure

The Chairman of the Council, Councillor Ifan Davies welcomed all to the meeting and confirmed that the meeting was being webcasted.

1 Apologies

- a) Councillor Rhodri Evans apologised for his inability to attend the meeting as he was on other Council duties;
- b) Councillor Steve Davies and Amanda Edwards apologised for their inability to attend the meeting.

2 Disclosure of personal / prejudicial interests

- a) The Chairman of the Council declared a personal interest on behalf of all Councillors in relation to item 8 below;
- b) Councillor Chris James declared a personal interest in relation to all items relating to transport.

3 Personal matters

- a) Councillor Ifan Davies thanked Ifan Meredith, Ceredigion Youth Council Chairperson and Aled Lewis, Ceredigion United Kingdom Youth Parliament Member for their presentation to Members prior to the Council meeting;
- b) Councillor Ifan Davies congratulated Ceredigion Young Farmers' newly appointed officers:
 - County Queen: Sioned Davies, Llanwenog YFC
 - Young Farmer of the Year: Dewi Davies, Llanddeiniol YFC
 - Deputies: Gwenyth Richards, Pontsiân YFC, Angharad Evans, Mydroilyn YFC,
 - Angharad Davies, Trisant YFC, and Alaw Mair, Felinfach YFC
 - Senior Member: Endaf Griffiths, Pontisan YFC
 - Junior Member: Sion Evans, Felinfach YFC
- c) Councillor Gwyn Wigley Evans extended his condolences to the family of Mary Blodwen Morgan of Llanrhystud who passed away recently.

4 Minutes of the Meetings of the Council held on 2 March 2023 and 9 March 2023

It was **RESOLVED** to confirm as a true record the Minutes of the Council meeting held on 2 March 2023 and 9 March 2023. There were no matters arising.

5 Notice of Motion submitted under Rule 10.1 of the Council's Rules of Procedure

Proposer: Councillor Meirion Davies

Seconder: Councillor Paul Hinge

Given the crisis facing the rural bus network in Ceredigion and rural Wales, Ceredigion Council urges Welsh Government to set up a rural transport task force to urgently tackle this issue.

We recognise that residents and visitors have not returned to public transport post-Covid, in the numbers we would expect. However, as a result of the withdrawal of many rural bus routes due to affordability, our communities are becoming increasingly isolated from accessing public services and socialising with friends and family.

The withdrawal of many rural bus routes exacerbates rural poverty where the impact is felt most greatly. Vulnerable adults, including older people, and those without transport have a right to access public transport in their communities.

Ceredigion Council supports Welsh Government's focus on tackling the climate emergency. Yet by asking residents to move from cars to public transport, investment and the accompanying subsidy for a rural transport infrastructure is required.

Rural transport must have parity with our larger towns and cities if we are to seriously tackle the climate emergency, and to prevent rural communities from being further isolated.

Therefore, Council notes:

- 1. That Ceredigion Council asks Welsh Government to acknowledge that there needs to be investment in transport in rural communities, and subsidised accordingly.*
- 2. That public transport in rural communities such as those in Ceredigion, which have been adversely impacted by the underfunding of public transport from Welsh Government, seeks parity of access similar to larger communities.*
- 3. That a rural transport task force is established immediately by Welsh Government and in conjunction with key stakeholders like Ceredigion Council, to tackle the issue of rural transport.*

Councillor Meirion Davies gave an outline of the current situation noting that residents are being isolated by the lack of public transport and unable to attend medical appointments, shopping and banking, and that he has concerns regarding the welfare and health of these residents. The cost of living crisis meant that not everyone can afford to run a car, and that the loss of the Saturday bus service and reduction to other services was having an effect on the youth in his and other Wards. He noted that the Welsh Government should finance transport services because of the impact upon those living in rural areas, and in line with their emphasis on the

environment. He noted his concern that the Bus Emergency scheme (BES) was due to end, which will have a greater impact on those living in rural areas, and that Ben Lake MP, Elin Jones MS and Jane Dodds MS have all noted their support for its continuation.

Councillor Paul Hinge commended Councillor Meirion Davies on his explanation of the importance of transport for Ceredigion, which had also been reflected in the presentation by the representatives from the Youth Council earlier in the day. He noted that Welsh Government should be thinking more broadly and consider the health and the wellbeing of future generations, however no resources have been provided to deliver this. He called for a Rural Taskforce to be set up immediately including key stakeholders to look at the proper distribution of wealth and parity with other places in Wales in order to tackle the problem of rural transport.

Councillor Bryan Davies noted that he fully endorsed the Motion, and that discussions take place regularly with Lee Waters MS, Deputy Minister for Climate Change at the WLGA Rural Forum. He noted that Lee Waters is eager to ensure that every village has access to transport, however, the Welsh Government definition of a village is that of 200 or more residences, which does not apply to the majority of villages in Ceredigion. Following COVID, there has been demographical changes including home working, with fewer people using the bus services, which is having an impact on local businesses, however this is something that he would hope to discuss if the forum is established. He also noted that they would need to look at a 10–15 year plan, and not just the current situation, and it would also need to consider the re-opening of the railway.

Councillor Gareth Lloyd noted the knock-on effect on the Local Development Plan, due to the Welsh Government guidance stating that a community is not sustainable unless it has a bus service, which would mean that no new houses would be built unless they were on the main road corridor through the county.

Councillor Elizabeth Evans noted her full support, and thanked everyone for the support across the Chamber.

Councillor Alun Williams noted that in order to reduce the number of cars on the roads, there would need to be an excellent bus transport system. He noted that Ceredigion had also been at a disadvantage in terms of the Active Travel with only 3 towns in Ceredigion qualifying for the scheme. Two thirds of Wales are rural areas therefore the Welsh Government should be good at this, and he hoped that these views would be reflected by neighbouring authorities due to the impact on the economy, health and a low carbon Wales.

Councillor Keith Henson noted that he has raised these matters with Lee Robinson, the Transport for Wales Director for North Wales, as the Chairman for Trac Cymru and is awaiting response to his request for data relating to this. He also noted that there is a lack of providers and drivers and this

would also need to be reviewed. He noted that Dolen Teifi provide an excellent service also, which would need to be looked at in the long term.

Councillor Bryan Davies noted that Members have met with the Hywel Dda University Health Board a few weeks ago regarding proposals to build a new hospital in the Whitland area and noted that they have raised their concerns regarding accessibility for the residents of Ceredigion due to the lack of public transport.

Councillor Gwyn Wigley Evans clarified that the reference made by Professor Stuart Cole to the railway link being unlikely to happen in the next 30- to 40 years was due to financial reasons, and that operating 3 buses a day to Carmarthen would be significantly cheaper than reinstating the railway line.

Following a vote, it was **RESOLVED** to agree the motion as presented.

6 Report by the Corporate Lead Officer: Legal and Governance and Monitoring Officer upon the Draft Annual Governance Statement 2022-23 and Local Code of Corporate Governance 2023-24

Councillor Matthew Vaux, Cabinet Member for Partnerships, Housing, Legal and Governance and Public Protection presented an outline of the report to Council noting that a workshop held on 28 November 2022 the Governance Framework document was reviewed to consider any updated evidence and to reflect on previously identified actions. The document was considered by the Governance and Audit Committee at their meetings dated 17 January 2023 and 9 March 2023, and it was agreed to recommend that Council endorse the Draft Annual Governance Statement.

The Governance and Audit Committee also reviewed the Local Code of Corporate Governance 2023-24 at their meeting dated 17 January 2023 and agreed to recommend that Council endorse the Local Code of Corporate Governance 2023-24.

Councillor Elizabeth Evans as a Member of Governance and Audit Committee assured colleagues that the committee goes through this in some depth, and thanked Officers for their contributions to the Annual Governance Statement and stated the workshops are very worth-while.

The Council noted the content of the 2022-23 Governance Framework Document and following a vote the Council **RESOLVED** to approve the Draft Annual Governance Statement 2022-23 and the Local Code of Corporate Governance 2023-24.

7 Report of the Corporate Lead Officer: Policy, Performance and Public Protection upon the Ceredigion Local Well-being Plan 2023-2028

Councillor Bryan Davies, Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Democratic Services, Policy, Performance and People and Organisation presented the report to Council noting that the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 places a Well-being duty on specific bodies to act jointly to prepare and publish an assessment of the state of economic, social, environmental and cultural well-being of its area, and to prepare and

publish a Local Well-being plan setting out local objectives and steps it proposes to take to meet them.

He noted that consultation upon the draft Ceredigion Local Well-being Plan 2023-28 took place between October 2022 and January 2023, and that it was considered by the Overview and Scrutiny Coordinating Committee at its meeting on 23 November 2022. Feedback from the public consultation indicated that the Plan was well received, with recommendations incorporated into the final Local Well-being Plan as far as possible. Following amendments to the plan, it was presented to the Public Service Board at their meeting on 6 March 2023 and considered by the Overview and Scrutiny Coordinating Committee on 22 March 2023 prior to being presented to Cabinet on 4 April 2023.

Members asked about the long-term considerations for the plan, and it was confirmed that all areas are considered in the long term as well as the short term.

Following a vote, the Council **RESOLVED** to approve the Ceredigion Local Well-being Plan 2023-28.

8 Report by the Corporate Lead Officer: Democratic Services upon the Schedule of Member Remuneration for 2023/24

Councillor Bryan Davies, Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Democratic Services, Policy, Performance and People and Organisation presented the report to Council noting that the Independent Remuneration Panel for Wales Annual Report was issued in February 2023 and considered by the Democratic Services committee at its meeting on 24 March 2023.

He provided an outline of the remunerations, emphasising that adequate remuneration was required in order to attract a wide representation of people, reminding members of the support available for cost of care, and the counselling service available.

Councillor Elizabeth Evans, Chair of the Democratic Services Committee noted that the Committee had considered the report at its meeting dated 24 March 2023 and resolved to recommend to Council to approve the content of the report. She noted her disappointment however that the Independent Remuneration Panel had failed to recognise that councillors work more than the equivalent of 3 days a week, and that a need to attract a more diverse membership needs to be encouraged.

Members asked about the option to opt out of the taking the increase in salary, and it was confirmed that they would need to submit a written request to the Corporate Lead Officer, Democratic Services.

Councillor Bryan Davies noted that the number of Councillors had reduced from 42 to 38, which was causing problems in terms of appointing members to committees and placing more pressure on Members in terms of time, and additional responsibilities, in addition to their roles on external bodies.

Councillor Gareth Davies noted that in terms of the Council's budget, Members' salaries accounts for less than 0.5% of the overall budget.

The Council **RESOLVED** to note the following:

1. The payment of Basic and Senior Salaries as prescribed by the Independent Remuneration Panel, as set out in Schedule 1 of Appendix A;
2. The payment of Civic Salaries payable to the Chair and Deputy Chair of the Council, as set out in Schedule 1 of Appendix A;
3. Schedule of other payments as set out in Schedule 1;

Following a vote the Council **RESOLVED** to approve the following:

1. To continue the current practice of not making payments for travelling expenses whilst undertaking constituency duties;
2. To approve that travelling, subsistence, overnight accommodation and car parking allowances continue at the same levels as 2022/23 for 2023/24;
3. To continue with the opt-in monthly allowance scheme of a maximum of £10 to cover telephone, broadband and postage costs;
4. To reflect the payment of this allowance in the annual Statement of Payments made to Members;
5. Co-opted Members to be paid fees subject to a maximum equivalent to 10 full days for each committee to which an individual has been co-opted, based on a half day or full day payment;
6. To continue to publish the total amount reimbursed by the authority during the year but not attributed to any named Member in respect of the reimbursement of care;
7. The 2023/2024 Schedule of Member Remuneration, subject to incorporating any amendments determined by the Council at this meeting; and
8. To authorise the Corporate Lead Officer: Democratic Services to incorporate any such amendments prior to publication after the Annual Meeting to be held 19th May 2023.

9 Report by the Corporate Lead Officer: Democratic Services upon a Members' Survey in relation to the Timing of Meetings of the Council and its Committees

Councillor Bryan Davies, Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Democratic Services, Policy, Performance and People and Organisation presented the report to Council noting that statutory guidance requires local authorities to conduct a survey in relation to the times and intervals at which meetings are held taking into consideration the needs and circumstances of all Members.

He noted that 25 Members responded to the survey, and that the findings of the survey were considered by the Democratic Services Committee at its meeting of 24 March 2023. He noted that the responses included responsibilities such as children and caring responsibilities and self-employment as well as travel times,

Councillor Elizabeth Evans, Chair of the Democratic Services Committee noted that the Committee had considered the report at its meeting dated 24 March 2023 and recommended that a start time of 10am for all committee, and that holding afternoon meetings at 1.30pm would allow for better opportunities for members to join the meetings.

Councillor Bryan Davies noted that all-day meetings did not allow sufficient time to go to the town for lunch, and asked whether a vending machine could be provided at Penmorfa.

Following a vote the Council **RESOLVED** to approve the following:

1. That meetings are mainly held on Tuesdays, Wednesday and Thursdays;
2. That all meetings of Council and Committees commence at 10:00am;
3. That afternoon meetings, workshops and training events commence at 1:30pm.

10 Report by the Chief Executive and Electoral Registration Officer and Returning Officer and Corporate Lead Officer: Democratic Services upon a Review of Communities and Electoral Arrangements - Council Size Policy

Eifion Evans, Chief Executive and Electoral Registration Officer and Returning Officer for Ceredigion County Council presented the report to Council noting that the Cross-Party Group set up to review the Communities and Electoral arrangements had met to consider a Council Size Policy. The policy will be shared with the Local Democracy and Boundary Commission for Wales, subject to approval by Council.

He outlined the legal requirement to undertake a review, as reported to Council in March 2023 and noted the need for greater consistency of Town and Community Councils across the County. The Cross-Party Group had therefore considered an urban and a rural model for the 'Council Size Policy' – an urban and rural approach, acknowledging the differences in the number of electors.

Clarification was given regarding the difference between community wards, which would have no fewer than 400 electors; and a community council, which some are made up of a number of community wards, which together would have no fewer than a total of 800 electors.

In addition, where possible, the community wards would be removed and councillor representation would be based on the whole community council area. The precept collected from the community wards would still be available to them for the purposes of allocating the funding from the precept.

He emphasised that the aim of the Council Size Policy was to provide parameters for the Local Democracy and Boundary Commission for Wales to put forward proposals for consideration by the Council.

The Chief Executive confirmed that this would be a 15-18 month process and that the final decision would be made by the Council and not by the Local Democracy and Boundary Commission for Wales.

Following discussion and a vote, the Council **RESOLVED** to approve the Council Size Policy as presented in Appendix A of the report.

- 11 Report by the Corporate Lead Officer: Democratic Services upon the Amendments to the Membership of the Community Health Council**
Councillor Bryan Davies, Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Democratic Services, Policy, Performance and People and Organisation presented the report to Council noting that the Community Health Council (CHC) was replaced by 'Llais' on 3 April 2023. As a result of the changes to the Community Health Council, Councillor representative membership of this external body has ceased, and a further report will be presented to Council of further representation is required.

Councillor Elizabeth Evans, who was the prior Chair of the Community Health Council paid tribute to the voluntary work carried out by Members, especially during COVID, forcing Hywel Dda University Health Board to put i-Pads in Wards, and ensuring that Bronglais Hospital had parity of services compared to Glangwili and other larger hospitals. She noted the importance of ensuring that the patient voice is heard, especially in a rural area. She noted that 'Llais' have asked the previous members of the Community Health Council to submit an application form in relation to 'Llais'.

Councillor Keith Evans, Paul Hinge and Alun Williams, also former Members of the Community Health Council paid tribute to the work carried out by the CHC, and Councillor Alun Williams noted the importance of their work in ensuring that senior Health Board Officers are held to account. He noted that 'Llais' has a far wider remit which includes social care, which could present a conflict of interest if Councillors are involved.

Councillor Bryan Davies noted that the Membership of 'Llais' would need to be ratified by Council.

The Council **RESOLVED** to note that Membership of the Community Health Council ceased as of 2 April 2023.

- 12 Report by the Corporate Lead Officer: Legal and Governance and Monitoring Officer upon the Nomination of Trustee to the charity known as Llandysul Memorial Park**

Councillor Matthew Vaux, Cabinet Member for Partnerships, Housing, Legal and Governance and Public Protection presented the report to Council noting that The Charity Commission made a Scheme in relation to the charity known as Llandysul Memorial Park (Parc Coffa Llandysul) in 1997 which sets out a Committee of Management which includes a member from Ceredigion County Council. He noted that Councillor Keith Evans has been attending the meetings as Local Member, however Officers have not been able to locate a resolution formally appointing a member to represent Ceredigion County Council.

Councillor Gareth Lloyd proposed that Councillor Keith Evans is nominated as Trustee, as Local Member for Llandysul South and recommended that the records show that the local Member is stipulated as the representative in order to avoid the need to review this each time.

Following a vote the Council **RESOLVED** to nominate the Councillor for the Llandysul South ward to sit as the Ceredigion County Council representative Trustee, on the Committee of Management for the Llandysul Memorial Park (Parc Coffa Llandysul) (current incumbent Cllr. Keith Evans).

13 Membership of the Council to the Committees of the Council for the ensuing Municipal Year

It was **RESOLVED** to confirm the Membership of the Council's Committees as presented at the meeting.

14 Election of the Chairman-elect for the Council for 2023/24 to be installed at the Annual Meeting to be held at 2:00pm on Friday, 19 May 2023

It was proposed by Councillor Bryan Davies and seconded by Councillor Gareth Davies that Councillor Maldwyn Lewis be elected as Chairman of the Council for the ensuing Municipal year, 2023/24

It was unanimously **RESOLVED** that Councillor Maldwyn Lewis be elected Chairman-elect for the Council for 2023/24 to be installed at the Annual Meeting to be held at 2.00pm on Friday 19th May 2023.

15 Election of the Vice-Chairman-elect for the Council for 2023/24 to be installed at the Annual Meeting to be held at 2:00pm on Friday, 19 May 2023

It was proposed by Councillor Gareth Lloyd and seconded by Councillor Euros Davies that Councillor Keith Evans be elected as Vice-Chairman of the Council for the ensuing Municipal year, 2023/24

It was unanimously **RESOLVED** that Councillor Keith Evans be elected Vice-Chairman-elect for the Council for 2023/24 to be installed at the Annual Meeting to be held at 2.00pm on Friday 19th May 2023.

16 Notification of appointment of interim Corporate Lead Officers

Councillor Bryan Davies, Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Democratic Services, Policy, Performance and People and Organisation presented the supplementary agenda item report to Council. He noted that these roles are secondments as opposed to permanent appointments, therefore interviews were conducted by a recruitment committee including Group Leaders.

The Committee resolved that Mrs Elen James be appointed Corporate Lead Officer: Lifelong Learning (and Chief Education Officer) on the basis of a two-year secondment to commence as soon as possible after 15th May 2023 on a salary of £85,381, the third incremental point on the Corporate Lead Officer

A2 pay scale; and that Mr Clive Williams be appointed Corporate Lead Officer: Schools (and Deputy Chief Education Officer) on the basis of a two-year secondment to commence on 15th May 2023, or as soon as possible thereafter on a salary of £80,275, the 4th incremental point on the Corporate Lead Officer A1 pay scale (pay awards pending). Councillor Bryan Davies noted that they did seek the approval of the Ysgol Gymraeg Governing Body prior to publishing the report.

He acknowledged the contribution of Meinir Ebbsworth the current Corporate Lead Officer for Schools and Culture and wished her well in her new role.

Councillor Bryan Davies also noted an extension to the engagement of Ms Audrey Somerton-Edwards on an agency basis as the Interim Corporate Lead Officer: Porth Cynnal and Statutory director of Social Services for a maximum period of 6 months. He noted that the recruitment process to appoint a permanent Officer has commenced and that a Shortlisting Committee and Special Council meeting will be convened in due course.

The Council **RESOLVED** to:

- a) note the appointment of the following:
 - Mrs Elen James as interim Corporate Lead Officer: Lifelong Learning for a maximum 2 year period, to commence as soon as possible after 15th May 2023, following the appointment of a replacement for her current post; on a salary of £85,381 (the third incremental point on the Corporate Lead Officer A2 pay scale).
 - Mr Clive Williams as interim Corporate Lead Officer: Schools for a maximum period of 2 years, from 15th May, or as soon as possible thereafter, on a salary of £80,275 (the fourth incremental point on the Corporate Lead Officer A1 pay scale).
- b) to note the extension of the engagement of Ms Audrey Somerton-Edwards' services as Interim Corporate Lead Officer - Porth Cynnal and Statutory Director of Social Services on an agency basis for a maximum of a further 6 month period, from 18th April 2023.

Confirmed at the Meeting of the Council held on 15 June 2023

CHAIRMAN: _____