

**Minutes of the Meeting of COUNCIL**  
**held at Neuadd Cyngor Ceredigion, Penmorfa, Aberaeron and remotely via**  
**video conference on Thursday 21 March 2024**

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

(10.00am - 12.05pm)

**Procedure**

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

**1 Apologies**

None.

**2 Disclosure of personal / prejudicial interests**

- a) The Chairman declared a personal interest on behalf of all Councillors in relation to item 6 below. All Councillors agreed;
- b) Councillors Maldwyn Lewis, Euros Davies, Gareth Davies, Endaf Edwards, Elaine Evans, Wyn Evans, Keith Henson, Paul Hinge and Gwyn James declared a personal and prejudicial interest in relation to minute 7 below and withdrew from the meeting during discussions;
- c) Councillor Caryl Roberts declared a personal interest in relation to item 10.
- d) Eifion Evans, Chief Executive, on behalf of all Senior Officers present declared a personal and prejudicial interest in relation to minute 7 below in accordance with the Code of Conduct for Local Government. Those members of staff withdrew from the meeting during discussion. Liz Merriman, Corporate Manager, People and Organisation; the minute taker and translator remained in the meeting during discussions.

**3 Chair Announcements**

Councillor Maldwyn Lewis, Chair of the Council extended his sympathies on behalf of the Council to the families and friends of Callum Wright and Llŷr Davies, on their recent bereavement.

He also extended his sympathies to the family of Rev. Goronwy Evans from Lampeter on their recent bereavement.

The Council observed a minutes' silence.

The Chairman congratulated Vaughan Gething on his appointment as First Minister for Wales and expressed his best wishes to Mark Drakeford following 5 years in the role.

Councillor Bryan Davies reiterated the Chairman's comments in relation to Vaughan Gething the newly appointed First Minister for Wales, noting that he would be inviting him to visit Ceredigion in the near future.

He congratulated Aberystwyth University on winning the 'Rhyngol' for the first time in 9 years, and he wished Jeremy Turner, Arad Goch well upon his retirement.

The Chairman also congratulated Deian Gwynne and Steffan Jones on winning their first rugby cap for Wales under 18, beating Scotland by 43 points to 10 during their first game, before travelling to Ireland and winning again by 27 points to 19.

He congratulated Felinfach Young Farmers' Club for winning the all-Wales Drama competition; Bleddyn Thomas for his nomination as the best actor in the Welsh category; Gwern Thomas from Felinfach on his nomination as 'Young Farmer', Mared Lloyd Jones from Llanddewi as Queen and her deputies Meleri Morgan from Llangeitho, Mared Jones from Felinfach, Angharad Davies from Penbanc and Carys Morris from Llanddeiniol.

He also congratulated Josh and Finn Tarling who will be representing Britain on 7 April at the prestigious one day race from Paris to Roubaix, and he also congratulated Ysgol Bro Pedr and Ysgol Bro Teifi who took part recently in a rugby tournament at the Principality Stadium and to Ysgol Bro Teifi on winning the event.

Councillor Ifan Davies apologised for inappropriate language used at a previous meeting of the Council noting that he would be more careful in future.

**4 Minutes of the Meetings of the Council held on 6 February 2024 and 29 February 2024.**

It was **RESOLVED** to confirm as a true record the Minutes of the council meeting held on 6 February 2024 and 29 February 2024, subject to an amendment to the date for the 29 February meeting in the Welsh version to read 29 Chwefror as opposed to 29 Mawrth 2024.

Matters arising

There were no matters arising,

**5 Report by the Corporate Lead Officer: Democratic Services upon a Single Transferable Vote**

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 all Councillors in Wales are currently elected using a simple majority system, commonly known as the first past the post which is also the current mechanism applied by the Welsh and UK Government. He noted that should the Council elect to transfer to a Single Transferable Vote, that it would require a public consultation followed by a vote supported by 2 out of 3 Members. He noted that a change to the

voting mechanism would impact upon rural areas greater than that of areas of high population as each Ward would be represented by between 3 to 6 Member each, and that there would be no restriction on representation being clustered in one small area of the larger ward.

Several Members noted that it would not be appropriate for 38 Councillors to decide on wholesale changes without consulting residents. They noted that this would not be a referendum, however they have a democratic obligation to consult. Members also highlighted their concerns in relation to holding a consultation prior to information being available on the effect this would have on Ward Boundaries that have already gone through several significant changes recently; the cost implications of changing the voting system which would fall on Ceredigion tax-payers as this would not be funded by the Welsh Government; the timing of the consultation coinciding with other important consultations relating to budget savings, and the impact this would have on resources and Officers' time.

Councillor Alun Williams noted that the Single Transferable Vote is considered to be a fairer system, noting that the Conservatives currently hold 16% more seats than votes at Westminster despite not winning a majority of the votes, and that the Labour Party hold 10% more seats than votes in the Welsh Government. He noted that the difference between votes and seats in Ceredigion at the last election under the First Past the Post system was negligible at less than 4% for each of the group. Therefore, he concluded that there is no electoral injustice that needs to be corrected; however a number of residents have shown a significant interest in this matter, and despite the undeniable logistical and operational concerns, he noted that whatever the outcome, it would be appropriate to consult these residents.

Following a discussion and a vote, it was **RESOLVED** to undertake a public consultation on the possible change to the voting system for County Council elections to the Single Transferable Vote system.

## **6 Report by the Corporate Lead Officer: Democratic Services upon the Schedule of Member Remuneration for 2024/25**

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 decisions regarding Member remuneration are made by the Independent Remuneration Panel for Wales, which is not within the control of the Council and that any Member wishing to waive their remuneration should contact the Corporate Lead Officer for Democratic Services in writing.

This was reiterated by Councillor Gareth Lloyd, and Councillor Elizabeth Evans noted that the remuneration is paid at 3 days a week, and that all additional activities and community events are attended during the Members' own time.

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

1. Continuation of the current practice of not making payments for travelling expenses whilst undertaking Ward duties:

2. That travelling, subsistence, overnight accommodation and car parking are paid at the levels proposed by the Independent Remuneration Panel;
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 opt-in of this allowance in the Statement of Payments made to Members annually;
5. Co-opted Members to be paid 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 2024/2025 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 and submission to the IRPW, after the Annual Meeting to be held 17<sup>th</sup> May 2024.

**7 Report by the Corporate Lead Officer: People and Organisation upon the Council Staff Pay Policy**

Councillors Maldwyn Lewis, Euros Davies, Gareth Davies, Endaf Edwards, Elaine Evans, Wyn Evans, Keith Henson, Paul Hinge and Gwyn James and all Senior Officers withdrew from the meeting for the duration of the discussion.

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 in accordance with the Localism Act 2011, local authorities are required to approve a Council Pay Policy for each financial year to be published by 31 March.

Liz Merriman, Corporate Manager, People and Organisation also highlighted that the re-employment clause applies to all staff, not just teaching staff.

Following a vote, the Council **RESOLVED** to approve the Ceredigion Pay Policy for 2024/2025.

**8 Report by the Corporate Lead Officer: Democratic Services upon the broadcasting of additional committee meetings**

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 Ceredigion County Council currently exceeds the requirements of the Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021 in terms of the broadcasting of proceedings at Council meetings. However, Members of the Democratic Services Committee had requested that consideration be given to extending this provision to include additional committee meetings.

He noted that a discussion paper was presented to the Committee during its meeting held on 28 February 2024. They considered the additional demand that this would place on Democratic Services Officers, and also considered feedback received from other Local Authorities in Wales which recommended that the Monitoring Officer or his/her Deputy are present in all meetings being broadcasted. Consideration was also given to the capacity of the Monitoring Officer and Deputy to attend the meetings. As such, the Democratic Services Committee recommended that the provisions is extended to include the Development Management Committee meetings from May 2024, and that consideration was given to extending the provision to include all Overview and Scrutiny Committees when capacity allows. He also noted that the Council had come under pressure from Audit Wales to extend this provision.

Councillor Elizabeth Evans, Chair of the Democratic Services Committee noted that there had been lengthy discussion by Members of the Democratic Services Committee, and whilst there was a desire to see all meetings broadcasted that it would be impossible in terms of Officer capacity.

Following a vote, the Council **RESOLVED** to approve that the provision for broadcasting of meetings is extended to include the Development Management Committee from May 2024.

**9 Report of the Corporate Lead Officer: Legal and Governance and Monitoring Officer upon the Governance Framework**

Councillor Matthew Vaux, Cabinet Member for Partnerships, Housing, Legal and Governance and Public Protection presented the report to Council noting that following a review of the Council's governance documents, it was agreed that a Governance Framework would be created to act as an overarching document encompassing the Council's governance arrangements and to replace the current Local Code for Corporate Governance.

He noted that the draft Governance Framework demonstrates the arrangements in place to ensure that the intended outcomes for all stakeholders and defined and achieved, whilst ensuring that the Council always acts in the public interest.

Following a vote, the Council **RESOLVED** to approve the draft Governance Framework as set out at Appendix 1 of the report.

**10 Report by the Corporate Lead Officer: Legal and Governance to confirm the appointment of Chair and Vice-Chair of the Governance and Audit Committee**

Councillor Matthew Vaux, Cabinet Member for Partnerships, Housing, Legal and Governance and Public Protection presented the report to Council noting that the Governance and Audit Committee had approved the re-appointment of Alan Davies as Chair and Andrew Blackmore as Vice Chair of the Governance and Audit Committee for a period of two years from 17<sup>th</sup> May 2024 to 17<sup>th</sup> May 2026.

Councillor Bryan Davies asked whether these appointments could be open-ended. The Monitoring Officer confirmed that appointments are for 6 years in the first instance, with an option to extend for a further term of 5 years. The Chair and Vice-Chair appointments are reviewed every two years with an opportunity for another Member to step in or to extend.

Following a vote, the Council **RESOLVED** to approve the appointment of Alan Davies as Chair, and Andrew Blackmore as Vice-Chair of the Governance and Audit Committee for a period of two years from 17<sup>th</sup> May 2024 to 17<sup>th</sup> May 2026.

**11 To elect a Chairman-elect for the Council for 2024/25 to be installed at the Annual Meeting to be held at 2.00 pm on Friday, 17 May 2024**

Councillor Gareth Lloyd proposed and was seconded by Councillor Rhodri Evans that Councillor Keith Evans be elected as the Chairman of the Council for the ensuing municipal year.

It was unanimously **RESOLVED** that Councillor Keith Evans be elected Chairman-elect for the Council for 2024/25 to be installed at the Annual Meeting to be held at 2.00pm on Friday, 17 May 2024.

**12 To elect a Vice-Chairman-elect for the Council for 2024/25 to be installed at the Annual Meeting to be held at 2.00 pm on Friday, 17 May 2024**

Councillor Bryan Davies proposed and was seconded by Councillor Catrin M S Davies that Councillor Ann Bowen Morgan be elected as the Vice-Chairman of the Council for the ensuing municipal year.

It was unanimously **RESOLVED** that Councillor Ann Bowen Morgan be elected Vice-Chairman-elect for the Council for 2024/25 to be installed at the Annual Meeting to be held at 2.00pm on Friday, 17 May 2024.

**Confirmed at the Meeting of the Council held on 20 June 2024**

**CHAIRMAN:** \_\_\_\_\_