

Minutes of the Meeting of Council
held at Neuadd Cyngor Ceredigion, Penmorfa, Aberaeron and remotely
via video conference on Thursday, 24th October, 2024

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

(10.00am - 11.30am)

Procedure

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

1 Apologies

Councillors Euros Davies, Rhodri Davies, Elaine Evans, Ceris Jones, Gareth Lewis and Mark Strong apologised for their inability to attend the meeting.

2 Disclosure of personal / prejudicial interests

There were no disclosures of interest.

3 Chair Announcements

Councillor Mark Strong on his recent bereavement, and he also extended his condolences to the relatives of Tudor Evans on their recent bereavement, thanking the emergency services and Ceredigion County Council staff for their prompt response following the recent train collision near Llanbrynmair.

Councillor Keith Evans congratulated the following:

- a) Gareth Lewis on being elected Councillor for Tirymynach Ward;
- b) Steffan Lloyd from Talgarreg on winning a gold medal at the paralympic games as a pilot to James Ball in the men's B 100m tandem time trial;
- c) Professor Philip Kloer on his appointment as Chief Executive Officer for the Hywel Dda University Health Board;
- d) The Aberporth Bilingual Playgroup on winning the Early Years Wales Award for "The World Outside" category;
- e) The Craft Festival Wales held at Cardigan Castle which attracted over 3,500 visitors;
- f) Cefngwyn Hall farm, near Llanon on winning a national award for their South Devon cattle breed;
- g) Peg Jones on celebrating her 103rd birthday;
- h) Mair Jones on celebrating her 100th birthday;
- i) Owen Jac Roberts, Reuben Lerwill and Leia Vobe on being selected to represent the Welsh gymnastic team at the Tumbling French Cup competition;
- j) Pamela Worrall on being selected to represent the Wales Shore Angling team held in Spain next month, and Councillor Carl Worrall on being selected Manager of the Wales Women Sea Angling team;

- k) Ceredigion County Council on becoming a member of the WHO Global Network for Age-friendly Cities and Communities;
- l) The Ceredigion Young Farmers on hosting a very successful Eisteddfod at Pontrhydfendigaid.

4 To confirm the Minutes of the Meetings of the Council held on 19 September 2024

It was **RESOLVED** to confirm as a true record the Minutes of the Council meeting held on 19 September 2024.

Matters arising

There were no matters arising.

5 Notice of Motion

Proposer: Cllr Gareth Davies

Seconder: Cllr Caryl Roberts

Council notes that:

Chancellor urged to put local council funding back on a firm foundation

Cyngor Sir Ceredigion congratulates the Rt Hon Rachel Reeves MP on becoming the first woman to be appointed as Chancellor of the Exchequer in the UK Government.

We can empathise with her on taking on this challenging role as local councils who've had to cope with a disproportionate share of spending cuts during 14 years of ruthless Conservative Govt austerity. Cyngor Sir Ceredigion alone, due to chronic government under-funding, is now £70m worse off, in real terms, than we were a decade ago.

This is an extremely worrying time for all councils and their staff, with many now teetering on the brink of financial disaster. UNISON general secretary Christina McAnea has warned that "countless essential services and very many vital jobs are at risk, with terrible consequences for communities across Britain."

We urge the Chancellor in her forthcoming autumn budget to put local government funding back on a sustainable foundation, by drawing on the £10b available due to the Bank of England's decision to slow down the pace of its quantitative tightening programme.

Urgent extra revenue funding (via the Barnett Formula for Wales) is needed for such essential services as:

Social Care – for a population which includes an increasing percentage of older people who need residential and community care.

Children's Services – facing unprecedented demand and critical financial pressures.

Schools – *struggling, or failing, to live within allocated budgets, resulting in impact on staffing levels and curriculum delivery.*

Highways – *deteriorating following a decade's year-on-year cuts in maintenance budgets, as evidenced by the increasing number of potholes on our roads.*

Culture and Leisure – *the lack of funding is endangering our museum collections and public libraries by losing our heritage.*

We further urge the Chancellor to provide for inflationary pressures on local government budgets, and to ensure that pay settlements which are set centrally should be fully funded by central government.

Councillor Gareth Davies presented the notice of motion, which was seconded by Councillor Caryl Roberts.

Councillor Elizabeth Evans proposed an improvement on the motion, replacing the first part of the sentence of the second paragraph, with the following:

Local Government has received a disproportionate share of cuts since austerity.

This was seconded by Councillor Rhodri Evans. However, following a vote, the proposed improvement was not carried.

Following a further vote on the original notice of motion, it was **RESOLVED** to agree the motion as presented.

6 To consider the report of the Corporate Lead Officer for Finance and Procurement and Section 151 Officer upon the Medium Term Financial Strategy

Councillor Gareth Davies, Cabinet Member for Finance and Procurement services presented the report to Council noting that the Council's Medium Term Financial Strategy had been considered by Corporate Resources Overview and Scrutiny Committee at its meeting dated 23 September, and by Cabinet on 1 October. He noted that Members had also been provided with detailed information during a budget workshop earlier in the week.

He noted that the Strategy set out 4 clear Corporate Wellbeing Objectives, underpinned by various priorities and expected outcomes, with the aim of providing resources and a financial framework to ensure that outcomes can be achieved as far as possible as well as ensuring a balanced budget is set out on an annual basis, and that Members are aware of the associated financial challenges and risks.

He referred to the constrained public finances, as well as the key priorities from the Corporate Strategy that have already been achieved, including Ysgol Dyffryn Aeron, the new Community Housing Scheme, the Wellbeing Centre in Lampeter and the construction of the Aberaeron Coastal Defence

Scheme. He also noted that Ceredigion County Council had a good track record of setting and achieving a balanced budget, and that Audit Wales had issued an unqualified audit opinion year on year, despite funding shortfalls.

Councillor Gareth Davies noted that the Medium-Term Financial Strategy had been modelled upon a 0.5% increase in Welsh Government funding from 2025/26 onwards, providing the indicative budget shortfall for 2025/26, 2026/27 and 2027/28, and an estimated annual, monthly and weekly costs for a Band D Council Tax bill in Ceredigion based upon a Council Tax increase of 1%, 5%, 10%, 12% and 14%.

Members asked whether the Medium-Term Financial Strategy predetermined the budget and savings proposals for future years. It was confirmed that the aim of the strategy is to highlight the challenges ahead, and to provide a framework for future discussion; however no decisions regarding the budget or savings proposals are made during this meeting.

It was noted that the report from the Corporate Resources Overview and Scrutiny Committee recommended that Cabinet and Council approve the Medium-Term Financial Strategy.

Following a vote, it was **RESOLVED** to approve the updated Medium Term Financial Strategy.

7 To consider the report of the Corporate Lead Officer for Economy and Regeneration upon an amendment to the membership of the Local Place for Nature (LP4N) grant panel

Councillor Keith Henson, Cabinet Member for Highways and Environmental Services and Carbon Management presented the report to Council noting that Council approved the appointment of members to the Local Places for Nature grant panel at its meeting dated 18 July 2024. He noted that the Terms of Reference stipulated that the panel should comprise of between 5 and 9 members, including the Chair and Vice-chair.

He noted that since implementation, one external member had resigned however Chris Worker had agreed to join the panel, representing environmental, voluntary, social and cultural interests. It was proposed to progress with the current membership of the panel with the addition of Chris Worker, whilst seeking an additional representative to join the group.

Following a vote, it was **RESOLVED** to approve the appointment and to note the revised Terms of Reference for the panel.

8 To appoint an Armed Forces Member Champion

Councillor Keith Evans, Chair of the Council paid tribute to Councillor Paul Hinge for his dedicated contribution to his role as the Armed Forces Member Champion and asked for nominations to carry on with this work.

Councillor Rhodri Evans nominated Councillor Gwyn James as Armed Forces Champion providing an overview of his service with the RAF. This was seconded by Councillor Elizabeth Evans.

Following a vote, it was **RESOLVED** to appoint Councillor Gwyn James as Armed Forces Member Champion for Ceredigion County Council.

Confirmed at the Meeting of the Council held on 28 November 2024

CHAIRMAN: _____