

**Minutes of the Meeting of COUNCIL**  
**held at Neuadd Cyngor Ceredigion, Penmorfa, Aberaeron and remotely via**  
**video conference on Thursday, 20th March, 2025**

**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, Rhodri Davies, Amanda Edwards, Endaf Edwards, Elaine Evans, Elizabeth Evans, Eryl Evans, Gwyn Wigley Evans, Raymond Evans, Rhodri Evans, Wyn Evans, Keith Henson, Hugh Hughes, Chris James, Ceris Jones, Maldwyn Lewis, Gareth Lloyd, Sian Maehrlein, Ann Bowen Morgan, John Roberts, Mark Strong, Wyn Thomas, Matthew Vaux and Alun Williams

(10.00am - 12.00pm)

**Procedure**

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

**1 Apologies**

- a) Councillors Gwyn James and Caryl Roberts apologised for their inability to attend the meeting due to being on other Council duties;
- b) Councillors Euros Davies, Gareth Lewis and Carl Worrall apologised for their inability to attend the meeting;
- c) James Starbuck apologised for his inability to attend the meeting.

**2 Disclosure of personal / prejudicial interests**

- a) The Chairman declared a personal interest on behalf of all Councillors in relation to minute 5 and minute 8 below;
- b) Councillor Matthew Vaux declared a personal and prejudicial interest in relation to minute 5 below and withdrew from the meeting during discussion;
- c) Councillors Keith Evans, Bryan Davies, Catrin M S Davies, Meirion Davies, Amanda Edwards, Endaf Edwards, Eryl Evans, Gwyn Wigley Evans, Rhodri Evans, Wyn Evans, Chris James, Gareth Lloyd and Sian Maehrlein declared a personal interest in relation to minute 5 below noting that they had been given dispensation by the Ethics and Standards Committee to speak and vote on this matter;
- d) Councillors Bryan Davies, Endaf Edwards, Rhodri Evans, Chris James and John Roberts declared a personal and prejudicial interest in relation to minute 9 below and withdrew from the meeting during discussion;
- e) Councillors Bryan Davies, Gareth Davies, Endaf Edwards, Wyn Evans and Keith Henson declared a personal and prejudicial interest in relation to minute 10 below and withdrew from the meeting during discussion;
- f) Lowri Edwards, Corporate Manager, Democratic Services declared a personal and prejudicial interest in relation to minute 5 below and withdrew from the meeting during discussion;
- g) Eifion Evans, Chief Executive declared a personal and prejudicial interest in relation to minute 9 below and withdrew from the meeting during discussion;

- h) Eifion Evans, Chief Executive on behalf of all Senior Officers present declared a personal and prejudicial interest in relation to minute 10 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; Patricia Armstrong, Corporate Manager Legal Services and Deputy Monitoring Officer; the minute taker and translator remained in the meeting during discussions.

### 3 **Chair Announcements**

Councillor Keith Evans, Chair of the Council congratulated the following:

- a) Gwasg Gomer on winning Book Printer of the year;
- b) Lois Jones on being selected to the Wales under 18 Ladies Rugby Team, winning her first cap against Italy;
- c) The Harbourmaster, Aberaeron on being named Wales Hotel of the year in the Times' 100 best places to stay in the UK for 2025;
- d) Ynys Hir Hall on maintaining their Michelin 2 stars for the third consecutive year;
- e) The Talbot in Tregaron who have progressed to the final round of the Wales Tourism Awards.

The Chair extended his condolences to the family and friends of John Emrys Jones on their recent bereavement.

### 4 **To confirm the Minutes of the Meetings of the Council held on 3 March 2025**

It was **RESOLVED** to confirm as a true record the Minutes of the Council meeting held on 3 March 2025

#### Matters arising

There were no matters arising

### 5 **To consider the following motion submitted under Rule 10.1 of the Council's Rules of Procedure**

Councillor Matthew Vaux, and Lowri Edwards, Corporate Lead Officer: Democratic Services withdrew from the meeting for the duration of the discussion.

Proposer: Councillor Wyn Evans  
Seconder: Councillor Rhodri Evans

*Ceredigion County Council is calling on the British Prime Minister, Sir Keir Starmer and Chancellor Rachel Reeves to re-consider and reverse the financial decisions they have made regarding the issues set out below:*

1. *Energy allowance withdrawn for many of the elderly living in Ceredigion which will have a significant impact on their health and wellbeing, and who will struggle to heat their homes today and, in the future, following this decision.*

2. *Proposed changes to Inheritance Tax that the Chancellor is introducing are going to be detrimental to many Ceredigion farmers and businesses. No changes should be made to the current systems, in terms of the Agricultural Property Relief (APR) and Business Property Relief (BPR)*
3. *The proposed double change to the National Insurance Tax of increasing the percentage payable, but also the lowering of the starting threshold at the same time should be reversed. This decision will have an adverse consequence on employment and a significant impact on the cost of running a business.*

Councillor Wyn Evans gave an outline of the above Notice of Motion, noting that the decision of the UK Government regarding the Winter Fuel Allowance was placing financial pressures upon those that are less fortunate, which in turn was impacting upon services provided by local authorities. He also noted that a substantial number of the residents of Ceredigion fall into this category.

He noted that the agricultural inheritance tax threshold was far too low and that it would have a significant impact on the next generation, noting that a farm of 100 acres with no buildings in the north of the county had been sold recently for £1.4m, and that another farm of 192 acres which is being advertised for sale had a guide price of £2.4m.

He also noted that the changes to the Employers' National Insurance contributions would impact a number of businesses which employ people in Ceredigion, which would result in an increase to the cost of services and consumables, which would have to be passed on to the consumers. In addition, several businesses have decided to reduce the workforce, which will have a further impact upon the community and the young people who wish to remain in the area.

Councillor Rhodri Evans seconded the motion, thanking the Farmers' Unions for their letters of support. He also referred to the impact that the changes to the Winter Fuel Allowance would have upon the most vulnerable members of society and concerns regarding rural poverty in Ceredigion. He also noted that he had been contacted by numerous residents concerned that small businesses and farms would not be able to afford the inheritance tax and would have to sell which would breakdown the character and the local economy of Ceredigion. He proposed that the content of the letters from the Farmers' Unions were included within the correspondence to the UK Government.

Councillor Bryan Davies, Leader of the Council noted that the price for livestock was relatively high at present due to the reduction in production and the sale of farms however it had been reported that the UK had seen the highest increased in imported meats since 2008, noting that there was a risk of opening the floodgates for food of a lower quality. He emphasised the importance of encouraging young people to enter the agricultural industry, noting his concern that this would have no purpose if they were punished for

doing so. He noted that it had been estimated that the changes to the inheritance tax would impact circa 150 to 200 farms in Ceredigion. He also noted that the changes to employers' National Insurance contributions had a direct impact on the Council Tax, resulting in a 2.9% increase.

Councillor Elizabeth Evans noted that the impact on businesses would prevent investment, job creation and growth in areas that are dependent upon tourism and the care sector which is already on the brink. She noted that in addition to the inheritance tax, there are several other cuts hidden in small print within the budget, which would result in reduced support for farmers after years of chaos and uncertainty following Brexit. There was a risk of a lost generation of farmers and food production which was all leading to a perfect storm.

Several members reiterated the above sentiments, noting a need for an energy tariff to protect the elderly and the high level of cold weather deaths in Ceredigion. They also highlighted their concerns that businesses were purchasing land which was not being farmed in order to avoid paying taxes, and the importance of high-quality local food production and a reduced carbon footprint which was also important in terms of attracting tourism to the area. It was noted that these changes would lead to an end of family farms and also impact upon other businesses and industry reliant upon farming such as factories, contractors, machinery suppliers etc.

Members thanked their electors for the letters of support that they had received.

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

**6 To consider the report of the Corporate Lead Officer: Policy, Performance and Public Protection upon the Statement of Gambling Policy 2025-2028 and proposals for casinos**

Councillor Matthew Vaux, Cabinet Member for Partnerships, Housing, Legal and Governance and Public Protection presented the report to Council noting that the Gambling Act 2005 requires each Licensing Authority to renew their Statement every 3 years to include statutory consultation. He noted that the Gambling Commission was currently undertaking a review of the Social Responsibility Code of Practice, and that they had advised Local authorities to proceed with their updated policy during the review.

He noted that the Council would need to consider also if they wished to continue with the resolution not to have a casino within the County, which would then be inserted into the revised Gambling Policy.

He noted that a consultation was held between 25 October 2024 and 20 December 2024, which resulted in 8 responses, six of which were from residents of Ceredigion. Two of the responses indicated that consideration should be made to changing the 'think 21' to 'think 25'. It was also confirmed that the policy would be further reviewed when the new Gambling Act is published.

Councillor Bryan Davies, Leader of the Council thanked the Licensing Committee for their work reviewing the revised policy, noting that they had recommended the inclusion of an additional recommendation which recommended that the Public Protection Service send a leaflet highlighting the issues that arise from Ambling to various Sports Clubs in Ceredigion.

Following discussion, it was unanimously **RESOLVED** to:

- a) follow the recommendation made by Cabinet to retain the “no casino” Resolution and the decision recorded and added to the final policy;
- b) approve the revised Statement of Gambling Policy as the Statement of Gambling Policy for Ceredigion for the period 2025 – 2028;
- c) approve the recommendation by the Licensing Committee held on 19 February 2025 that a leaflet be sent to various Sports Clubs in Ceredigion, highlighting the issues arising in relation to Gambling, to be distributed to their users.

**7 To consider the report of the Corporate Lead Officer: Policy, Performance and Public Protection upon the revision of Hackney Carriage (Taxi) and Private Hire Vehicles, Drivers and Operators Policy 2025**

Councillor Matthew Vaux, Cabinet Member for Partnerships, Housing, Legal and Governance and Public Protection presented the report to Council outlining the amendments to the Revised Taxi and Private Hire Vehicle Policy 2025.

He noted the requirement for drivers which included joining the Disclosure and Barring Service Update scheme which would be checked every 6 months, the addition of overseas criminal checks, the adoption of the Welsh Government’s Driver Code of Conduct and Driver Dress Code, updating the Driver Conditions in accordance with the Welsh Government’s Recommendations and the adoption of the “Fit and Proper Test”.

Vehicle proprietors would be required to have an annual Disclosure and Barring Service check, and to meet the “fit and Proper Test”. Installing CCTV and Video Point of Impact System (Dash Cams) would be voluntary, however drivers or operators opting to install such equipment must comply with the conditions as set out by the Welsh Government. The Welsh Government’s recommendations for accessibility conditions on vehicles would also apply. The “Fit and Proper Test” would also apply both to operators and vehicle proprietors, as well as the revised Operator Conditions in line with the recommendations from the Welsh Government.

He also noted that the Licensing Authority would not renew any licence to use a vehicle as a hackney carriage or private hire vehicle if the relevant vehicle has been become rated as a Category A, Category B, Category C, Category D or Category S Salvaged vehicle (write-off for insurance purposes) after the date on which the vehicle was first licensed by the Council. However, vehicles rated as a Category N Salvaged vehicle (insurance write-off) may be re-licensed provided the applicant or owner has

provided an appropriate engineer's report (approved by the Licensing Authority) which verifies the standard of repairs.

Councillor Matthew Vaux noted that a consultation was held from 22 October to 27 December 2024, and that only six responses were received in response to the consultation, despite contacting 319 individuals / organisations or services including mandatory consultees and posting the information on the Council's website. He also noted that the Welsh Government updated its guidance on CCTV use in taxis and hire vehicles as the consultation went live, which provided a template for councils to use when creating a CCTV policy to help improve uniformity across Wales.

Councillor Bryan Davies, Leader of the Council noted that this is an important document which demonstrates the Council's commitment to securing public safety whilst protecting the vulnerable and promoting the local economy whilst ensuring uniformity throughout Wales.

Following a discussion, it was **RESOLVED** to approve the changes in the revised Policy for Hackney Carriage (Taxi) and Private Hire Vehicles, Drivers and Operators, and adopt the policy.

- 8 To consider the report of the Corporate Lead Officer: Democratic Services upon the Schedule of Member Remuneration for 2025/26**
- 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 relating to the 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. He noted that the Welsh Local Government Association were in favour of this mechanism for determining Members' allowances, noting that despite criticism, several Members did not claim any expenses, however this was a personal decision for each and every Member.

He noted that the addition of guidance relating to family absence and long-term sickness absence, which would eliminate the need to consider individual matters, or to name any individuals.

Following a vote, it was unanimously **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. That when family absence or long-term sickness absences occur for a senior salary holder, that the Corporate Lead Officer: Democratic Services, makes arrangements to ensure that a paid substitute is appointed for the duration of the family or long-term sickness absence. The Corporate Lead Officer: Democratic Services will also amend the Members' Schedule of Remuneration and inform the IRPW accordingly;
6. 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;
7. 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;
8. The 2025/2026 Schedule of Member Remuneration, subject to incorporating any amendments determined by the Council at this meeting; and
9. 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 16 May 2025.

**9 To consider the report of the Corporate Lead Officer: People and Organisation upon the Teacher Pay Policies 2024/25**

Councillors Bryan Davies, Endaf Edwards, Rhodri Evans, Chris James and John Roberts and Eifion Evans, Chief Executive withdrew from the meeting for the duration of the discussion.

Councillor Wyn Thomas presented the report to the Council on behalf of Councillor Bryan Davies who had declared a personal and prejudicial interest. He provided an outline of the Teacher Pay Policies, noting the statutory elements that are required to be implemented which include a 5.5% uplift to all statutory scale points and allowances, noting that all pay lifts will be payable from 1 September 2024.

He also outlined the amendments resulting from the recommendations of the Independent Welsh Pay Review Body, which included:

- a requirement for Governing Bodies to be satisfied that sustained, additional responsibilities relating to a TLR1 "includes line management responsibility for a significant number of people or equivalent significant additional levels of responsibility and accountability in key areas of the school";
- that TLR3 allowances should typically not be awarded for longer than 2 years;
- that TLR1 and TLR2 allowances awarded to part-time teachers, 'will' as opposed to 'may' be paid in full, with agreement of the part-time teacher and the employer/governing body if the teacher undertakes the full duties associated with the allowance; and
- the introduction of "involves pastoral or wellbeing responsibilities and the safeguarding of children" as a significant responsibility which could result in awarding a TLR1 or TLR2.

Following a vote, it was unanimously **RESOLVED** to approve:

- a) the Model School Pay Policy 2024/25 and to commend to Governing Bodies for adoption within schools in Ceredigion
- b) the Model Unattached Teacher Pay Policy 2024/25 for centrally employed teachers.

**10 To consider the report of the Corporate Lead Officer: People and Organisation upon the Council's proposed Pay Policy for 2025/26**  
Councillors Bryan Davies, Gareth Davies, Endaf Edwards, Wyn Evans and Keith Henson and all Senior Officers withdrew from the meeting for the duration of the discussion.

Councillor Wyn Thomas presented the report to the Council on behalf of Councillor Bryan Davies who had declared a personal and prejudicial interest. He provided an outline of the report highlighting the changes that had been agreed nationally, noting that negotiations for the 2025/26 pay awards had only started in February 2025. He noted that the pay award for NJC staff had been agreed at £1,290 added to spinal point 2 – 43 and 2.5% added to spinal points 44 – 53; that the national pay award for Chief Executive and Chief Officers had been agreed at 2.5% added to all spinal points; and that the national pay awards for Soulbury Committee were agreed in February 2025 and back dated to 1 September 2024 at 2.5% added to all spinal points and allowances.

Following a vote, it was unanimously **RESOLVED** to approve the Pay Policy for 2025/26.

**11 To consider the report of the Corporate Lead Officer: Democratic Services upon Amendments to Councillors' responsibilities**  
Councillor Bryan Davies, Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Democratic Services, Policy, Performance and People and Organisation presented the report to Council outlining the changes to the Councillors' responsibilities.

He thanked Councillor Keith Henson for the excellent work that he had done handling an exceptionally challenging portfolio whilst responding to concerns from all Members across the Chamber, and he welcomed Councillor Shelley Childs to his new role. This was re-iterated by the Chair, Councillor Marc Davies, the Chair of the Overview and Scrutiny Thriving Communities Committee, Councillor Elizabeth Evans and Councillor Rhodri Evans.

Councillor Keith Evans thanked everyone for their kind words, and thanked Officers from Highways and Environmental Services and the Carbon Management group for their hard work ensuring the best outcomes for all residents under extremely challenging conditions.

Member of the Council noted the following changes, effective from 1 April 2025:

- a) The appointment of Councillor Shelley Childs as Cabinet Member for Highways and Environmental Services;



- b) The transfer of the Carbon Management portfolio function to the Economy, Regeneration and Carbon Management portfolio;
- c) The appointment of Councillor Keith Henson as a Member of the following Committees
  - i. Licensing Committee
  - ii. Thriving Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee
- d) The appointment of Councillor Eryl Evans as Biodiversity Champion.

**12 To elect a Chairman-elect for the Council for 2025/26 to be installed at the Annual Meeting to be held at 2.00 pm on Friday, 16 May 2025**

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

It was unanimously **RESOLVED** that Councillor Ann Bowen Morgan be elected Chair-elect for the Council for 2025/26 to be installed at the Annual Meeting to be held at 2.00pm on Friday, 16 May 2025.

**13 To elect a Vice-Chairman-elect for the Council for 2025/26 to be installed at the Annual Meeting to be held at 2.00 pm on Friday, 16 May 2025**

Councillor Elizabeth Evans proposed and was seconded by Councillor Meirion Davies that Councillor John Roberts be elected as Vice-Chair of the Council for the ensuing municipal year.

It was unanimously **RESOLVED** that Councillor John Roberts be elected Vice-Chair-elect for the Council for 2025/26 to be installed at the Annual Meeting to be held at 2.00pm on Friday, 16 May 2025.

**Confirmed at the Meeting of the Council held on 16 May 2025**

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