

**Minutes of the Meeting of CEREDIGION COUNTY COUNCIL
held at Neuadd y Cyngor, Penmorfa, Aberaeron and remotely via
video-conferencing on Thursday, 26th January, 2023**

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

(10.00 am – 11.00am)

Procedure

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

1 Apologies

Councillor Rhodri Davies, Elaine Evans, Eryl Evans and Ceris Jones apologised for their inability to attend the meeting
Councillor Rhodri Evans apologised for his inability to attend the meeting due to being away on other Council duties.

2 Disclosure of personal / prejudicial interests

- a) Councillor Endaf Edwards declared a personal interest in relation to minute 6 below;
- b) Councillors Bryan Davies, Euros Davies, Geraint Hughes and Chris James declared a personal and prejudicial interest in relation to minute 10 below, and withdrew from the meeting during this item;
- c) Eifion Evans, Chief Executive declared a personal and prejudicial interest in relation to minute 10 below, in accordance with the Code of Conduct for Local Government and withdrew from the meeting during this item;
- d) Councillors Euros Davies, Gareth Davies, Endaf Edwards, Elizabeth Evans, Keith Henson, Geraint Hughes, Chris James, Gwyn James, John Roberts and Matthew Vaux declared a personal and prejudicial interest in relation to minute 11 below, and withdrew from the meeting during this item;
- e) Eifion Evans, Chief Executive, on behalf of all Senior Officers present declared a personal and prejudicial interest in relation to minute 11 below, in accordance with the Code of Conduct for Local Government. Those members of staff withdrew from the meeting during discussion. Angharad Rees, HR Officer, the minute taker and translator remained in the meeting during discussions.

3 Personal matters

- a) Councillor Keith Evans congratulated Nancy Davies on celebrating her 100th birthday;
- b) Councillor Wyn Evans congratulated Jessica, Charlotte and Emily Smith-Jones from Aberaeron on singing with Rhys Meirion on a S4C show 'Canu Gyda Fy Arwr'

- c) Councillor Maldwyn Lewis congratulated Huw Thomas from Pontsian on receiving recognition for his work by the Hywel Dda University Health Board;
- d) Councillor Maldwyn Lewis congratulated Llinos Davies from Ffostrasol on winning an award for Excellence in Nursing 2022;
- e) Councillor Caryl Roberts extended her condolences to the family of Kevin Jenkins, who was an extremely significant figure in coaching the youth and girl football teams in Penrhyncoch;
- f) Councillor Ifan Davies congratulated Llanwennog Young Farmers Club on their success in the Public Speaking competition.

4 Minutes of the Meetings of the Council held on 15 December 2022

It was **RESOLVED** to confirm as a true record the Minutes of the Council meeting held on 15 December 2022.

5 Annual Governance Statement 2021/22

Councillor Matthew Vaux, Cabinet Member for Partnerships, Housing, Legal and Governance and Public Protection introduced the updated Annual Governance Statement 2021/22 to the Council, noting that the draft Annual Governance Statement was approved by Council on 8th July 2022, and reviewed by the Governance and Audit Committee on 19th January 2023.

He noted that minor amendments have been made to the 2021/22 Annual Governance Statement in reference to amending dates; the inclusion of the self-assessment review of CIPFA Financial Management Code; updated comments and dates for Internal Audit Progress Report and Annual Report and minor typographical errors corrected.

Following a vote, it was **RESOLVED** to approve the Annual Governance Statement 2021/22

6a ISA260 Report of Audit Wales on the 2021/22 Statement of Accounts

The Chair welcomed Jason Blewitt and Eleanor Ansell of Wales Audit to the meeting.

Jason Blewitt presented the ISA260 Report in respect of the Council's Statement of Accounts for 2021/22, noting that there are no significant issues arising from the audit. It was noted that the deadline for submitting the reports had changed from 30 November 2022 to 31 January 2023 due to national issues and that Ceredigion had complied with all the requirements in relation to this. Wales Audit confirmed that it was their intention to issue an unqualified audit opinion on the year's account.

Members noted their concern that the report identified some issues relating to the Council's assets. Alan Davies, the Chair of Governance and Audit confirmed that this matter was currently being addressed by Officers in conjunction with the Governance and Audit Committee.

Councillor Gareth Davies, thanked the Finance Service for producing such excellent accounts, noting that the unqualified opinion given by Wales Audit is testimony to the fact that the balance sheets and accounts have been

managed in a very responsible manner. He also noted that he had received assurances that an action plan is in place which will ensure that the matters raised regarding the valuation of assets is being carried out in a timely manner, and that measures are in place to ensure that this will not be an issue next year. He congratulated Steve Johnson, the current S151 Officer during 2021/22, Duncan Hall and Justin Davies for their work.

6b The Chairman of the Governance and Audit Committee comments on the report

Alan Davies, Independent Member and Chairman of the Governance and Audit Committee, noted that they Governance and Audit Committee had considered the Statement of Accounts for 2021/22 in detail on 19th January 2023, and that they were happy with the report, and recommended that it is approved by Council. He thanked Audit Wales for producing a positive report and congratulated the team in Ceredigion on their unqualified report.

6c 2021/22 Statement of Accounts

Councillor Gareth Davies, Cabinet Member for Finance and Procurement Services noted that it is a pleasure the present the unqualified Statement of Accounts and ISA260 report to Council. He noted that the outturn position is an overall underspend of £668,000, the level of the General Fund had risen to £6.720m and that the level of Earmarked Reserves had increased at year-end to just under £54m.

Councillor Bryan Davies thanked the staff for their diligence and hard worked, and who have worked alongside Members providing training and budget workshops. Members also noted that during the same time, staff processed grant payment in excess of £14m to ensure the sustainability of the economy during that period.

Eifion Evans, Chief Executive thanked everyone for their positive comments, and he thanked Officers and Managers throughout all the Council Service areas for managing their budgets tightly and with great care.

Following discussion, it was **RESOLVED** to approve the Council's Statement of Accounts and the Ceredigion Harbour Authority Statement of Accounts for 2021/22.

7 Report of the Corporate Lead Officer: Finance and Procurement upon the requirement to adopt a Council Tax Reduction Scheme by 31 January 2023

Councillor Gareth Davies, Cabinet Member for Finance and Procurement Services presented the report noting that, in accordance with the Council Tax Reduction Scheme and Prescribed Requirements (Wales) Regulation 2013 it is a requirement for local authorities to consider whether to revise or replace their existing scheme on an annual basis, and to consult with any persons it considers are likely to have an interest in the operation of its scheme where any revisions are proposed. He noted that the scheme is unchanged from last year, and that it is based on the Welsh Government scheme, and although it is partly funded by Welsh Government, it is disappointing that the scheme is not fully funded.

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

- 1) Note the making of the Council Tax Reduction Schemes (Prescribed Requirements and Default Scheme) (Wales) (Amendment) Regulations 2023;
- 2) Adopt the provisions of the Prescribed Requirement Regulations (2013) as the Council's Council Tax Reduction Scheme for 2023/24, subject to the local discretions that the Council is able to exercise as set out below:
 - (i) Continue to apply a 100% disregard beyond the statutory £10 disregard for War Disablement Pensions, War Widows' Pensions and War Widowers' Pensions, for both pensioners and working age claimants.
 - (ii) Not to increase the extended payment periods for pensioners and working age claimants from the standard 4 weeks currently contained within the Prescribed Scheme.
 - (iii) Not to increase the backdate period for pensioners and working age claimants from the standard 3 months contained within the Prescribed Scheme.

8 Report of the Corporate Lead Officer: Legal and Governance in relation to the review of the Council's Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act 2000 (RIPA)

Councillor Matthew Vaux, Cabinet Member for Partnerships, Housing, Legal and Governance and Public Protection presented the report noting that was considered by the Overview and Scrutiny Co-ordinating Committee on 23rd November 2022.

Following this meeting, the following amendments have been made to the Procedure for Applying a Directed Surveillance Authorisation:

- Added ability for Authorising Officers to deputise for each other where the Authorising Officer for the relevant service is unavailable and the delay caused may compromise the investigation;
- Added that the Authorising Officer should consider an application for directed surveillance authorisation within 10 working days of receiving the application.

Councillor Keith Evans, Chairman of the Overview and Scrutiny Coordinating Committee thanked Elin Prysor and her team for leading Members through the process, and he confirmed that the Scrutiny Committee were in support of the proposed amendments.

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

- a) approve the changes made to the Council's RIPA PART II Directed Surveillance, Covert Human Intelligence Sources and Communications Data Corporate Policy & Procedures Document

(‘RIPA Policy’) (Appendix 1) as presented to the Overview and Scrutiny Co-ordinating committee on 23/11/22; and

- b) approve the addition of the two further amendments set out in this report to the Procedure for Applying for a Directed Surveillance Authorisation to the RIPA Policy (pages 27 and 28 of **Appendix 1**).

9 Report of the Corporate Lead Officer: Legal and Governance upon the appointment of an Independent Member to the Ethics and Standards Committee

Councillor Matthew Vaux, Cabinet Member for Partnerships, Housing, Legal and Governance and Public Protection presented the report noting that following a recruitment process Gail Storr was selected as an Independent / Lay Member to the Ethics and Standards Committee.

It was noted that subject to approval by the Council, the new lay member would be appointed for one term of 6 years, with an option to reappoint for a second term of 4 years, up to no more than two consecutive administrative terms inclusive of the current term (up to 10 years, up to 29 July 2032).

Following a vote, it was **RESOLVED** to approve the appointment of Gail Storr as Independent / Lay Member to the Ethics and Standards Committee with effect from 30 July 2023 up to 29 July 2029.

10 Report of the Corporate Lead Officer: People and Organisation upon the Approval of Teachers' Pay Policies 2022/23 and Model Unattached Teacher Pay Policy for centrally employed teachers

Councillor Wyn Thomas, Cabinet Member for Schools, Lifelong Learning and Skills presented the report noting that it contains a policy for Teachers and Unattached Teachers which relate to the School Teachers’ Pay and Conditions (Wales).

He noted that a 5% uplift to all statutory scale points and allowances have already been implemented, and that part-time staff on Teaching and Learning Responsibility payment (TLR1 and TLR2) will receive payment in full provided that the full duties of the allowance can be undertaken with the recipient’s normal working hours. Also, as a result of the two additional bank holidays during 2022/23 teachers must be available to work 193 days during the 2022/23 academic year.

Finally, he confirmed that consultation had taken place with the Trade Unions that that their commitment is extremely important in relation to presenting this report.

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

- a) the Model School Pay Policy 2022/23 and to commend to Governing Bodies for adoption within schools in Ceredigion; and
- b) the Model Unattached Teacher Pay Policy 2022/23 for centrally employed teachers.

11 Report of the Corporate Lead Officer: People and Organisation upon the Council's proposed Pay Policy 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 committee. He noted that sections 2.4 and 2.5 relate to job evaluation, explaining that any uplift to a particular group of staff, would have an impact upon the whole cohort of staff.

He noted that the 2022/23 nationally agreed pay awards for NJC staff, Chief Executive and Chief Officers of £1,925 to be added to all spinal points were announced in November 2022 and backdated to 1 April 2022; that the NJC Spinal Column Point 1 is to be deleted from 1 April 2023; that the national pay award for Soulbury staff has not yet been agreed but will be backdated to 1 September 2022 once announced; and that with effect from 1 April 2023 an additional day's leave has been added to the annual leave entitlement of staff on NJC and Soulbury Committee terms and conditions.

Following a vote, it was **RESOLVED** to approve the Pay Policy for 2023/24.

Confirmed at the Meeting of the Council held on 2 March 2023

CHAIRMAN: _____