

Minutes of the Meeting of Council
held at Neuadd Cyngor Ceredigion, Penmorfa, Aberaeron and remotely
via video conference on Thursday, 12th December, 2024

PRESENT: Councillor Keith Evans (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, Raymond Evans, Rhodri Evans, Wyn Evans, Keith Henson, Hugh R M Hughes, Chris James, Maldwyn Lewis, Gareth Lloyd, Ann Bowen Morgan, Caryl Roberts, John Roberts, Mark Strong, Wyn Thomas, Matthew Vaux, Alun Williams and Carl Worrall.

(10.10am - 12.16pm)

Procedure

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

1 Apologies

Councillor Ceris Jones, Gareth Lewis and Sian Maehrlein apologised for their inability to attend the meeting. James Starbuck, Corporate Director apologised for his inability to attend the meeting.

2 Disclosure of personal / prejudicial interests

Councillor Gareth Davies declared a personal interest in relation to item 5.

3 Chair Announcements

Councillor Keith Evans thanked Council staff, contractors, emergency services, Members and volunteers in responding to the recent storm.

He congratulated Brychan Hopkins, who represents the Llandovery College Rugby Team on winning the Wales Schools' under 18 trophy, and wished him well in the World Schools' Competition in Abu Dhabi.

He also congratulated Phil Kloer and Lisa Gosling on their permanent appointments with the Hywel Dda University Health Board.

4 To confirm the Minutes of the Meetings of the Council held on 28 November 2024

It was **RESOLVED** to confirm as a true record the Minutes of the Council meeting held on 28 November 2024, subject to an amendment noting that Councillor Endaf Edwards was present.

Matters arising

There were no matters arising.

5 Presentation by the Mid and West Wales Fire and Rescue Service

The Chair of the Council welcomed Roger Thomas, Chief Fire Officer, Sarah Mansbridge, the Section 151 Officer, and Councillor Gwynfor Thomas, Chair of the Mid and West Wales Fire Authority to the meeting.

Roger Thomas and Sarah Mansfield gave an overview of the current situation in relation to the service and staffing, budget planning, community risk management, capital spending and long-term projects, organisational culture, training and safeguarding, on-call pressures and climate change.

They noted that a consultation process would be held early in the next year in relation to the service provision and long-term projects.

Sarah Mansbridge noted that the Welsh Government National Framework requires the Fire and Rescue Service to ensure comprehensive cover, whilst being prudent in terms of setting the budget. She noted that the pay awards and increases to the National Insurance contributions were outside of their control, and that the service were considering savings across the board on premises costs, vacancy management, digitalisation of training courses and a review of equipment, fleet and premises in order to offset part of the additional costs.

It was noted that the starting point for the levy had been set at 3.9%, however due to the additional cost pressures, it was anticipated that the levy for the Ceredigion area would be circa 7.3%, taking into consideration the introduction of a revised population data set.

Councillor Bryan Davies thanked the Officers for their presentation, noting that this would be an exceptionally challenging time for all services. Sarah Mansbridge confirmed that funding for the increase in National Insurance contributions would be distributed via the Local Authorities, therefore this had been included in the levy, however if payment was made directly to the Fire and Rescue Service, this would be repaid to Ceredigion County Council.

Councillor Rhodri Evans, Marc Davies, Gareth Davies, Gwyn Wigley Evans, Gareth Lloyd, Euros Davies and Wyn Evans re-iterated the appreciation to the Fire and Rescue Service.

Councillor Shelley Childs asked whether there was any dialogue with the Local Authority in terms of recent parking issues which had caused an obstruction to emergency services. Roger Thomas confirmed that there was regular dialogue in terms of road closures and that Members have a significant role to play in terms of embedding good practice within their communities also.

Councillor Euros Davies asked about the electrification of fleet vehicles, and it was confirmed that all non-frontline appliances have been changed to electrical vehicles, and that they have received funding from the Welsh Government in terms of a charging infrastructure, however the cost of electric fire engines are prohibitive, and that they are looking at alternative models of sustaining the services, especially in rural areas.

Councillor Wyn Evans asked whether the services had been compromised as a result of the recent storm with the electricity and telephone outages. Roger Thomas confirmed that the Fire and Rescue Service are on the

priority list, however the removal of copper wires from telephone systems will need to be addressed.

6 To consider the following motion submitted under Rule 10.1 of the Council's Rules of Procedure

Proposer: Councillor Catrin M S Davies

Seconder: Councillor Alun Williams

The Crown Estate owns 65% of Wales' riverbeds and beaches and more than 50,000 of land - worth over £603m. Proceeds from these go to the Crown Estate - to fund the Royal Family and to the UK Treasury.

The Crown Estate has made an unprecedented profit published at £658.1 million more than last year – totalling a net profit of £1.1 billion.

In 2023 the section of the Crown Estate devolved to the Scottish Government generated £103.6 million into the public coffers in Scotland'.

In a recent YouGov poll, 58% of those polled said they supported devolving the Crown Estate to Wales.

As a result of this Ceredigion County Council declares that we believe that the responsibility for the Crown Estate should be devolved to the Welsh Government. Any profits generated by the Crown Estate, here on Welsh land, sea-sides and riverbeds, should remain in Wales, for the benefit of our residents and communities.

Responsibility for the Crown Estate is already devolved to the Scottish Government and the same must happen in Wales so that the profits from our natural resources are invested for the wellbeing of the Welsh people.

The Council notes that there are serious financial pressures upon this Authority as with other authorities throughout Wales and it is estimated that Wales may benefit by around £50m a year from the devolution of the Crown Estate.

We therefore ask that the Crown Estate is devolved to the Welsh Government, in line with Scotland so that WE in Wales, and in turn - us in Ceredigion - who benefit from our natural resources.

*We ask the First Minister of Wales puts pressure on the UK Prime Minister to devolve the Crown Estate to Wales and to **do so urgently**.*

We ask the UK Prime Minister pursues the devolution of the Crown Estate to Wales promptly.

Councillor Catrin M S Davies gave an outline of the above Notice of Motion, noting the need for a fairer system for Wales and Ceredigion. Councillor Alun Williams noted the fundamental unfairness in terms of how Wales is funded including the Barnett formula, the funding for Wales from the HS2 project and the Crown Estate. He noted that if approved, Ceredigion County Council would be the seventh Council in Wales to support this motion. He noted that this was particularly relevant to Ceredigion with coastlines and sea beds out to 12 nautical miles included within the Crown Estate, with Ceredigion having 60 miles of coast. He also referred to the challenging budget allocation especially for rural authorities, and the profits generated by Scotland where the Crown Estate had been devolved in 2017.

Members asked whether the Crown Estate had contributed towards the cost of the coastal defence schemes in Ceredigion, and it was confirmed that it

had not. Members also asked whether the cost of maintaining these assets would supersede the benefits and income generated. Councillor Catrin M S Davies noted that assets such as the rivers and coastlines are currently maintained by Natural Resources Wales.

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

7 To consider the report of the Corporate Lead Officer: Porth Cynnal upon the Corporate Parenting Charter

Councillor Alun Williams presented the report to Council noting that the Local Authority is always the lead corporate parent and is expected to wholeheartedly promote and champion the rights of these children and young people. He noted that the Ceredigion Corporate Parenting Group had agreed to formally adopt the Corporate Parenting Charter at its meeting held on 15 October 2024, and that it had also been recommended for approval by the Healthier Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee and by Cabinet at its meeting dated 3 December 2024.

Following a vote, it was **RESOLVED** that the Council adopt the Corporate Parenting Charter.

8 To consider the report of the Corporate Lead Officer: Legal and Governance in relation to changes to the Council's Constitution

Councillor Matthew Vaux, Cabinet Member for Partnerships, Housing, Legal and Governance and Public Protection presented the report to Council noting that the proposed amendments had been considered in detail by the Constitution Working Group at its meetings dated 5 November 2024.

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

1. Approve the changes to the Constitution (Appendix 1-6);
2. Authorise the Monitoring Officer to update the Council's Constitution to reflect the above changes.

Confirmed at the Meeting of the Council held on 23 January 2025

CHAIRMAN: _____