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LLANELLI RURAL COUNCIL

Minute Nos: 391 – 398

At a **COUNCIL** Meeting of the Llanelli Rural Council held at the Council Chamber, Vauxhall Buildings, Vauxhall, Llanelli, on Tuesday, 10 February, 2015, at 6.00 p.m.

Present: Cllr. L. J. Butler (Chairman)

Cllrs.

F. Akhtar	H. J. Evans
L. A. Beer	S. N. Lewis
S. M. Caiach	A. G. Morgan
D. M. Cundy	C. A. Rees
M. V. Davies	A. J. Rogers
W. V. Thomas	

391. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Cllrs. T. Bowen, S. M. Donoghue, S. L. Davies, T. Devichand, M. L. Evans, R. E. Evans, T. J. Jones and G. H. Wooldridge.

392. MEMBERS' DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No declarations of interest were made.

393. MID AND WEST WALES FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITY

Further to Minute No. 345, the Chairman welcomed the Deputy Chief Officer Liz Aitken and Group Manager Steve Mclinden, Mid and West Wales Fire and Rescue Authority to the meeting to discuss the Draft Strategic Plan 2015/2020 and the Annual Draft Improvement Plan 2015/2016

Ms Aitken informed Members that the Mid and West Wales Fire Authority (MWWFA) comprised six County Council areas. Each of the counties was very different and the Authority's governance arrangements were different compared to County Councils.

Ms Aitken then briefly touched upon the Authority's scrutiny arrangements. The Performance, Review and Audit Committee had recently been renamed the Performance, Audit and Scrutiny Committee due to a change in its business and objectives. The Performance Audit and Scrutiny Committee was responsible for demonstrating the Authority's commitment to efficient and effective deployment of public resources and the attainment of performance targets.

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In regards to the Authority's Strategic Plan Ms Aitken stated if county boundaries changed they would review the Strategic Plan. Generally, there had been cuts in the fire service with a 20% saving over the last 5 years. The MWWFA had been asked if it could deliver its services in a different way. Llanelli station was one of the first fire stations to change and yet still maintain a full service.

If part of the Authority's area was transferred to another Fire Authority as muted in the White Paper on public service reforms then the heads of department for each service would meet up to discuss how best to continue the service in its revised form. A view would be taken on how to collaborate with other public services with the aim being to reduce the cost of restructuring.

Members were informed the fire service had been transformed over the last five to ten years and co-responder calls were increasing to a point where more co-responder calls were received and dealt with compared to calls dealing with actual fires. Nationwide collaboration was now common place and Ms Aitken identified procurement as an example. Innovation in how the Authority delivered services was key. The ethos now was prevention and this had been the focus for the last ten years. The approach had reduced the incidence of fire by 50%. Ms Aitken then described how the co-responders initiative worked in practice. The MWWFA was working in partnership with the Welsh Ambulance Service NHS Trust (WAST) to deliver this initiative. There were currently 13 co-responders situated at fire stations. The co-responder had been trained and would attend road traffic collisions and assist until medical help arrived. Joint partnership working was better and safer for the community. The emergency call would go to the ambulance department first and then if help was needed the co-responder at the nearest station would be alerted. WAST provided the funding for the co-responder initiative. There was a real need for this service.

Mr Mclinden commenting in support of the co-responder service added the Fire Authority identified where WAST had difficulty providing coverage and it then provided the emergency medical response without compromising the needs of the Fire and Rescue Service. The co-responder scheme was prevalent in rural and remote areas. He reiterated there was a real need for the service as over 1,800 calls had been dealt with by co-responders.

The Chairman thanked members of the MWWFA for addressing Members and then invited questions from the floor.

Members enquired how many fire stations had a co-responder and was the service likely to increase with it rolled out to other stations. Furthermore the Ambulance Service was under pressure to attend calls so were there any instances recorded where the fire service had taken patients to hospital?

By way of response Mr Mclinden confirmed there had been two instances in the last five years where the fire service had transferred a patient to hospital. He recognised the pressure faced by emergency services and the need to collaborate was essential to make communities safer. He commented that even the Fire Brigade Union recognised the function and role of the service was changing particularly as a consequence of the proactive work on preventing fires. Thirteen stations currently had a co-responder and there were plans to roll out the initiative to another four stations. Ms Aitken stated the Authority received money from WAST for dealing with calls but the money didn't cover all costs associated with the service. There were plans to place defibrillators on every fire appliance in rural areas. The co-

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responders operated under contract to WAST. In response to a question as to whether the scheme would be used at Llanelli Fire Station, Ms Aitken couldn't confidently predict what might happen at this point in time. It had to be efficient and worth doing but the Fire Authority was receptive to this line of work.

Mr Mclinden then touched upon the co-responder training programme. WAST paramedic trainers trained the Authority's staff. The role of a co-responder was not a replacement for a paramedic. The role was closer to a skilled technician. The co-responders undergo a clinical training programme and were certified to perform the role. Co-responders were different to fire fighters, they would travel to incidents in a car and not on a fire appliance.

Cllr. S. M. Caiach left the meeting.

Members referred to the sickness levels increasing and did this correlate to new rostering patterns? Furthermore the Authority had attracted bad press over whistle-blowers. Ms Aitken responded by saying sickness levels had decreased over the last 10 years and again this year had decreased due to the policy and procedures changing. There was a whistle-blower policy in place together with anti-fraud and disciplinary policies.

Members then referred to the number of special service calls in Llanelli and whether this category of call required different specialised equipment on fire appliances. Ms Aitken replied that in the main special service calls as they were now categorised referred to road traffic collisions (RTCs). All vehicles now incorporated cutting gear, especially rescue pumps. It was confirmed that special service calls were increasing because of RTCs.

In response to a question on the possibility of having paramedics placed at fire stations with them then going out on rescue pumps in the future, the Fire Authority would consider coming to an arrangement with WAST. Reference was then made to shared service models in Europe and the United States of America but the service model and relationship was different in the UK. However, overtime it might be harder to justify the separation of services. Mr Mclinden confirmed the support the service received from WAST was very good.

Attention then turned to Llanelli Fire Station and how the new roster pattern was working given the number of personnel had been reduced from 28 to 14 staff and given that the 14 members of staff were new to Llanelli. Ms Aitken confirmed the arrangements were working well and proceeded to read out performance figures addressing turnout times, sickness absence, crewing figures for rescue pumps (night and day shifts) and the number of completed home fire safety checks. The data revealed there had been positive improvements in all areas. The new crew was working very well and there were no issues. The Chairman commenting in support added she had visited the fire station last week and morale seemed very high.

Mr Mclinden stated overall sickness levels were lower in comparison to the general public sector.

Cllrs. L. A. Beer and S. N. Lewis left the meeting.

Ms Aitken then went on to discuss Rescue 365. Mid and West Wales Fire Authority continued to face financial challenges in order to continue to deliver its services within a reduced budget. The Fire Authority had successfully identified opportunities to reduce

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spending over recent years without reducing the service that it delivered to the communities of Mid and West Wales. To offset the impact on further reductions in the Authority's budget, it had been recognised that opportunities for income generation could be explored. One current option was to sell services to other private or public sector organisations with a view to generating profit for the benefit of MWWFA.

Ms Aitken then referred to the constitution and status of Rescue 365. She confirmed it was set up as a Community Interest Company and the sole beneficiary was MWWFA. The income raised was ploughed back into the fire service. However, she stressed the primary focus of the Fire Authority would never detract from its statutory function. Rescue 365 offered training opportunities to stakeholder partners for example high line training courses had been offered to Western Power. No fire fighters were used to promote or deliver the ancillary service. The service acted as a buffer to cope with any financial cuts. Training was offered in generic areas such as compiling fire risk assessments and fire extinguisher training. Rescue 365 could not call on any of the Fire Authority's services; it was a separate company, there would be no blurring of roles. In closing the representatives speculated on income generated from the service and how this might be transferred to earmarked reserves in future depending on the type and length of contract it might enter into going forward.

The Chairman thanked Ms Aitken and Mr Mclinden for attending the meeting and following which it was

RESOLVED that

1. The information provided by Mid and West Wales Fire and Rescue Authority representatives during the meeting be noted.
2. An invitation be extended to the Fire Brigade Union and the Retained Fire Fighters Union to attend a future Council meeting.

Cllr. S. M. Caiach re-joined the meeting.

394. CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES

RESOLVED that the following Minutes (copies of which had been previously circulated to Members) be confirmed and signed as a true record of proceedings:

Council	13 January, 2015
Recreation and Welfare Committee	20 January, 2015
Policy and Resources Committee	21 January, 2015
Finance and General Purposes Committee	28 January, 2015
Learning and Development Consultative Committee	29 January, 2015
Planning and Liaison Committee	2 February, 2015
Special meeting of the Civic and Ceremonial Committee	5 February, 2015
Special meeting of the Policy and Resources Committee	5 February, 2015
Special meeting of the Finance and General Purposes Committee	9 February, 2015

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395. MATTERS ARISING

**(1) TRANSFER OF ASSETS PROGRAMME
PARKS, PLAY AREAS AND OTHER COMMUNITY ASSETS**

Further to Minute No. 354, the Clerk informed Members that a letter had been sent to the Executive Board Members, Carmarthenshire County Council inviting them to attend a Special Council meeting, date to be agreed. He was currently awaiting a response.

RESOLVED that the information be noted.

**(2) PWLL RECREATION GROUND
ACCESS ROAD**

Further to Minute No. 356, Members commented on the engagement costs for services being sourced direct by the Council for the project and whether there was merit in contacting Welsh Water about its recent survey work for the area as a means of saving on costs. Welsh Water had carried out extensive surveys as a precursor to relaying a new rising main between Burry Port and Pwll and it was

RESOLVED that appropriate enquiries be made with Welsh Water as to whether its survey work will be suitable to accommodate the Council's needs and whether it will be prepared to share the information with the Council.

**(3) WHOLE PLACE PLAN
WORKING GROUP**

Arising out of discussion of Minute No. 361, the issue of deciding upon a representative from the Swiss Valley Ward to serve on the working group was raised. Both of the Swiss Valley Ward Members were present during the meeting and they agreed they would decide between themselves which one of them would serve on the working group going forward.

RESOLVED accordingly.

396. MEMBERS CODE OF CONDUCT

Further to Minute No. 84(2), Members considered correspondence from the Chair of the Standards Committee, Carmarthenshire County Council informing of feedback that the Standards Committee had received on the level of compliance with the Members Code of Conduct by town and community councillors.

From the information provided from town and community councils and an examination of the minutes and agendas which some councils published online, there were examples of good practices by town and community councils in the county. However, there was some inconsistency in the way in which declarations of interests were recorded. It was recommended that all councils adopt the same approach.

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Furthermore, the Monitoring Officer, Carmarthenshire County Council would be holding two training evenings later in the year, invitations to council would follow.

The Clerk confirmed that the Council's procedures were fine and did not require any amendment because they complied with the recommended practice outlined in the letter.

Reference was also made in the letter that the Standards Committee had issued a large number of dispensations where Councillors interests related to involvement with a community or voluntary organisation. Councillors had been granted dispensation in such instances authorising them to speak (but not vote) during Council meetings. Members were urged to discuss this with Clerks and if necessary seek advice from the Monitoring Officer.

Following discussion, it was

RESOLVED that the information be noted and the Clerk circulates the letter to all Councillors as a separate communication highlighting the issue of seeking dispensations should the need arise.

397. MATTERS REPORTED

RESOLVED that the schedule of matters reported be noted.

398. LLANELLI JOINT BURIAL AUTHORITY

Members received the following Minutes of a meeting of the Llanelli Joint Burial Authority held on 10 December, 2014:

“At the Meeting of the Llanelli Joint Burial Authority held at Vauxhall Buildings, Vauxhall, Llanelli, on Wednesday, 10 December, 2014 at 4:00 pm.

Present: M. V. Davies (Chairman)

Cllrs.

P. J. Edmunds V. J. Johns
A. G. Morgan

55. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Cllrs. F. Akhtar, M. J. P. Burns and C. J. Reed, MBE

56. MEMBERS' DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No declarations of interest were made.

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57. CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES

RESOLVED that the following minutes (copies of which had been previously circulated) be confirmed and signed as a true record of proceedings:

Ordinary Meeting - 12 November 2014

58. INCOME AND EXPENDITURE REPORTS

RESOLVED that the income and expenditure report for October 2014 and the provisional report for November 2014 be noted.

59. SCHEDULE OF PAYMENTS

Consideration was given to the schedule of payments for November 2014, which revealed expenditure for the month amounted to £25,472.89.

RESOLVED that the information be noted.

60. LOCAL GOVERNMENT PAY SCALES 2014/2016

RESOLVED that the National Joint Council circular 2014/2016 confirming pay scales and allowances effective from 1 January 2015, be received and adopted.

61. PUBLIC BODIES (ADMISSION TO MEETINGS) ACT, 1960

RESOLVED that in view of the confidential nature of the business to be transacted the following matters be considered in private and that the power of exclusion of the public under Section 1(2) of the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act, 1960 be exercised.

62. CEMETERY LAND ENCROACHMENT

Members considered correspondence from Randall Lloyd & Martin Solicitors in respect of a potential claim from their client for Adverse Possession of cemetery land. Thereupon, the Secretary introduced Mr A Evans, Solicitor for Carmarthenshire County Council. Mr Evans had been representing the Burial Authority in respect of the matter. Mr Evans provided Members with a summary of events leading up to the receipt of the letter received from Randall Lloyd & Martin. Having considered the content of the letter and after receiving Mr Evans' advice on how to proceed it was

RESOLVED that

1. Mr Evans be authorised to respond to the letter as directed informing the firm of solicitors that their client must vacate the land and that all personal possessions must be removed from the site forthwith.

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- 2. In the event the cemetery land is not vacated, Mr Evans is also authorised to engage the services of a Barrister to prepare the necessary legal advice in anticipation of entering into court proceedings.

63. CHAPEL REFURBISHMENT

Further to Minute No. 54, Members considered the Cemetery Manager’s report on the four tenders received for the planned office refurbishment. After a brief discussion it was

RESOLVED that the tender received from Martin Taffetsauffer Building & Civil Engineering Contractor Ltd, Claire Chambers, 38 Inkerman Street, Llanelli for the sum of £35,105.10 plus VAT be accepted subject to the receipt of a favourable report from the Burial Authority’s consultant architect.

64. LLANELLI CREMETORIUM LTD

The Secretary informed Members that MJ, Director of Llanelli Crematorium Ltd was retiring and had subsequently sold her interest in the company to The Westerleigh Group. Llanelli Crematorium Ltd would continue to trade under the same operational parameters with no changes to the existing lease agreement with the Burial Authority.

RESOLVED that the information be noted.

65. SEASONAL GREETINGS

The Chairman wished Members and Officers a Merry Christmas and a healthy and happy New Year.

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The meeting concluded at 4:55 pm”
.....

RESOLVED that the Minutes be noted.

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The Meeting concluded at 7.20 p.m.
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The afore-mentioned Minutes were declared to be a true record of the proceedings and signed by the Chairman presiding thereat and were, on 10 March, 2015, adopted by the Council.