

16 December, 2015.

LLANELLI RURAL COUNCIL

Minute Nos: 317 – 330

At a Meeting of the **POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE** of the Llanelli Rural Council held at the Council Chamber, Vauxhall Buildings, Vauxhall, Llanelli, on Wednesday, 16 December, 2015 at 4.45 p.m.

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

Cllrs

F. Akhtar	M. L. Evans
M. V. Davies	A. G. Morgan
T. Devichand	J. S. Phillips
S. M. Donoghue	C. A. Rees

317. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Cllrs. D. M. Cundy, H. J. Evans, T. J. Jones (Cllr. M. L. Evans deputising) and A. J. Rogers.

318. MEMBERS' DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

The following Members declared a personal interest in the following matters:

<i>Minute No.</i>	<i>Councillor</i>	<i>Interest</i>
324	J. S. Phillips	Personal – Governor, Pwll Primary School
327	C. A. Rees	Personal – Committee Member, C.A.T.C.H. U.P

319. GOVERNANCE REVIEW

Further to Minute No. 284 & 298(2), Members considered the following proposal itemised on the agenda by Cllr. S. L. Davies.

“That in the interests of public accountability and transparency an independent governance review is undertaken to examine the Council’s general performance and management to assess the effectiveness of its structures, decision making arrangements and the like, to gauge the overall impact these arrangements have on its business arrangements and its general ability to serve the electorate”.

Cllr. Davies was unable to attend the meeting in order to move the proposal. However, Cllr. Devichand had agreed to speak on her behalf and accordingly was prepared to formally move the motion. Given the circumstances the Chairman was happy for the committee to proceed

16 December, 2015.

to consider the proposal on this basis and invited Cllr. Devichand to present the motion to Members.

Cllr. Devichand commented that the proposal was put forward without prejudice and explained that it was good practice to conduct a general governance review from time to time in the interests of public accountability and in order to promote openness and transparency. Cllr. Devichand referred to the Carmarthenshire County Council governance review and stated that members of the public were unsure about what Llanelli Rural Council's role and position in the community was and what it did. Generally, people were confused as to who did what and didn't know a great deal about the Rural Council. Having considered the supplementary background information from Cllr. Devichand, the Chairman then invited Members to have a full on open discussion on the merits of the proposal. During the discussion, the Chairman called upon the Clerk to confirm what the Council had in place to support the Council's existing governance arrangements. The Clerk referred to the extensive list of annual checks and balances already in place and Members generally discussed these in taking a considered view over the proposal.

Members commented that no issues of concern had been raised by the two sets of auditors and the Council was working fully in accordance with all legislation and regulatory requirements. Reference was made to the Carmarthenshire County Council review and this was performed for different reasons because concerns had been raised by the Auditor. It was important to make this distinction and not to make similar comparisons. Members then commented that conducting a general review of governance arrangements was different to addressing issues over the Council's public profile if people were unsure about what the Council did. The two issues were not to be confused. Furthermore, Members welcomed any specific suggestions for strengthening the existing governance controls where it was felt areas needed to be strengthened or improved and particularly if the existing control measures didn't go far enough in meeting objectives. Members invited Cllr. Devichand to comment and put forward any suggestions to widen the scope of the current governance arrangements to support this but no specific issues were identified.

Members referred to the considerable expenditure incurred satisfying the Council's annual governance arrangements and in view of not being presented with any specific suggestions or justification for commissioning an independent governance review on top of what the Council already had in place, it was

RESOLVED that the proposal be declined.

Cllrs. Akhtar and Devichand voted against the proposal being declined.

Cllr. L. J. Butler withdrew from the meeting.

320. APPOINTMENT OF CHAIRMAN PRO TEMPORE

RESOLVED that Cllr. S. M. Donoghue be appointed Chairman pro tempore for the remainder of the business.

16 December, 2015.

321. SELECTION OF CHAIRMAN ELECT AND VICE CHAIRMAN ELECT FRAMEWORK

Members received the report of the Clerk informing of the review of the selection of chairman elect and vice chairman elect framework so that it reflected the current procedure for determining the order in which Members were listed in the qualifying length of service list.

RESOLVED that the Clerk's report be accepted and that the amended selection of chairman elect and vice chairman elect framework be adopted.

322. ALTERNATIVE DELIVERY MODELS IN PUBLIC SERVICE DELIVERY

Members were circulated with a consultation document received from the Welsh Government. The consultation document sought views over the creation of a national framework to support decisions being made locally and the appropriateness of alternative delivery models for public services.

The purpose of developing the framework and making support available was to ensure that:

- The wider environment within which proposals for new models were considered, and then established, was conducive for ongoing sustainability and success.
- New models were properly tested before being adopted.
- The interests of citizens, communities and the workforce were properly considered and protected throughout.

Following discussion, it was

RESOLVED that Clerk responds to the consultation document highlighting Members views by completing the accompanying consultation questionnaire.

323. POLICE AND CRIME

Members considered a questionnaire document from the Police and Crime Commissioner, Dyfed-Powys Police requesting help for the Commissioner to work towards setting the 2016/17 Council Tax policing precept.

The Commissioner wanted to understand what the public wished to pay for their policing.

Following discussion of the options highlighted in the questionnaire, it was

RESOLVED that Clerk responds to the questionnaire highlighting Members views while commenting that all the options listed carried equal importance.

16 December, 2015.

324. PWLL PRIMARY SCHOOL

Cllr. J. S. Phillips declared a personal interest in the matter as she was a Governor at Pwll Primary School.

Members considered a consultation document from the Director of Education and Children's Service, Carmarthenshire County Council, proposing to change the age range of Pwll Primary School from 4 – 11 to 3 – 11 year olds.

In Pwll Primary School the Welsh Government's Flying Start Programme was delivering quality childcare for children aged 2 – 3 years of age. Currently the age range of Pwll Primary School was 4 – 11. This led to a gap in the provision of education within the school between the age of 3 and 4. It was Carmarthenshire County Council's view that seamless transition of pupils through the Flying Start Programme into school at 3 years of age was the preferred means of providing early years education.

Following discussion, it was

RESOLVED that the proposal to change the age range of Pwll Primary School to 3 – 11 year olds be supported.

325. THE PENSIONS REGULATOR

Correspondence was received from the Chief Executive, The Pensions Regulator confirming that the Council had completed a declaration of compliance with The Pensions Regulator under the Pension Act 2008.

RESOLVED that the information be noted.

326. 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.

327. C.A.T.C.H. U.P. LIMITED

Cllr. C. A. Rees declared a personal interest in the matter as she was a committee member of the organisation by virtue of the Council nominating her as its representative.

Further to Minute No. 201(5), Members considered the Clerk's report informing of the outcome of meetings held with the Chairman of C.A.T.C.H. U.P. Ltd regarding the possibility of the Council providing financial assistance to the organisation to help it continue to deliver a benefits claim service to residents in the Llanelli Rural and wider Carmarthenshire area.

16 December, 2015.

The organisation was managed by a group of volunteers who employed two full time case officers and one part time administrator. The organisation received an annual grant from Carmarthenshire County Council. This grant formed the core of its general income and was used to offset salaries, wages and general office running costs. Up until recently the organisation also received additional grant support from other sources but this had ceased in 2014. In 2015 it also received a one off grant from Santander. The organisation also received donations in the form of voluntary contributions.

The service had been run on a shoestring and there was little room in the budget to cater for unforeseen expenditure. The organisation was also unsure about the on-going level of grant support it could expect to receive from Carmarthenshire County Council. It was subject to six monthly review meetings but so far and based on the two quarterly payments covering April to September 2015 there had been no grant reduction. There was no guarantee this would be the case in the future especially as the County Council was reducing its grant allocation by as much as 20% to third sector bodies. The organisation faced considerable financial uncertainty.

It was difficult at this stage to future gaze as to what might happen to the organisation's core funding stream. However, in the interim C.A.T.C.H.U.P. needed to secure a further source of funding to replace the £5,000 grant support received from the likes of Santander. This was perhaps where the Rural Council could provide support.

During the discussion, Members recognised the excellent work achieved by the organisation over many years. If the organisation was to cease operating, benefit claimants from the Llanelli Rural area would potentially miss out by not having an advocacy service which was able to negotiate for enhanced benefit payments on their behalf. This would seriously undermine general quality of life for these people and it was

RESOLVED that:

1. A grant of £2,500 be made to C.A.T.C.H.U.P Ltd and that it be released immediately;
2. An allocation of £2,500 also be made in next year's budget for 2016/17; and as an additional measure
3. C.A.T.C.H.U.P. Ltd also be offered support and advice from the Council's Community Development Officer as regards to potential grant opportunities to help offset revenue costs going forward.

FURTHER RESOLVED that the Clerk shall organise a meeting with a representative from C.A.T.C.H. U.P. Ltd, Carmarthenshire County Council and Llanelli Town Council to clarify why the Rural Council has made this financial donation and to discuss the importance of the County Council's funding role going forward.

328. TRAINING VEHICLE

Members considered the Training Manager's report informing of a retrospective decision taken under delegated powers to purchase a training vehicle as well as the sale of an existing vehicle to help offset the procurement costs.

16 December, 2015.

The Training Department had been successful in being awarded an additional ‘Innovation Lot’ as part of its Work Based Learning contract with Welsh Government. The additional lot involved the delivery of a Logistics programme to 60 learners over a period of four months. To enable the successful delivery of the contract a training vehicle needed to be purchased.

The transport team had researched various options for a suitable vehicle matching the specification required. The most suitable vehicle within the price range was the 2007 DAF 55LF which was available and had a full year’s MOT.

Members were informed that £5,000 was set aside last year for a trailer to be purchased. This money wasn’t spent and instead was used to part finance the purchase of the replacement training vehicle. The balance of funding would be claimed back from the proceeds of the Logistics programme which had an overall contract value of £120,000 and it was

RESOLVED that the purchase of the 2007 DAF 55LF vehicle at a cost of £9,800 plus VAT and the sale of the IVECO for £1,400 be endorsed.

Cllrs J. S. Phillips and C. A. Rees withdrew from the meeting.

329. STAFFING MATTERS

Members considered the report of the Deputy Clerk (Administration) informing of staffing matters.

RESOLVED that the report referenced 12:2015 be accepted.

330. CHAIRMAN’S ANNOUNCEMENT

The Chairman wished Members and Staff a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

.....

The meeting concluded at 6.15 p.m.

.....

The afore-mentioned Minutes were declared to be a true record of the proceedings and signed by the Chairman presiding thereat and were, on 12 January, 2016, adopted by the Council.