

22 May, 2013.

LLANELLI RURAL COUNCIL

Minute Nos: 58 – 67

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, 22 May, 2013 at 4.45 p.m.

Present: Cllr. M. V. Davies (Chairman)

Cllrs.

L. J. Butler	H. J. Evans
D. M. Cundy	M. L. Evans
S. L. Davies	T. J. Jones
A. G. Morgan	

58. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Cllrs. L. A. Beer, T. Devichand (Cllr. S. L. Davies deputising), S. M. Donoghue and A. J. Rogers.

59. MEMBERS' DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Cllr. A. G. Morgan declared a personal and prejudicial interest in Minute No. 63 as he was a trustee on the Citizens Advice Bureau.

60. APPOINTMENT OF SUB-COMMITTEE

(1) HUMAN RESOURCES

RESOLVED that the Chairman of Committee, Leader of Council and Cllr. D. M. Cundy, be appointed.

(2) APPEALS

RESOLVED that the Vice Chairman of Committee, the Chairman of Council and M. L. Evans, be appointed.

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61. SERVICE PLANS 2013/14

Members considered the Council's Service Plans 2013/14 which set key objectives for the following service groups:-

- Administrative Services;
- Community Services;
- Recreation and Leisure Services; and
- Training Services.

Whilst generally accepting the content of the service plans, Members referred to the various performance indicator measures but in particular to the percentage of Councillors attending Council and Committee meetings and the importance of improving overall levels of attendance.

RESOLVED that the service plans be accepted.

**62. ECONOMIC, SOCIAL OR ENVIRONMENTAL WELL-BEING
STATUTORY GUIDANCE TO PROMOTE THE POWER OF WELL-BEING**

Further to Minute No. 236 (17 October, 2012), the Clerk presented Members with the above statutory guidance which had been received at a training seminar hosted by the Society of Local Council Clerks and One Voice Wales at the Liberty Stadium, Swansea on 17 April, 2013. The guidance was issued by Welsh Ministers under Section 3(5) of Part 1 of the Local Government Act 2000 ("the Act"). Community Councils had this power conferred to them by the Local Government (Wales) Measure 2011.

The Act created a discretionary power referred to as "the well-being power" which enabled local authorities to do anything that they considered was likely to promote or improve the economic, social or environmental well-being of their area and/or persons in it, provided they were not restricted from doing so by other legislation. The power came into force in Wales on 9 April, 2011.

An in-depth description was given on the meaning of "well-being", the power to promote and use it. The Clerk expressed concern at paragraph 2.1 (iii) referring to the retention of section 137 of the Local Government Act 1972 which contained a financial limit on incurring expenditure and would still be applied if a community council wished to exercise the well-being power contained in the Local Government Act 2000. He felt that this would be a retrospective step and would not give the liberty to community councils to incur expenditure as it saw fit on items not authorised by other legislation.

RESOLVED that the concerns expressed on the financial limit imposed on the "well-being" power be forwarded to the Welsh Government.

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63. CITIZENS ADVICE BUREAU – ANNUAL REPORT

Cllr. A. G. Morgan declared a personal and prejudicial interest in Minute No. 63 as he was a trustee on the Citizens Advice Bureau. Cllr. Morgan withdrew from the meeting before discussion began.

Members received the first Annual Report from the Chairman of the Trustee Board, Citizens Advice Bureau (CAB) detailing the services that CAB provided and the benefits it had obtained and examples of ways in which it had helped people in the community and beyond.

It had been nearly two years since the three bureaux of Ammanford, Carmarthen and Llanelli merged to form the new Bureau. Since the merger the service across the county had been improved considerably. The expertise of the staff at the bureau offices could now be utilised more fully across the county with the enhanced flexibility brought about by the merger. As a result the three bureau offices opening times had been extended in line with the Carmarthen office to help meet the needs of these areas.

Members thereupon proceeded to consider the information report and of noticeable concern was the increasing levels of debt throughout the county. This was likely to increase further still with the on set of the Government welfare reform proposals. Members noted that Employment Support Allowance appeals against negative decisions was increasing. Case officer evidence suggested a year on year increase in appeals, especially covering the Llanelli area. Concern was expressed in the annual report over the further changes to the welfare system. There were to be numerous changes, not only to the Universal Credit, but also with the replacement of the Disability Living Allowance with the Personal Independent Payment. Reductions would be made to housing benefit (under the bedroom tax), the social fund and changes to council tax benefit.

During general discussion, Members were mindful of the local implications brought about by Government reforms and in order to help the Council better prepare for the changes it was felt that an invitation should be extended to a guest speaker to further discuss the impact of the Government's welfare reforms and it was

RESOLVED that

- (1) the Annual Report be noted;
- (2) an invitation be extended to a guest speaker to further discuss the impact of welfare reforms and the anticipated correlation with rising levels of debt and poverty.

Cllr. A. G. Morgan returned to the meeting.

**64. MID AND WEST WALES FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITY
ANNUAL IMPROVEMENT PLAN 2013/2014**

Further to Minute No. 286 (21 November, 2012), Members were circulated with the Annual Improvement Plan 2013/2014. The document outlined the Authority's range of initiatives and performance to date, as well as its proposed improvements for the future focusing on the following key areas:-

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Managing Risk;
Managing People;
Working Together;
Managing Resources;
Managing Performance.

Improvement objectives were consulted upon annually, giving the communities the opportunity to provide their views on what they propose to deliver and help shape the priorities for the future.

Following discussion during which Members expressed concern over the potential knock on effects of reviewing the crewing arrangements at Swansea and Port Talbot fire stations and the implications for providing cover in Llanelli, it was

RESOLVED that the information be noted and to await developments in respect of the Council's invitation extended to the Fire Brigade Union to attend a future meeting.

65. TOWN /COMMUNITY COUNCILLOR COMPOSITION

Further to Minute No. 465 (20 March, 2013), Members received a letter dated 5 April, 2013 from the Electoral Services Manager, Carmarthenshire County Council.

In response to a Council question posed to Carmarthenshire County Council about the review of electoral ward boundaries the writer confirmed a review of electoral ward boundaries would start with Carmarthenshire County Council carrying out the review of the community council boundaries then once this had been completed it would then carry out a review of the electoral division boundaries to bring them in line with the community boundaries.

The community council boundaries were the building blocks of electoral divisions and this review would be carried out in the first instance.

RESOLVED that the information be noted.

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

RESOLVED that in view of the confidential nature of the business to be transacted, the following matter 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.

67. STAFFING MATTERS

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

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RESOLVED that the report referenced 5:2013 be accepted.

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The meeting concluded at 6.15 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 11 June, 2013, adopted by the Council.