

18 December, 2013.

LLANELLI RURAL COUNCIL

Minute Nos: 340 – 345

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, 18 December, 2013 at 4.45 p.m.

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

Cllrs.

D. M. Cundy	R. E. Evans
H. J. Evans	A. J. Rogers

340. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Cllrs. L. A. Beer, M. L. Evans, T. J. Jones (R. E. Evans deputising), A. G. Morgan and C. A. Rees.

341. MEMBERS' DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No declarations of interest were made.

342. REVIEW OF COUNTY ELECTORAL ARRANGEMENTS FOR THE COUNTY OF CARMARTHENSHIRE

Further to Minute No. 467 (20 March, 2013), Members received the Local Democracy and Boundary Commission for Wales' final proposals for the electoral arrangements for the County of Carmarthenshire.

In accordance with the directions issued by the Minister for Local Government and Government Business on 13 January, 2009, the Commission had now completed the review of electoral arrangements for the County of Carmarthenshire. In 2012 the County of Carmarthenshire had an electorate of 141,040. At present it was divided into 58 electoral divisions returning 74 councillors with 42 electoral divisions (72%) being single-members and 16 electoral divisions (28%) being multi-member. The average number of electors to each councillor for the County was currently 1,906. The existing electoral arrangements had a level of representation that ranged from 37% below to 55% above the current county average.

Under its final proposals the Commission proposed an increase in the county council size from 74 to 75 elected members and a change to the arrangement of electoral divisions that would achieve a significant improvement in the level of electoral parity across the County of Carmarthenshire. The proposed average number of electors to each councillor for the County

18 December, 2013.

was 1,881. The electoral arrangements had a level of representation that ranged from 22% below to 24% above the proposed county average.

Specifically focusing on the arrangements affecting the existing county electoral divisions within the Rural Council's area; it was proposed that the Glyn, Hengoed and Swiss Valley electoral divisions remain as standalone electoral divisions and that the existing electoral divisions of Bynea and Llwynhendy be combined into a new single electoral division. It was also proposed that the existing electoral divisions of Dafen and Felinfoel be combined into a new single electoral division. It was felt this would vastly improve the level of electoral parity in these areas.

The level of Councillor representation for each division would remain the same as the present arrangements except that the two new divisions would return three Councillors for Bynea and Llwynhendy and two Councillors for Dafen and Felinfoel.

Following discussion, it was

RESOLVED that the information be noted.

343. COUNCIL TAX REDUCTION SCHEME 2014 - 2015

Members considered correspondence received from the Revenue Services Manager, Carmarthenshire County Council regarding the review of the Council Tax Reduction Scheme.

Council Tax Benefit was abolished from April 2013 and in Wales responsibility to provide a replacement scheme was devolved to the Welsh Government. A national scheme was introduced for all Welsh councils to operate in 2013/14 with a small number of limited discretions; the scheme was known as the Council Tax Reduction Scheme. The Welsh Government had decided to retain the scheme for 2014/15 and subsequent years, with only relatively minor changes to the 2013/14 scheme.

The County Council was seeking views about its approach to the Council Tax Reduction Scheme for 2014/15 and subsequent years. Effectively it was proposing to continue operating the scheme based on its existing arrangements namely:

- To retain the existing standard extended payment period of four weeks to people after they return to work, when they have been in receipt of a relevant qualifying benefit for at least 26 weeks.
- To continue to disregard the whole amount of War Disablement pensions and War Widows pension when calculating income.
- To retain the three month statutory period to backdate the application of Council Tax Reduction awards for working age customers and/or pensioner age customers prior to the claim.

Members supported the proposals and it was

18 December, 2013.

RESOLVED that the Clerk complete and return the accompanying questionnaire to the Revenue Services Manager, Carmarthenshire County Council indicating full support for the proposals.

344. 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.

345. STAFFING MATTERS

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

RESOLVED that the report referenced 12:2013 be accepted.

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The meeting concluded at 5.20 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 14 January, 2014, adopted by the Council.