

20 July, 2022

LLANELLI RURAL COUNCIL

Minute Nos: 119 – 126

At a Meeting of the **POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE** of the Llanelli Rural Council held at the Council Chamber, Vauxhall Buildings, Vauxhall, Llanelli, and via remote attendance on Wednesday, 20 July, 2022, at 4.45 p.m.

Present: Cllr. R. E. Evans (Chairman)

Cllrs.

S. R. Bowen	J. P. Hart
D. M. Cundy	S. N. Lewis
S. L. Davies	A. G. Morgan
A. Evans	J. S. Phillips
N. Evans	B. M. Williams

Absent: S. M. T. Ford

119. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

No apologies for absence were received.

120. MEMBERS' DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No declarations of interest were made.

121. PAPERLESS AGENDAS

Cllr. A. Evans enquired if the council could automatically conduct business electronically whereby the default position was for all members to receive electronic copies of agendas and associated background papers going forward and that members notify the clerk in writing if they wished to receive such documentation in hardcopy. The Clerk commented this would fully accord with the provisions of the Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021, specifically Schedule 4 (introduced by sections 47 and 49 of the Act), paragraph 19 (6) (2C) which stated that *“if a member of a community council gives notice in writing to the proper officer of the council that summonses to attend meetings of the council should be sent to the member at an address specified in the notice rather than electronically, such summonses must be sent to that member by being left at, or sent by post, to that address.”*

The discussion then extended to all councillors having individual designated council email addresses and moreover, whether they should also be provided with IT equipment such as a tablet to access the email accounts and to serve as a mechanism for participating in council and committee meetings. In view of this, Cllr. Evans felt his proposal could be held in

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abeyance for the time being on the assumption that all matters could be enacted relatively quickly and possibly at the same time.

Following discussion, it was

RESOLVED that in supporting the request to conduct business electronically, the additional items highlighted during discussion also be investigated with the council's IT support provider with the findings and costs being reported to a future committee meeting for further consideration with the intention of making provision for the items in the council's estimates of income and expenditure.

122. SERVICE PLANS 2022/23

Members considered the council's service plans for 2022/23 which set key objectives for the following service groups:-

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

Following discussion of the multitude of key tasks identified in the service plans it was

RESOLVED that the service plans be accepted.

**123. THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT AND ELECTIONS (WALES) ACT 2021:
STATUTORY GUIDANCE FOR COMMUNITY AND TOWN
COUNCILS**

Further to Minute No. 192 (15 September, 2021 refers), members received the statutory guidance document from the Minister for Finance and Local Government, Welsh Government.

The Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021 (the Act) provided for the establishment of a new and reformed legislative framework for local government elections, democracy, governance and performance. The legislation affected the community and town council sector and the key changes were explained in the guidance along with supporting remarks from the Clerk, highlighting where appropriate, the council's compliance with the new governance responsibilities and duties brought about by the Act.

The Act gave qualifying local authorities, including eligible community councils, a general power of competence. The guidance supported community and town councils to consider the requirements they would need to meet should they wish to become eligible community councils.

The guidance provided information to help all councils discharge their new duties in relation to the following requirements:

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- Access meetings from multiple locations;
- Provide opportunity for public participation at public council meetings;
- Prepare and publish an annual report;
- Prepare and publish a training plan to support training for councillors and council staff;
- Other provisions which impact on community and town councils.

Following discussion, it was

RESOLVED that the information and the steps already taken by the council to comply with the Act and the statutory guidance be noted.

124. THE FINANCE AND GOVERNANCE TOOLKIT FOR COMMUNITY AND TOWN COUNCILS

Members considered correspondence from the Minister for Finance and Local Government, Welsh Government about the publication of The Finance & Governance Toolkit for Community and Town Councils along with a document bundle which included a joint letter from the Chief Executives of One Voice Wales and the Society of Local Council Clerks together with a copy of the toolkit and accompanying supporting papers.

Jointly developed by One Voice Wales, the Society of Local Clerks and the Welsh Government, supported by commentary from Audit Wales, the toolkit had been designed to support all councils to meet their statutory responsibilities, have strong financial management and governance and to deliver the best outcomes for their communities.

The toolkit comprised two parts with a set of common themes:

- Part 1 -The Health Check
- Part 2 -The Self-assessment

The Clerk guided members through the document bundle. During discussion it was suggested that a working group should be created to work through the toolkit with the Clerk, with the findings then being periodically reported to future council meetings for consideration. Moreover, the working group shall be made up of eight councillors drawn from serving members of the Policy and Resources Committee. The intention being to complete all aspects of the toolkit within a defined period of 30 months, if not sooner. This time frame was geared more towards completing the six themes set out under Part 2 – the self-assessment. These would take more time to work through as the questions were designed to help the council understand and reflect on how it was currently operating and where there was a need or opportunity to strengthen a particular area of work, and it was

RESOLVED that:

1. The Finance & Governance Toolkit for Community and Town Councils be received and adopted for completion.
2. Cllrs. A. G. Morgan (Chairman of Council) S. N. Lewis (Leader of Council), S. R. Bowen, A. Evans, N. Evans, J. P. Hart, J. S. Phillips and B. M. Williams be appointed to serve on the working group, which shall be known as “The Finance and Governance Working Group”.
3. Future member appointments to serve on the working group shall be determined at the same time as other similar appointments at the council’s annual meeting.

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4. The findings from the working group shall be periodically reported to future council meetings for consideration and once agreed, the council’s response and actions in response to each theme shall be published on the council website.

125. 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.

**126. STAFFING MATTERS
(1) BUILDING CAPACITY**

Members considered the Clerk’s discussion paper informing of how the council could build internal capacity with its staff resources to help ensure the council operated on a more sustainable footing going forward.

Following discussion, it was

RESOLVED that:

- 1. The discussion paper findings be noted.
- 2. The Clerk be authorised to prepare a further committee report for consideration, which identified new staffing proposals to improve capacity and the related budget costs.

Cllr. S. L. Davies left the meeting.

(2) STAFFING REPORT

Members considered the report of the Technical and General Operations Manager informing of staffing matters.

RESOLVED that the report referenced 07:2022 be accepted.

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The meeting concluded at 6.42 p.m.

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The fore-mentioned Minutes were declared to be a true record of the proceedings and signed by the Chairman presiding thereat and were, on 11 October, 2022, adopted by the Council.