

19 April, 2023

LLANELLI RURAL COUNCIL

Minute Nos: 454 – 461

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, 19 April, 2023, at 4.45 p.m.

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

Cllrs.

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|--------------|----------------|
| 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

454. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

No apologies for absence were received.

455. MEMBERS' DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

The following members declared an interest in the following matters:

| <i>Minute No.</i> | <i>Councillor</i> | <i>Interest</i> |
|-------------------|-------------------|---|
| 458 | S. R. Bowen | Personal interest – owned a private hire taxi firm. |
| 458 | S. L. Davies | Personal interest – employed by Dolen Teifi as a Community Transport Officer, working in the third sector with Hywel Dda University Health Board. |

456. SPAM EMAILS

Members considered a quotation from NetBop Technologies to reconfigure councillors' email addresses on the council's website to help reduce the amount of SPAM emails.

19 April, 2023

Following discussion, it was

RESOLVED that the quotation of £227.50 plus VAT from NetBop Technologies, 6 Fishmarket Quay, Swansea, SA1 1UP be accepted to undertake the work.

457. COMMUNITY REVIEW FOR TOWN AND COMMUNITY COUNCILS IN THE COUNTY OF CARMARTHENSHIRE

Further to Minute No. 399, correspondence was received from the Electoral Services and Civil Registration Manager, Carmarthenshire County Council informing of the formal notice that the county council would exercise its powers under Section 31 of the Local Government (Democracy) (Wales) Act 2013 (the Act) to conduct a community review of all its town and community councils.

The review would consider the following:

- The number of members of the council for the community.
- Its division into wards (if appropriate) for the purposes of the election of councillors.
- The number and boundaries of any wards.
- The name of any ward.

Under the review, the county council would not look at:

- Requests to create new town/community councils.
- Merge existing town/community councils.
- Requests to abolish a town/community council.

Having considered an analysis of current and forecast elector: councillor ratios across the council's seven electoral wards prepared by the Clerk, and following lengthy discussion, it was

RESOLVED that the council responds to the community review consultation, by making the case for increasing the number of councillors in the Bynea Ward from three to four councillors, which in turn shall raise the total council membership from 21 to 22 councillors at the next set of ordinary elections in May 2027.

458. LAUNCH OF PUBLIC CONSULTATION ON LOCATION OF NEW PLANNED AND URGENT CARE HOSPITAL

Cllr. S. R. Bowen declared a personal interest in the following matter as he owned a private hire taxi firm. Cllr. S. L. Davies declared a personal interest as she was employed by Dolen Teifi as a Community Transport Officer, working in the third sector with Hywel Dda University Health Board.

Further to Minute No 355, members received a consultation questionnaire from the Executive Director - Strategy Planning, Hywel Dda University Health Board informing of the three potential sites planned for the new urgent care hospital as part of the health board's wider strategy to improve health and care in the region.

19 April, 2023

A new urgent and planned care hospital was part of the strategy to be able to re-provide more care in community settings by having a sustainable hospital model fit for future generations. This would improve and increase specialist care services that could be provided across the Hywel Dda catchment area and tackle some long-standing challenges, including old hospitals, problems in maintaining clinical rotas over several hospitals and staff recruitment.

The consultation set out three potential sites for a new urgent and planned care hospital in the south of the health board area, two near Whitland and one near St. Clears. This was subject to funding from the Welsh Government which had not yet been confirmed. If successful, it would take several years to achieve.

During discussion, members opined that Llanelli residents would not use the new hospital irrespective of where the preferred site turned out to be. This was because of the greater travel distance involved compared to currently having to travel to Glangwili Hospital, Carmarthen which in itself was not ideal. Given the choice, they felt the general public would opt to use Morriston Hospital which was much closer albeit being located in a neighbouring health board area. There were concerns expressed about the sustainability of public transport in West Wales given the ongoing reductions in government funded subsidy payments across all areas of Wales and this was compounded by a limited timetable for bus and train services for those people who relied on public transport. The health board was expecting stakeholders and the general population of the area to take a huge leap of faith over the public transport arrangements, when it had no direct control or influence over future policy making in this important area. Not only did public transport have an impact on relatives wanting to visit hospitalised patients, it also had a bearing on accessing general patient appointments and moreover on the discharge of patients late at night, as has been the case on occasions at Glangwili Hospital. Prior to the Covid-19 pandemic, it was not uncommon for some patients discharged late at night to have to pay over £40.00 to hire a taxi to return to Llanelli because public transport (both bus and train services) had stopped operating after the early evening. It was revealed that such a taxi journey would now cost £75.00, and so moving the main urgent care hospital further west of Carmarthen will only add to this cost.

Members also remarked that the health board was likely to struggle to recruit sufficient number of skilled clinicians because relocating to rural parts of West Wales was not appealing from a professional standpoint and this would detrimentally impact the health board with it likely having little choice but to pay higher salaries to attract the right calibre of person. This was unsustainable. It was felt the majority of doctors and nurses would not wish to commute on a daily basis over longer than average travel distances from major towns/cities and many would prefer to live near urban areas to gain full and timely access to services, shops and entertainment venues. Not recruiting the right personnel could cost lives and could make services unsafe.

During the discussion it was also mentioned that Welsh Government was contemplating reducing the speed limit from 70mph to 50mph along the main dual carriageway from Pontabraham Service Station at the end of the M4 motorway down to Tenby and the west. Therefore, in an emergency situation, the public would not be able to get to the new hospital in under 50 minutes. This point was garnered from one of the participants during the online meeting about the health board's plans which was attended by Cllr Bowen and the Clerk on 7 March 2023. If this was indeed to be the case, reducing speed limits would increase travel times to the new hospital site. This was also a concern that should be highlighted to the health board. Given these factors it was inevitable that Llanelli residents, would choose to travel east to the neighbouring health board's Morriston hospital to access services instead. This would

19 April, 2023

then put more pressure on that hospital and its staff. While it was noted that none of the three site proposals favoured Llanelli residents it was remarked that retaining services at Prince Philip Hospital was paramount and so the further endorsement of SOSPPAN's (the local pressure group) 'B+' proposal' for the hospital should also be highlighted to the health board when responding to the accompanying consultation questionnaire, and it was

RESOLVED the Clerk responds to the accompanying consultation questionnaire highlighting member's views and observations as specified above but in addition to the council's formal response being submitted to the health board, all members be given the opportunity of responding to the questionnaire on an individual basis having previously been issued with a copy of the questionnaire, which was recently sent to all councillors in anticipation of today's meeting.

459. LLANELLI AIR QUALITY MANAGEMENT AREA MONITORING

Members considered correspondence from the Clerk, Llanelli Town Council inviting the council to work in partnership with Llanelli Town Council in regard to the clean air issues in Llanelli.

The Clerk, Llanelli Town Council provided correspondence that he had received from Professor Paul Lewis, Swansea University the Clean Air Programme Regional champion for Wales and advisor to the Welsh Government on air quality regarding the issues associated with the Llanelli Air Quality Management Area at Sandy Road to Felinfoel Road, Llanelli.

During the discussion reference was also made to previous correspondence sent to the Climate Change, Decarbonisations and Sustainability Scrutiny Committee, Carmarthenshire County Council and also the Democratic Services Unit, Carmarthenshire County Council (Minute No. 234 refers). To date no response had been received to the questions posed in the letter and it was remarked that having a reply was likely to support any potential collaboration with the Town Council and Professor Lewis going forward.

Following discussion, it was

RESOLVED that:

1. Further to Minute No. 234, the council letter dated 6 December 2022, addressed to the Climate Change, Decarbonisations and Sustainability Scrutiny Committee, Carmarthenshire County Council be re-issued to the relevant Cabinet Member holding portfolio over this subject area under the auspices of Cllr. Alex Evans.
2. The offer to work in partnership with Llanelli Town Council in regard to clean air issues in Llanelli be accepted in principle and that an initial joint meeting be convened with the Town Council and Professor Paul Lewis to discuss proposals and associated costs for further committee consideration.

Cllr. A. G. Morgan left the meeting.

19 April, 2023

460. 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.

461. STAFFING MATTERS

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

RESOLVED that the report referenced 04:2023 be accepted.

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The meeting concluded at 6.18 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 May, 2023, adopted by the Council.