

**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE COUNTY COUNCIL HELD AT COUNCIL  
CHAMBER - COUNTY HALL, LLANDRINDOD WELLS ON THURSDAY, 13 JULY  
2017**

**PRESENT**

County Councillor D E Davies (Chair)

County Councillors MC Alexander, B Baynham, G Breeze, J Charlton, L V Corfield, K W Curry, A W Davies, B Davies, P Davies, S C Davies, M J Dorrance, E Durrant, D O Evans, J Evans, L Fitzpatrick, L George, J Gibson-Watt, M R Harris, S M Hayes, H Hulme, A Jenner, DR Jones, E Jones, E M Jones, G Jones, J R Jones, M J Jones, D Jones-Poston, F H Jump, K Laurie-Parry, H Lewis, K Lewis, P E Lewis, S Lewis, MC Mackenzie, I McIntosh, S McNicholas, DW Meredith, C Mills, JG Morris, N Morrison, R Powell, WD Powell, D R Price, P C Pritchard, G Pugh, G W Ratcliffe, L Roberts, P Roberts, K M Roberts-Jones, E Roderick, D Rowlands, D Selby, K S Silk, D A Thomas, R G Thomas, T J Van-Rees, E Vaughan, M Weale, J Wilkinson, A Williams, G I S Williams, D H Williams, J Williams, J M Williams, R Williams, S L Williams

The Chair welcomed County Councillor Iain McIntosh following his election for the Yscir electoral division.

<b>1.</b>	<b>APOLOGIES</b>
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Apologies for absence were received from County Councillors M Barnes, EA Jones, G Morgan and J Pugh.

<b>2.</b>	<b>DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST</b>
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Councillors who had been members of the Council in 2016/17 declared personal non-prejudicial interests in item 10 Member Allowances and Expenses 2016-17.

All members present declared personal non-prejudicial interests in item 11 Members' Schedule of Remuneration 2017 -18.

County Councillor Matthew Dorrance declared a personal non-prejudicial interest in item 9 Health and Social Care Strategy for Powys as a member of Powys Teaching Health Board.

County Councillor E Michael Jones declared a personal non-prejudicial interest in item 17b Notice of Motion – Charges at Social Care Day Centres as trustee of a care centre. County Councillor Francesca Jump declared a personal non-prejudicial interest as a volunteer who delivered meals on wheels to the day centre in Welshpool. County Councillor Heulwen Hulme declared a personal and prejudicial interest in this item. County Councillor Beverley Baynham sought advice from the Monitoring Officer and did not have to declare an interest.

County Councillors Timothy Van-Rees and Gareth Ratcliffe declared personal non-prejudicial interest in item 16 Correspondence from the Royal British Legion as a member and trustee respectively.

County Councillors Dai Davies, David Meredith and Beverley Baynham declared personal and prejudicial interests in item 17c Notice of Motion Chair's car.

### **3. MINUTES**

Subject to the deletion of a duplicate set of apologies from the minutes of the meeting held on 23 February, the Chair was authorised to sign the minutes of the meetings held on 23 February, 7 March, 18 May and 13 June 2017 as correct records.

### **4. CHAIR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS**

The Chair gave details of some of the events he had attended including a reception with HRH The Prince of Wales, four civic services and a concert in Ystradgynlais.

### **5. LEADER'S ANNOUNCEMENTS**

The Leader and Portfolio Holder with responsibility for Trading Standards were pleased to introduce Detective Constable Gemma Rees, accompanied by DCI Martin Slevin from Dyfed Powys Police. DC Rees had won a national award from the anti-counterfeiting group after being nominated by Powys County Council Trading Standards. The special commendation was for work which resulted in dozens of investigations being launched and counterfeit goods worth £300,000 being seized.

The Leader advised that she had been appointed as the WLGA's joint rural spokesperson with the Leader of Gwynedd County Council. County Councillor Aled Davies had been appointed as the deputy spokesperson.

She also advised that a range of events and receptions had been organised for the Royal Welsh Show that Ministers from the Welsh Government had been invited to attend. The Royal Welsh Show would also see the launch of the Council's Heart of Wales Business Solutions which sold services such as payroll, DBS and counter fraud to other local authorities.

The Leader was pleased to note that the works at schools in the Gwernyfed catchment area were proceeding on time and in budget and that £120,000 Welsh Government grant had been secured for works at the lake in Llandrindod Wells.

### **6. CHIEF EXECUTIVE'S BRIEFING**

The Chief Executive advised Council that in the wake of the Grenfell Tower fire tragedy the cladding used on Council owned buildings had been checked and found to meet the highest industry standards. He also advised that the Council's emergency planning arrangements were being reviewed in response to the fire and recent terrorist attacks.

The Chief Executive also referred to The Queen's Commonwealth Games Baton Relay which would be visiting Brecon, Rhayader, Llanidloes and Newtown in September and he confirmed that the Council would be repeating the successful careers fair at an event on 8 March 2018. Finally he reported that Management Team had held a series of round table discussions with staff at venues around the county and that nominations for staff awards had opened.

<b>7.</b>	<b>CAPITAL VIREMENTS</b>
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**7.1. Capital Virement for Fleet Vehicle Replacements**

The budget for the fleet replacement budget had been underspent by £925k in 2016/17 and there were sufficient funds in the budget for 2017/18 so it was proposed to remove this sum from the budget. It was proposed by County Councillor Aled Davies and seconded by County Councillor Liam Fitzpatrick and by 61 votes to 0 with 1 abstention it was

<b>RESOLVED</b>	<b>Reason for Decision:</b>
<b>The Capital Virement is approved and the budget of £925k is removed from 2016/17.</b>	<b>To match the capital budgets to the actual spend.</b>

**7.2. Capital Virement for Brecon Cultural Hub**

Due to delays to the project in early 2017 because of the late delivery of the steel frame, a virement was needed to roll forward £2.255m to 2017/18 to continue with the project. In answer to questions from members the Chief Executive confirmed that there were penalty clauses in the contract for the contractor for failing to deliver. He also advised that documents relating to the contract would have to be checked before they could be made publically available because they may contain commercially confidential information.

The proposal was moved by County Councillor Aled Davies and seconded by County Councillor Rosemarie Harris and by 60 votes to 0 with 1 abstention it was

<b>RESOLVED</b>	<b>Reason for Decision:</b>
<b>The Capital Virement to roll forward £2.255m of the Brecon Cultural Hub budget into 2017/18 is approved.</b>	<b>To match the project expenditure to the approved budget.</b>

<b>8.</b>	<b>ANNUAL REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF SOCIAL SERVICES</b>
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The interim Strategic Director – People presented her annual report for 2016/17 as statutory Director of Social Services. She acknowledged the work of her predecessor Amanda Lewis and thanked staff, stakeholders and all those who supported social care in Powys. She noted the close working relationship between the Council and Powys Teaching Health Board and the continued push forward for integration to provide better services more efficiently and effectively. She referred to the recent launch of the health and care strategy for Powys, which set the ambition for the future.

In answering questions from members, the Strategic Director confirmed that the report had been scrutinised although the amount of scrutiny had been curtailed by the local government elections. She confirmed that she would be happy to review the section of the report dealing with finance to take account of the findings of the Audit/Scrutiny Working Group on Social Care.

In proposing and seconding the report, County Councillor Stephen Hayes the Portfolio Holder for Adult Social Care and County Councillor Rachel Powell the Portfolio Holder for Children’s Services acknowledged the contribution of the interim Strategic Director – People since her appointment and the benefit of having such a senior officer with a dual role within the Council and the Health Board.

By 61 votes to 0 with 1 abstention it was

<b>RESOLVED</b>	<b>Reason for Decision</b>
<b>To approve the Director of Social Service’s report for publication.</b>	<b>To comply with the statutory requirement for the Director of Social Services to produce an annual report.</b>

<b>9.</b>	<b>HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE STRATEGY FOR POWYS</b>
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The Health and Care Strategy had been approved by the Cabinet and PTHB and had been formally launched on 5 July and a copy presented to the Welsh Government Minister. The Strategy was a key document to inform the basis of future service planning for health and care services in Powys and to influence those wider aspects of the Public Service Board’s Wellbeing Plan that also impact on health and wellbeing such as housing, education and access. It was a significant step towards the objective for Integrated Health and Adult Social Care, and also contributed to the objectives for Children and Young People.

The report was moved by County Councillor Stephen Hayes, Portfolio Holder for Adult Social Care and seconded by County Councillor Rachel Powell, Portfolio Holder for Children Youth, Libraries and Leisure Services and by 66 votes to 0 it was

<b>RESOLVED</b>	<b>Reason for Decision:</b>
<b>That the Health and Care Strategy for Powys be received.</b>	<b>The Health and Care Strategy provides the foundations for the development of integrated health and care in Powys in accordance with One Powys Plan goals.</b>

Council adjourned from 11.40 a.m. to 12.00 p.m.  
County Councillor William Powell left the meeting.

**10. MEMBER ALLOWANCES AND EXPENSES 2016-17**

Council received for information details of the amounts paid to members in salaries and allowances in 2016/17. Council was required to publish the information by 30 September 2017. The report was moved by County Councillor E Michael Jones and seconded by County Councillor Timothy Van-Rees and by 60 votes to 0 with 4 abstentions it was

<b>RESOLVED</b>	<b>Reason for Decision:</b>
<b>That the report is noted.</b>	<b>Ensuring this information is available in the public domain within the required timescale</b>

**11. MEMBERS' SCHEDULE OF REMUNERATION 2017- 18**

Council considered the Members' Schedule of Remuneration for 2017/18. Members considered whether to continue to pay a monthly broadband allowance of £15. On the proposal of County Councillor Gareth Ratcliffe and seconded by County Councillor Phil Pritchard by 63 votes to 1 with 2 abstentions it was

<b>RESOLVED</b>	<b>Reason for Decision:</b>
<b>that the Council cease payments to Members for broadband provision.</b>	<b>Most homes have their own broadband and separate arrangements are not needed for Councillors to access Council papers.</b>

On the proposal of County Councillor Linda Corfield and seconded by County Councillor Michael Williams by 62 votes to 0 it was

<b>RESOLVED</b>	<b>Reason for Decision:</b>
<b>the draft Schedule of Members Remuneration be approved for publication and submission to the IRPW.</b>	<b>To comply with the Regulations as set by the Independent Remuneration Panel for Wales.</b>

**12. WELSHPOOL TOWN COUNCIL REQUEST FOR ELECTION**

County Councillor Phil Pritchard declared a personal non-prejudicial interest in this item as a member of Welshpool Town Council.

Welshpool Town Council had requested the County Council to make the necessary arrangements for the holding of an election to fill two vacant seats.

It was moved by County Councillor E Michael Jones and seconded by County Councillor Francesca Jump and by 64 votes to 1 against with 1 abstention it was

<b>RESOLVED</b>	<b>Reason for Decision:</b>
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To approve the request from Welshpool Town Council to hold an election to fill each of the vacant seats left on Gungrog and Llanerchuddol wards.	To determine the request of Welshpool Town Council.
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**13. | PROTOCOL FOR PUBLIC PARTICIPATION AT COUNCIL MEETINGS**

Council considered the recommendation of the Democratic Services Committee that public participation at Council meetings be implemented for a year then reviewed. The Committee had also recommended that when a member of the public was unable to be present to submit a supplementary question, they could do so by letter or email. It was noted that this option was not open to members of the Council. The Chair of the Democratic Services Committee agreed to look at this as well as comments that there should be an evaluation of how the scheme operated.

The recommendations were proposed by County Councillor Matthew Dorrance and seconded by County Councillor Joy Jones and by 61 votes to 1 it was

<b>RESOLVED</b>	<b>Reason for Decision:</b>
<p>1. that Public Participation at Council meetings be implemented for a year and that it be reviewed by the Democratic Services; Committee after this period</p> <p>2. that where a questioner is unable to attend the Council meeting to ask their supplementary question that this could be submitted via letter/email etc. once the Agenda has been published. This would then be read out by an officer or local member on behalf of the questioner at the Council meeting and for this to be answered by the relevant Member.</p>	<p>To comply with the decision of the Full Council in October 2016 and to trial the scheme allowing members of the public to contribute in Council meetings for a further 12 months.</p>

County Councillor Maureen Mackenzie left at 12.30 p.m.

**14. | APPOINTMENTS TO COMMITTEES**

Council noted the following appointments to Committees made by political groups and approved by the Monitoring Officer under the general power of delegation granted by Council on 16<sup>th</sup> May 2013:

- County Councillor Iain McIntosh appointed to the Planning, Taxi Licensing and Rights of Way Committee by the Conservative group to fill a vacancy.

- County Councillor Iain McIntosh appointed to the Licensing Act 2003 Committee by the Conservative group in place of County Councillor Mark Barnes.
- County Councillor James Gibson-Watt appointed to Scrutiny Committee B by the Liberal Democrat group in place of County Councillor Francesca Jump.

<b>15. APPOINTMENTS TO OUTSIDE BODIES</b>
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### 15.1 Board of Care and Repair

<b>RESOLVED</b>	<b>Reason for Decision</b>
<b>That County Councillor Kath Roberts-Jones be appointed to the Board of Care and Repair.</b>	<b>Response to request to make an appointment.</b>

### 15.2 Welsh Books Council

<b>RESOLVED</b>	<b>Reason for Decision</b>
<b>That County Councillor Edwin Roderick be appointed to the Welsh Books Council.</b>	<b>Response to request to make an appointment.</b>

### 15.3 Wye Navigation Advisory Committee

<b>RESOLVED</b>	<b>Reason for Decision</b>
<b>That County Councillor Kelvyn Curry be appointed to the Wye Navigation Advisory Committee and County Councillor James Evans be appointed as deputy.</b>	<b>Response to request to make an appointment.</b>

### 15.4 Board of Mid Wales Housing

<b>RESOLVED</b>	<b>Reason for Decision</b>
<b>That County Councillor Michael Williams be appointed to the Board of Mid Wales Housing.</b>	<b>Response to request to make an appointment.</b>

The Chair advised that because the Portfolio Holder for Education had to leave at lunchtime he was changing the order of the agenda to take the questions to her next.

<b>16. QUESTIONS IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE CONSTITUTION</b>
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**16.1. Question to the Portfolio Holder for Education from County Councillor Phil Pritchard**

**Could you please tell me how many meetings were held between Powys CC Officers and representatives of The Church in Wales regarding the creation of two new schools in Welshpool to replace the current Oldford, Ardwyn, Gungrog and Maesydre schools?**

**Answer**

The School Transformation project for Welshpool has been programme managed under the Schools Transformation Programme Board. In line with the other area reviews undertaken in the Ystradgynlais, Gwernyfed, John Beddoes, Llanidloes and Bro Dyfi catchment areas, the review has been undertaken through a facilitated area project board. The project board had representatives from the 5 initial schools included in the review together with representatives from other interested bodies including representation from the St Asaph Diocese.

As part of the work undertaken by the project board officers from the school service has supported the board and any sub groups of the group, this work has included meetings and telephone conversations with individuals or small groups of school representatives. During the process there has been a small number of discussions with the Diocesan Director of Education or her representative, the exact number of these discussions / meetings have not been recorded but are estimated to be under a total of 15. This would include discussions / meetings with the Portfolio holder, the head of schools service, the senior manager – central services and the senior manager- transformation within the schools service. A similar number of meetings, conversations etc. would have been held with representatives from each of the school involved in the review.

In reply to Councillor Pritchard's supplementary question why information had not been shared with governing bodies of the schools, the Portfolio Holder offered to meet Councillor Pritchard in the week after the Royal Welsh Show.

**16.2. Question to the Portfolio Holder for Education from County Councillor Graham Breeze**

**Many residents in the Welshpool Llanerchydol Ward have voiced concerns regarding the closure in 2018 of Ardwyn Junior & Infants School and the future of the building in particular.**

**Could the Portfolio Holder outline what considerations have been given to this building's future following closure in 2018, particularly in view of its Grade II Listed status, limited access and any potential impact on nearby residents?**

**Answer**

It is expected that the two new Primary Schools will be built and occupied at the start of the 2019-20 School year in September 2019. The Schools service will declare the 3 vacant sites, Gungrog C in W, Oldford N & I and Ardwyn N & I Schools surplus to its requirements and will request corporate property to either



transfer the sites to another service or dispose of the sites. Part of the Gungrog C in W school site will revert to the St Asaph Church Authorities. Officers from the service has already raised the potential availability of the 3 sites to the multi-service strategic asset board and discussions are on-going on how the sites can be utilised to meet the authority's strategic priorities. I can give Councillor Breeze the assurance that the residents of his ward will be informed and consulted upon the future use of the schools building.

There was no supplementary question.

**16.3. Question to the Portfolio Holder for Education from County Councillor Sandra Davies**

**What is Powys County Council's policy on the use of Schools delegated budgets to provide home to school transport for learners and is the Council aware of any schools in the County undertaking this practice and if so, what advice have they received?**

**Answer**

The Authority under section 5.2 of the Scheme for Financing Schools states that schools cannot use its delegated budget for a purpose that is normally undertaken by the authority, with Home to School Transport being detailed specifically. Councillor Davies will be aware that the situation at Llanfyllin High School was subject to an investigation during the last council, with a further 2 Secondary Schools be subject to a subsequent report. In each of the cases the schools have been informed that they are in breach of the scheme and the authority has instructed the Governing Body to ensure that there is no subsidy from the delegated budget for the provision of Home to School transport to non-qualifying pupils within an agreed timescale.

In response to Councillor Davies' question as to what procedures were in place to ensure that policies are complied with, the Portfolio Holder said that the Council was going to engage much more frequently with governing bodies as they set budgets and that there needed to be an urgent review of policies covering out of county pupils.

**16.4. Question to the Portfolio Holder for Education from County Councillor Pete Roberts**

**Would the Cabinet Member for Education explain the impact the decision to retain a Welsh language education at Brecon will have on the viability of the Builth /Llandrindod Wells High School and what steps she will take to mitigate any negative impacts?**

**Answer**

The Portfolio Holder for Education said that it was her ambition to increase the numbers of learners in the medium of Welsh and to have sustainable Welsh medium streams in both schools. She went on to say that officers were preparing a review of Welsh medium education in mid Powys that would be rolled out to include the south of the county and that there was a need to recruit more Welsh speaking teachers so there was a wider curriculum choice.

Cllr Pete Roberts' supplementary question was to ask if there were any plans for the Builth Wells/Llandrindod School to be one 1 site and the Portfolio Holder said that there were no such plans and that 1 school on 2 sites was a model that had worked elsewhere.

Council adjourned for lunch from 1.06 p.m. to 2.00 p.m.

PRESENT

County Councillor D E Davies (Chair)

County Councillors B Baynham, G Breeze, J Charlton, L V Corfield, A W Davies, B Davies, P Davies, S C Davies, M J Dorrance, E Durrant, D O Evans, J Evans, L Fitzpatrick, L George, J Gibson-Watt, M R Harris, S M Hayes, H Hulme, A Jenner, DR Jones, E Jones, EM Jones, G Jones, J R Jones, M J Jones, D Jones-Poston, F H Jump, K Laurie-Parry, H Lewis, K Lewis, S Lewis, I McIntosh, S McNicholas, DW Meredith, C Mills, JG Morris, N Morrison, R Powell, D R Price, P C Pritchard, G Pugh, G W Ratcliffe, L Roberts, P Roberts, K M Roberts-Jones, E Roderick, D Rowlands, D Selby, K S Silk, D A Thomas, R G Thomas, T J Van-Rees, E Vaughan, M Weale, J Wilkinson, A Williams, G I S Williams, D H Williams, J Williams, J M Williams, R Williams, S L Williams

<b>17. CORRESPONDENCE</b>
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Council considered a letter from the Royal British Legion calling for the Council to support the Legion's "Count them in campaign" calling for changes to the UK census to capture data at a local authority level regarding the size and needs of the Armed Forces Community.

It was moved by County Councillor Timothy Van-Rees and duly seconded and by 53 votes to 0 with 4 abstentions it was

**RESOLVED to support the following motion:**

**This Council notes:**

- 1. The obligations it owes to the Armed Forces community within Powys as enshrined in the Armed Forces Covenant; that the Armed Forces community should not face disadvantage in the provision of services and that special consideration is appropriate in some cases, especially for those who have given the most.**
- 2. The absence of definitive and comprehensive statistics on the size or demographics of the Armed Forces community with Powys. This includes serving Regular and Reserve personnel, veterans, and their families.**
- 3. That the availability of such data would greatly assist the council, local partner agencies, the voluntary sector, and national Government in the planning and provision of services to address the needs of the Armed Forces Community within Powys.**

**In light of the above, this Council moves to support and promote The Royal British Legion's call to include a new topic in the 2021 census that**

**concerns military service and membership of the Armed Forces community. We further call upon the UK Parliament, which will approve the final census questionnaire through legislation in 2019, to ensure that the 2021 census includes questions concerning our Armed Forces community.**

<b>18. NOTICES OF MOTION</b>
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### **18.1. Notice of Motion on Household Waste Recycling Centres**

Council debated the following motion proposed by County Councillor Gareth Ratcliffe and seconded by County Councillor James Gibson-Watt:

“During the recent county council election campaign many residents expressed grave concerns about the recent changes to the Household Waste Recycling Centres’ (HWRCs) opening times and means of operation. We therefore call upon the relevant Cabinet portfolio holder to undertake an urgent review of the current operation of the HWRCs to ensure they are offering a fit and proper service.”

There was general support for the Cabinet’s decision to reinstate 5 day a week opening of HWRCs and introduce a permit scheme for commercial type vehicles and trailers. The Councillors for Machynlleth and Glantwymyn urged the Cabinet to look again at providing a facility for the residents of the Dyfi Valley. The Portfolio Holder for Property and Waste confirmed that he would be meeting Machynlleth Town Council. He recognised the value of the sites in helping the Council meet its recycling targets but explained that with the cuts faced by the Highways, Transport and Recycling Service he could not commit to 7 day a week opening.

Council was content that the Cabinet was moving in the right direction and therefore the proposer withdrew the motion.

### **18.2. Notice of Motion - Charges at Social Care Day Centres**

The Monitoring Officer explained that the motion was an attempt to call-in a Cabinet decision. Without creating a precedent the Portfolio Holder had agreed that it could be debated but the Monitoring Officer explained that Council could not reverse the decision but it could ask Cabinet to look again at it.

Council debated the motion proposed by County Councillor James Gibson-Watt and seconded by County Councillor Matthew Dorrance:

“A 50% increase in charges for attendance and meals at social care day centres in Powys was introduced by Cabinet before the end of the previous council and *after* the County Council had set its 2017-18 budget. We believe that that decision, which was taken without prior notice or consultation with service users or their carers, was an abuse of process and call on the current Council Cabinet to restore the charges to their previous levels with immediate effect.”

In speaking to the motion Councillors Gibson-Watt and Dorrance argued that there had not been proper consultation with service users and that the proposal not been included in the 2017-18 budget agreed by Council. They argued that the charges would deter the most vulnerable from attending day centres and from getting access to hot meals.

The Portfolio Holder for Adult Social Care explained that in 2014 as part of budget proposals the Council decided to close the day centres but that the decision was not enacted and the savings not taken. The responses to the consultation in 2016 made it clear that it would cause significant hardship for users and carers and it would not help the Council meet assessed need. During the consultation people had said that they would be prepared to pay more for the service rather than lose it. Cabinet reversed the decision to close day care centres and put back the savings back into the budget, however, day time activities had to make £150,000 savings. The Portfolio Holder reminded members that there was a £70 cap on weekly charges and that financial assessments meant the most vulnerable did not have to pay.

More than 10 members stood to request a named vote.

By 30 votes to 28 with 2 abstentions it was

**RESOLVED to call on the current Council Cabinet to restore the charges to their previous levels with immediate effect.**

Mark Barnes	Absent
Myfanwy Alexander	Absent
Beverley Baynham	Abstain
Graham Breeze	Against
Jackie Charlton	For
Linda Corfield	Against
Kelvyn Curry	Absent
Aled Davies	Against
Bryn Davies	For
Dai Davies	Against
Phyl Davies	Against
Sandra Davies	For
Matthew Dorrance	For
Emily Durrant	For
David Evans	Against
James Evans	Against
Liam Fitzpatrick	Against
Les George	Against
James Gibson-Watt	For
Rosemarie Harris	Against
Stephen Hayes	Against
Heulwen Hulme	Against
Amanda Jenner	For
Arwel Jones	Absent
David Jones	Against
Emyr Jones	Against
Gareth Jones	Against

Joy Jones	For
E Michael Jones	Against
Michael J Jones	Did not vote
Diane Poston-Jones	For
Francesca Jump	For
Karen Laurie-Parry	Did not vote
Hywel Lewis	Against
Karl Lewis	For
Peter Lewis	Absent
Sarah Lewis	Against
Maureen Mackenzie	Absent
Iain McIntosh	Against
Susan McNicholas	For
Davis Meredith	For
Claire Mills	For
Gareth Morgan	Absent
John Morris	For
Neil Morrison	For
Rachel Powell	Against
William Powell	Absent
David Price	Against
Phil Pritchard	Against
Gareth Pugh	For
Jeremy Pugh	Absent
Gareth Ratcliffe	For
Lucy Roberts	Against
Pete Roberts	For
Kath Roberts-Jones	Against
Edwin Roderick	For
Daniel Rowlands	For
David Selby	For
Kathryn Silk	For
David Thomas	For
Gwynfor Thomas	Against
Timothy Van-Rees	Against
Elwyn Vaughan	For
Martin Weale	Against
Jonathan Wilkinson	Against
Ange Williams	For
Gwilym Williams	Abstain
Huw Williams	For
Jon Williams	For
Michael Williams	Did not vote
Roger Williams	For
Sarah Williams	For

### 18.3. Notice of Motion - Use of Car by the Chair

The Chair, Vice-Chair and Assistant Vice-Chair left the Chamber for this item having declared personal and prejudicial interests. County Councillor E Michael Jones was elected by members to take the chair for this item.

Council debated the following motion proposed by County Councillor Elwyn Vaughan and seconded by County Councillor Bryn Davies:

“We call on the Council to cease the practice of purchasing or leasing a car for the use of the Chairman.”

The proposer and seconder argued that there was no justification in buying or leasing a car for the Chair of Council and that, at a time of austerity and cuts to services, the Council should be setting an example by making savings in expenditure on civic functions.

County Councillor Pete Roberts left the meeting at 3.29 p.m.

The Chief Executive explained why an automatic car was needed and set out the costs of the purchase and why it was more cost effective than leasing or letting the Chair use his own car and reclaiming the mileage. He also explained that as a pool car it was available for use by other officers and members.

County Councillor Jon Williams left the meeting at 3.37 p.m.

An amendment was moved by County Councillor Gwilym Williams and seconded by County Councillor David Jones:

“We call on the Council to refer the matter of the practice of purchasing or leasing a car for the use of the Chairman to Democratic Services and to review the future role of the chairman and all civic roles.”

County Councillor Gwynfor Thomas left the meeting at 3.55 p.m.

The amendment was passed by 30 votes to 18 with 0 abstentions and became the substantive motion.

County Councillors Francesca Jump and Emyr Jones left at 4.06 p.m.

Council voted on the substantive motion and by 31 votes to 12 with 0 abstentions

**RESOLVED to refer the matter of the practice of purchasing or leasing a car for the use of the Chairman to Democratic Services and to review the future role of the chairman and all civic roles.**

Council adjourned from 4.10 – 4.20 p.m.

County Councillors Gareth Jones, Karl Lewis, Neil Morrison and Kathryn Silk left the meeting.

The Chair, Vice-Chair and Assistant Vice-Chair returned to the Chamber and County Councillor Dai Davies resumed the chair.

<b>19. QUESTIONS IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE CONSTITUTION</b>
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**19.1. Question to the Portfolio Holder for Highways from County Councillor John Morris**

**We have learned through a press release that you intend to review the decision to make charges in 9 council owned car parks that were previously free. There is presently an inconsistency across Powys with some car parks being pay and display and some free. In the interest of fairness and equality for all council tax payers across Powys and to support the economy will you extend your remit to review the car park charging policy across the whole of Powys?**

**Answer**

Thank you for your question and I am grateful that you asked it when it is important that our decisions are equitable and fair throughout the entire county.

It is the intention of my review to look initially at the viability of the nine car parks which the previous Cabinet decided should no longer be free. This review will look at the particular issues raised by the communities (the social value component) as well as the predicted income compared to costs (cost benefit analysis component). Once this review is completed I will instigate a further review of all car parks to determine the future use and viability of these parking areas and how best they are managed, again based on the social value to the community and the cost benefit analysis. This is "Smart Thinking" and enables us to make much better decisions for our neighbourhoods and our many residents as the effect on a community is taken into consideration alongside the financial considerations – a new concept that my cabinet colleagues are aware of. It is the best way I can think of which will allow us to come up with an equitable and fair solution.

Every pound coming into Powys in car parking benefits our entire economy. A pound in Hay-on-Wye car park helps the brand new school indirectly in Hay-on-Wye - something perhaps we don't think about enough as politicians in Powys.

The Parking Service forms a vital part of the Council's budget and unless income can be maintained or increased in other areas I represent, any reduction in income may impact upon other services provided by the council. Like many services in my responsibility - such as street cleaning, public conveniences, pot holes, repair of our roads, bridges and buildings - these are services we take for granted in our neighbourhoods every day and are noticed daily by all of our residents including myself. These services, which I now represent, have been the hardest hit within the council and in two years in Powys has suffered a 53.6 per cent cut when other similar services throughout the U.K have suffered an average of 20 per cent. This is not a problem but an opportunity for all of us and I am grateful to councillors' input so far as to how the service can improve the neighbourhoods that they represent. This new cabinet is now fully aware of how essential these services are to our Neighbourhoods.

You will of course be aware that I have had to start off tough in my new role to ensure that essential services are delivered to the standard we all expect, and

took for granted up to two years ago, even though the grass cutting service was dramatically cut back. Therefore much as though I would like an immediate review of all existing pay and display car parks, it will not be undertaken at this time but I look forward to doing it in the near future. However I am pleased to announce that I am currently looking across my entire service to increase revenue and I can assure you that if revenues increase it would be my intention to consider this at a much earlier date based on the “smart thinking” I outlined above.

Councillor Morris' supplementary question was to ask the Portfolio Holder to undertake a holistic review of all car parks and develop a Powys wide policy and to ask how much of the £93,000 in car parking charges raised in car parking charges in Crickhowell in 2016/17 had been spent in the area. The Portfolio Holder for Highways outlined the actions he intended to take including ensuring that enforcement of parking restrictions was carried out in rural as well as urban areas, lifting the moratorium on traffic regulation orders and he said that he would consider disposing of car parks that did not bring in revenue. He undertook to provide Councillor Morris details of the HTR spend in Crickhowell.

#### 19.2. **Question to the Leader from County Councillor Emily Durrant**

**The lack of gender balance in democratic representation in Wales is dire. Of the 1,254 new Councillors elected in May, only 359 are women. This takes the previous 26% female representation to 27% - a pitiful rate of progress for Wales.**

**However, the picture in Powys is better. Women now make up 31.5% of the Council, which though still 20% out of balance, is progress worth celebrating. I would particularly like to congratulate the council for appointing its first female Leader, and thereby enabling female Council leadership across Wales to double from 9% to 18%. (Statistics from the Equality and Human Rights Commission. Obtained directly and from Who Runs Wales, 2017)**

**Even so, the current Cabinet consists of only 3 women out of 10 members.**

**This raises a question to the Leader:  
Could the Leader of the Council have done more to ensure that women in Powys are represented fairly in the Cabinet?**

#### **Answer**

When choosing the Cabinet members there were a number of aspects that I wanted to consider. We as a Council are only allowed to have a maximum Cabinet of 10 members out of the total of 73.

To provide stable governance over the term of the Council, the Independents of 30 are working in collaboration with the Conservative group of 20 so Cabinet members are drawn from the two groups.

I considered it very important that the Cabinet Members were drawn from a wide geographic area and that means having representation from the three Shires.



It was necessary to appoint some Cabinet members who had experience and understanding either of the Cabinet itself or of the way that the Council is run and of the services that are provided. I chose four members plus myself who had that experience and I also chose five new Councillors who had other types of experience and expertise to contribute. I also tried to choose from across the age range so that younger Councillors were given opportunities.

I was also aware of the importance of the Welsh language and appointed two Cabinet members who are Welsh speakers.

Underpinning all these considerations, I wanted to address the gender balance but also to address that gender balance within the three Shires.

Because of the depth and breadth of work that Cabinet members are expected to undertake then the obvious capability issues naturally applied.

As we only have 23 female members out of a possible 73 in Powys it is important that women are also represented on other groups like Scrutiny and other committees and on outside bodies such as the Brecon Beacons National Park Authority and Fire Authority.

I think, in appointing the Cabinet I have done as much as I could, within the boundaries of fairness and equity to all.

In response to Councillor Durrant's supplementary question on how to encourage more women to stand for election, the Leader said that she recognised that this was not a problem unique to Powys having just given a speech on the subject at the Fawcett Society. She said she would welcome a debate in Council as to the best ways of encouraging more female candidates.

**19.3. Question to the Portfolio Holder for HR, ICT and Communications from County Councillor James Evans**

**The situation for the council's workforce in Powys is different, though still leaves much to be desired. Whilst women make up the majority of the Council's workforce in Powys, this is not reflected in positions of power – 59% of roles for senior managers and above are held by men (SEP Annual Monitoring 2015-16).**

**This raises a question to the Portfolio Holder for Equality:  
Will Cllr James Evans commit to see power equality within its workforce in his term?**

**Answer**

Council has for many years committed to equality of opportunity for men and women regardless of race, ethnicity, religious or cultural heritage, age, disability or sexual orientation. This commitment is enshrined in employment policies, values and behaviours and code of conduct.

Officer appointments are based on fair recruitment and selection practices and are made on merit.

Currently, two women hold leadership posts at Management Team: the interim Strategic Director People and the Joint Director Workforce and Organisational Development. The Interim Chief Social Worker Officer/ Operations Director Social Care post is held by a woman and there are three female Heads of Service and several Senior Managers.

In terms of percentage representation, the council can improve its position for leadership posts being filled by women.

Flexible working for employees features prominently and together with agile working attracts many people, particularly women, to work for and remain with the Council.

In answer to Councillor Durrant's supplementary question as to what he perceived to be the main barriers to more women in senior roles, the Portfolio Holder said that he would be working with the Joint Director Workforce and Organisational Development to offer more training to both women and men in middle management and lower grade posts.

**19.4. Question to the Portfolio Holder for Children, Youth, Libraries and Leisure Services from County Councillor Gareth Ratcliffe**

**I along with local residents am pleased to see the council is revisiting decisions on waste recycling centres and parking. Will the Leader of the Council be open to discussions on revisiting the Library reduction in hours policy were communities can show the wider impact on council services if there is a reduction in hours?**

**Answer**

Powys County Council and the Library Service is very open to any innovative proposals and discussions which can help to sustain or increase library opening hours for residents to benefit from a whole range of resources and facilities, whilst still enabling the service to achieve their budgetary savings target for 2018/19, under the medium term financial strategy. This policy of community conversations was approved by informal Cabinet in Feb 2016, and has borne great fruit in sustaining valued local libraries. Successful partnership working in communities such as Llanidloes, Llanfair Caereinion and Crickhowell for example have enabled local savings targets to be already met in those areas, with very minimal disruption to the service users, and the service is grateful to the communities for their support.

In Hay in particular, the service is very willing to working with the Town Council, Hay-on-Wye Library Supporters group and the wider community of Hay on Wye in order to achieve the best possible outcome for local residents using the town's library for a wide variety of purposes, including accessing other council services. For some time, there has been a firm proposal to work with the Schools Service,

to reduce premises costs through co-locating the library with a brand new facility in the new primary school. This proposal has many advantages, not least the proximity of easily accessible disabled car parking, and the facility for the pupils and their families to have ready access to the library, to boost reading and library use. It builds on successful partnership working with schools and the Schools Service, in Llanwrtyd and Crickhowell, and the model is being duplicated in the new Ysgol Mynydd Du, for the benefit of Talgarth and Bronllys residents.

Although plans are well developed, the primary school co-location does not rule out further discussion around Hay Library, and the community has a further period, until 31<sup>st</sup> December 2017, to put forward fully costed proposals to sustain or develop the library, either in its current location or at the new primary school, whilst also achieving the local saving target. This would build on the generous support already given by Hay Festival to maintain local opening hours since 1<sup>st</sup> April 2015, and we look forward to hearing about the innovative partnership proposals which are sure to emerge from such a creative town.

There was no supplementary question.

**19.5. Question to the Portfolio Holder for Housing and Countryside Services from County Councillor Gareth Ratcliffe**

**Question**

**Following queries raised by residents that they are being charged for washing line rental and have to share with other tenants, as well as alarm call cover they do not even have set up on their weekly rental break down, can the portfolio please provide a breakdown of the list of what council tenants could be charged (including cost) and how they are able to opt out of these charges if they do not receive or wish to receive them as part of their rent?**

**Answer**

Before the financial year 2016/17, the cost of managing and maintaining council housing was spread equally across all tenants regardless of the services they received. The introduction of the Housing (Wales) Act 2014 required local authorities to introduce service charges to tenants who receive additional services. This was introduced by the Welsh Government to take account of changes introduced into the Housing Benefit system, by the UK Government, which meant that some types of charges were no longer eligible for Housing Benefit. Therefore since 2016/2017 the Council, to comply with the 2014 Act has had to separate the costs of additional services and charge them to tenants and leaseholders who receive the 'additional services', in the form of a service charge. Therefore where the Council supplies washing lines, the tenants can expect to be charged for this service.

Individual tenants are not generally able to opt out of paying service charges, however if tenants collectively come up with an alternative solution, this may be considered.

The information in the table below gives the schedule of Service Charges levied in the current financial year.

Service	Highest Weekly Charge		Lowest Weekly Charge Where Charged (NB many residents have a zero charge for most items)		How Calculated
	16/17	17/18	16/17	17/18	
Grounds maintenance (for flats and bungalows only)	£2.10	£1.33	£.04	0.04	Calculated on a site by site basis, based on actual meterage and the cost of the contract.
Cleaning of communal areas	£1.15	£1.20	£1.15	£1.20	Based on the global cost of the contract divided by all recipients of the service.
Communal Heating and Lighting	£1.01	£0.73	£1.01	£0.73	Based on the cost of the service globally divided by all recipients.
Fire Safety Work	£1.61	£1.66	£0.21	£0.08	Based on actual costs per block and divided by all residents of the block.
TV Aerials	£0.52	£0.17	£0.01	£0.04	Based on the costs associated with each aerial and divided by all potential recipients.
Repairs to Entrance Doors	£5.13	£1.84	£.006	£0.06	Based on actual costs per block and divided by all residents of the block.
Communal Washing Lines	£.05	£0.26	£0.04	£0.03	Based on actual costs per block and divided by all residents of the block.
Sewerage Treatment	N/A	£4.62	N/A	£4.62	Based on the cost of the service contract for 2017/18 (this year's figure is used because the figure for 2016/17 was uncompetitive). The costs of additional repairs in 2016/17 is added, with the cost spread over 5 years. The running costs ie electricity and grounds maintenance. All costs pooled between all recipients of the service so each user is charged

					the same amount.
Lift Maintenance	N/A	£6.49	N/A	£6.49	Costs split equally between all tenants

All tenants were made aware of these charges, along with their rent liability, 4 weeks prior to the start of the new financial year. The Housing Service does produce rent statements for tenants upon request. The statement details the charges on their account and payments received. We previously produced quarterly rent statements but have moved to producing them on request, due to the costs of postage and the fact that tenants had requested this information in alternative formats eg via e-mail.

In respect of community alarms, these have been placed in all of our older persons' and are considered a feature of the property. Therefore alarms will not be removed from the property and we will in the near future be renewing the alarms in all of the council's older persons' accommodation.

If a tenant does not wish to make use of the service then that is their choice but they will still be liable to pay the weekly charge. It should be noted that those tenants who receive full Housing Benefit, the cost of the alarm is covered by the payment of Supporting People Programme Grant and therefore the tenants contribution is nil.

In response to Councillor Ratcliffe's supplementary question as to whether an equality impact assessment had been undertaken before the decision had been made and if it could be shared with members, the Portfolio Holder advised that he would find out and let members know.

**19.6. Question to Portfolio Holder for Housing & Countryside Services from County Councillor Graham Breeze**

**Some residential properties in the ownership of Powys County Council appear to be treated with little respect by the tenant and as a result are being allowed to deteriorate at a long-term cost to the council, while at the same time causing problems for adjoining tenants.**

**Could the Portfolio Holder outline the council procedures for:**

- a. Identifying problem properties.**
- b. Whether there are scheduled inspection processes in place.**
- c. What action has been taken against problem tenants in the last 12 months?**

**Answer**

The issue of nuisance neighbours is something which all landlords (including social landlords like the council) have had to manage for a significant period of time and over the last few decades UK Governments have introduced legislation to enable social landlords to take action against such tenants. Much of the attention and legislation has focussed on tenants who are responsible for criminal acts and anti-social behaviour which adversely affects their neighbours. As a local housing authority we have responsibilities to:

- our tenants who rent their homes from the council and those who live on our estates
- to people who are homeless or threatened with homelessness.

In addition, as a corporate body we also have responsibilities to protect vulnerable adults and children, and all of these responsibilities colour the response that we take as a landlord to each instance of anti-social behaviour.

In terms of each of the questions posed

- a. Each Housing Management & Options Officer (HMOO) manages a patch of approximately 300 homes and they each inspect their patches regularly, either as part of a formal estate inspection, or in the course of their duties when they visit the estate. Problems are also reported to us by our contractors, other departments, Councillors and, of course, neighbours.
- b. There is not a scheduled inspection regime, as different housing areas need different levels of input at different times but we aim to inspect all of our housing areas on a regular basis. Where we are aware of tenants who are not complying with the conditions of their tenancy, in particular to keep the property in good order, such tenants will be subject to more frequent visits and inspections when compared to tenants who comply with the conditions of tenancy.
- c. We are unable to provide a figure for the actions we have taken against “problem tenants” as we do not use the term “problem tenants” and this is not something that we routinely collect data on. Generally there are a range of actions that we are able to take against tenants who breach the conditions of their tenancy agreement and cause nuisance and annoyance to others, this varies from warnings, the provision of support, multi-agency working to address the tenants difficulties, securing undertakings and/or injunctions to compel the tenant to undertake an action or stop them undertaking an action and finally action to recover possession of the home.

Some tenants do presents difficulties within the local community and our approach is to attempt to work with these tenants to assist them address the difficulties they are experiencing, which have led to the problems experienced by their neighbours. In a number of these cases we find the tenant and or their family members require support as the household suffers a range of challenges. When faced with a tenant who is causing problems for their neighbours we typically follow the approach shown below, the emphasis is on balancing enforcement and support:

- Talk to the tenant, make them understand what is expected of them, what our concerns are and what they need to do to rectify the situation.
- Understand from them if there are any difficulties or barriers stopping them managing the tenancy in a way that is acceptable
- Work with support agencies as appropriate to enable them to meet the standards expected (not every case requires support)
- Warn them that the tenancy is under threat if they do not comply – this is done verbally and in writing
- Follow up visits to ensure compliance
- Threaten legal action (this is typically eviction action or an injunction)

The difficulty of taking possession action against a tenant who is allowing their home to fall into disrepair is that the Ground for Possession (Ground 3), as set out in Schedule 2 to the Housing Act 1985, is a discretionary ground and it is unlikely that a County Court Judge will grant a possession order to the landlord, particularly where the tenant has difficulties, such as mental health problems or where the tenant has dependent children living in their household.

There was no supplementary question.

**19.7. Question to the Portfolio Holder for Property and Waste Services from County Councillor David Selby**

**Could the Portfolio Holder please confirm when he believes the Community Asset Transfer of the open space and amenity land in Newtown to Newtown and Llanllwchaiarn Town Council will be completed?**

**Answer**

The extent of the land to be transferred has still not been resolved. Therefore the legal process of transferring assets has not yet commenced.

We are planning to reiterate our position to the Town Council following a Cabinet meeting in the hope that we can move forward with the asset transfer of most of the land requested.

In answer to Councillor Selby's supplementary question about the lottery bid and investment being put at risk by delays to the transfer, the Portfolio Holder confirmed that he would be attending a meeting in Newtown to discuss the issue.

**19.8. Question to the Portfolio Holder for Property and Waste from County Councillor Huw Williams**

**The Council is undertaking an urgent review into the impact of cuts to the Household Waste Recycling Centres.**

**What are the terms and scope of the review and when will the final report be published?**

**Answer**

A review has been carried covering the first two months of the changes at the Household Waste Recycling Centres. This review has looked at the number of complaints, tonnage throughput at the sites, site usage, incidents and quantities of reported fly-tipping, and the effect on the recycling rate. This has informed the paper to Cabinet on 11th July which is recommending that the opening days at all sites are increased to five and that a permit scheme is introduced for residents to use commercial type vehicles and trailers for their own household waste. The report was made publicly available with the agenda of the meeting on 5th July 2017.

Councillor Williams had left the meeting, but before doing so he had asked the Portfolio Holder how the permit scheme would be paid for and the Portfolio Holder for Property and Waste explained that it would be free.

## 19.9. Question to the Leader from County Councillor Matthew Dorrance

### **Will the Cabinet make a statement on how it fulfils this Council's responsibilities as part of the Armed Forces Covenant?**

#### **Answer**

The Powys Armed Forces Community Covenant is a formal commitment to mutual support between the County's civilian and armed forces communities, with a special focus on service children.

It was signed at the Armed Forces Day National Event on Dering Lines Brecon on Thursday 4<sup>th</sup> August 2012.

At the heart of the covenant is a shared understanding that service families receive all the support available to them from the public and voluntary sectors in Powys.

It aims to raise awareness of the issues affecting the armed forces community and ensure that the County's service families and veterans are not disadvantaged in any way – by improving access to housing, healthcare and employment for example.

Signing the covenant also gives Powys the opportunity to bid for UK-wide funding.

Since 2012 the Armed Forces Community Covenant has evolved and a new way of working is now in place. There are now Regional Devolved Administration Boards under which Regional Covenant Partnerships sit. In most cases they are defined by Health Board areas, but Powys is unique because it sits alone due to the size of the County.

We have always worked in Partnership with:

- Brecon Beacons National Park
- NPTC Group
- Royal British Legion
- PAVO
- Powys Teaching Health Board
- Mid Wales Manufacturing Group

New partnerships have been formed to continue and improve the aims of the Armed Forces Community Covenant, namely:

- Army Families Federation
- Joint Director Workforce and Organisation Development (Workforce and Organisation Development)
- SSAFA
- Powys Dyfed Police
- Wales & West Fire Service

Workforce and Organisation Development are working with the Army Families Federation regarding employment opportunities within the Local Health Board and Powys County Council with the spouses of the Armed Forces personnel, many of which have the skills required in both organisations.



Ongoing work with the Powys Armed & Ex Forces Health Forum, highlighting and raising issues such as PTSD, enabling GP's to be aware that they are treating ex forces personnel so that a correct referral can be made.

Supporting Service Children in Education is the NPTC part of the partnership. Connections have been made through the partnership with a local school in Brecon which was successful in gaining funding, highlighting the issues of service children.

Two Community Days are being arranged to take place on 9<sup>th</sup> September at The Barracks, Brecon and on the 23<sup>rd</sup> September at The Park, Newtown.

It is envisaged that all of those that are in the partnership are represented on both days, primarily to showcase partnership working and the Armed Forces Covenant, but also to make a 'fun day' out for the family. Covenant funding has been secured to hold this event from the Armed Forces Covenant Small Grant fund, as this is the essence of the Covenant, bringing the Armed Forces and the public together.

In response to Councillor Dorrance's supplementary question, the Leader confirmed that a scheme allowing for free use of swimming pools and gym membership by armed forces veterans was being developed, based on a scheme operating in Rhondda Cynon Taff Council.

#### **19.10. Question to the Leader from County Councillor Roger Williams**

**In the White Paper entitled "Reforming Local Government: Resilient and Renewed" the Welsh Government writes in question 25:**

**"The Welsh Government intends to make a return to a form of the Committee system available to local authorities where best meets local circumstances."**

**Does the Council have any information when that may become available?**

#### **Answer**

The consultation on Welsh Government's White Paper – "Reforming Local Government: Resilient and Renewed" - ended on 11<sup>th</sup> April, 2017 and Welsh Government are considering the responses received. The First Minister Carwyn Jones on Tuesday 27<sup>th</sup> June set out the legislative programme for the year ahead. This includes legislation to reform local government.

It is currently anticipated that Welsh Government would bring forward draft legislation in the first half of 2018. It is unknown whether any proposals relating to the reintroduction of a committee system will be included in the draft legislation.

In response to Councillor Williams' supplementary question as to whether the Council would have an opportunity to discuss the best governance structure for the Council if the Welsh Government legislated to allow for a return to the committee system, the Leader advised that it would be appropriate for Council to debate a recommendation from the Democratic Services Committee.

#### **19.11. Urgent question to the Portfolio Holder for Housing and Countryside Services from County Councillor Matthew Dorrance**

**Today (12/7/17), I became aware that three men in the Brecon area are sleeping rough with only tents as their cover. These men are unable to access appropriate housing because they are not considered to be 'priority'.**

**With further changes coming to the Local Housing Allowance, particularly for those aged under 35, it is possible that this shameful situation could grow.**

**Will Cabinet urgently look at the three cases this question highlights and will the Cabinet Member assess the need for hostel provision in the County?**

### **Answer**

I have been advised by Officers that they are aware of two adult males who are currently living in tents in Brecon. Officers assisted another individual who was previously living in a tent into temporary accommodation about a month ago.

I am advised that Officers have been in frequent contact with both individuals and I have asked that Cllr Matthew Dorrance be provided with information on the contacts officers have had with them.

Cllr Matthew Dorrance is correct that the introduction of changes to the benefit system which commenced in April 2012 and extended the Local Housing Allowance (LHA) Shared Accommodation Rate to all single people aged under 35 (it had previously been in place for single people aged under 25 until this time). The current LHA Shared Accommodation Rate in Brecon is £45.90 per week. The extension of LHA Shared Accommodation Rate to under 35's has had the effect of reducing the amount of privately rented property which is available for single people under 35 who are in receipt of benefits to rent. In addition, from April 2018 the LHA Shared Accommodation Rate will be applied to under 35's in the social housing sector, further reducing the amount of property which is available for people aged under 35 who are in receipt of benefits to rent.

The council is currently undertaking a review of homelessness in accordance with S.50 Housing (Wales) Act 2014. This will take into account a range of factors set out in the legislation and Welsh Government Guidance and will result in the production of a Homelessness Strategy by December 2018. Whilst the council does have a stock of temporary accommodation in the county, either owned and managed directly or owned and managed by other agencies (such as housing associations and voluntary sector agencies), the review will consider whether the council and its partners need to provide additional temporary accommodation. Of equal importance is also the need to consider the provision and management of shared accommodation within the social rented housing stock (both the council and housing associations) to provide suitable accommodation which is affordable for single people aged under 35 who are in receipt of benefits.

In response to Councillor Dorrance's supplementary question if the Portfolio Holder would give a commitment to the Council providing hostel accommodation for young men not deemed to be priority, the Portfolio Holder said he would look into the circumstances of the men Councillor Dorrance had drawn to his attention to. He was concerned that the homelessness register wasn't able to cope with

the numbers seeking assistance and he gave an undertaking to consider hostel accommodation and to keeping members updated.

**County Councillor DE Davies**  
**Chair**