



City and County of Swansea

Minutes of the Council

Multi-Location Meeting - Council Chamber, Guildhall / MS

Teams

Thursday, 25 January 2024 at 5.00 pm

Present: Councillor J P Curtice (Chair) Presided

Councillor(s)

C Anderson
M Baker
S Bennett
P N Bentu
P M Black
A Davis
A M Day
P Downing
C R Doyle
M Durke
C R Evans
C M J Evans
E W Fitzgerald
R Fogarty
R Francis-Davies
N Furlong
L S Gibbard
K M Griffiths
H J Gwilliam
T J Hennegan

Councillor(s)

C A Holley
P R Hood-Williams
B Hopkins
L James
O G James
Y V Jardine
A J Jeffery
D H Jenkins
J W Jones
L R Jones
M H Jones
M Jones
S M Jones
S Joy
S E Keeton
A S Lewis
M B Lewis
W G Lewis
M W Locke
P M Matthews

Councillor(s)

P N May
J D McGettrick
F D O'Brien
A J O'Connor
D Phillips
C L Philpott
J E Pritchard
S Pritchard
S J Rice
B J Rowlands
R V Smith
R C Stewart
L G Thomas
W G Thomas
M S Tribe
G D Walker
L V Walton
T M White
R A Williams

Officer(s)

Gareth Borsden	Democratic Services Officer
Huw Evans	Head of Democratic Services
Martin Nicholls	Chief Executive
Ben Smith	Director of Finance / Section 151 Officer
Debbie Smith	Deputy Chief Legal Officer

Apologies for Absence

Councillor(s): A Anthony, M Bailey, V M Evans, V A Holland, D H Hopkins, E J King, E T Kirchner, H Lawson, R D Lewis, P Lloyd and N L Matthews

79. Disclosures of Personal and Prejudicial Interests.

The Chief Legal Officer gave advice regarding the potential personal and prejudicial interests that Councillors and / Officers may have on the agenda.

The Head of Democratic Services reminded Councillors and Officers that the "Disclosures of Personal and Prejudicial Interests" sheet should only be completed if the Councillor / Officer had an interest to declare. Nil returns were not required. Councillors and Officers were also informed that any declarable interest must be made orally and in writing on the sheet.

In accordance with the provisions of the Code of Conduct adopted by the City and County of Swansea the following interests were declared.

- 1) Councillors P Downing & R A Fogarty declared a Personal & Prejudicial Interest in Minute 87 "Adoption of the Council Tax Reduction Scheme." and left prior to discussion.
- 2) Councillors D H Jenkins & P M Matthews declared a Personal Interest in Minute 87 "Adoption of the Council Tax Reduction Scheme."
- 3) Councillors C Anderson, M Baker & T J Hennegan declared a Personal & Prejudicial Interest in Minute 88 "Housing Revenue Account (HRA) Rent Setting 2024/25." And left prior to discussion.
- 4) Councillors A Davies, P Downing, N Furlong & T M White declared a Personal Interest in Minute 88 "Housing Revenue Account (HRA) Rent Setting 2024/25."

80. Minutes.

Resolved that the following Minutes be approved and signed as a correct record:

- 1) Ordinary Meeting of Council held on 7 December 2023.

81. Written Responses to Questions asked at the Last Ordinary Meeting of Council.

The Chief Legal Officer submitted an information report setting out the written responses to questions asked at the last Ordinary Meeting of Council.

82. Announcements of the Presiding Member.

i) Condolences

a) Former Councillor Nortridge Perrot

The Presiding Member referred with sadness to the recent death of former Councillor Nortridge Perrott. Nortridge represented the Uplands Ward on:

- Swansea City Council 1994-1996.
- City & County of Swansea 1995-1999.

All stood as a mark of sympathy & respect.

ii) New Year's Honours

The Presiding Member congratulated those Citizens of Swansea who received awards in the New Year Honours.

a) Member of the Order of the British Empire (MBE)

- i) Robert Terence Grey. Lately Boxing Gym Owner and Trainer, Gwent Amateur Boxing Club. For services to Amateur Boxing in Swansea.
- ii) Alfred Oluwafemi Oyekoya. Director, Black Asian Minority Ethnic Mental Health Support. For services to Minority Ethnic Communities in Wales.

b) British Empire Medal (BEM)

- i) Leslie John Want. For services to the community in Sketty and Swansea.

iii) Santes Dwynwen

The Presiding Member stated that It was Santes Dwynwen day today (25-01-2024), the Welsh and Celtic Patron saint of friendship and love. The popularity and celebration of St Dwynwen's day has increased considerably in recent years. Remember to tell your partner that you love them.

iv) Britain's Best Large Indoor Market 2024

The Presiding Member stated that the National Association of British Market Authorities had awarded Swansea Market the Britain's Best Large Indoor Market award. Swansea Market had previously won this award in 2015 & 2020.

v) Amendments / Corrections to the Council Summons

a) Urgent Item - Notice of Motion - Tata Steel

The Presiding Member stated that pursuant to paragraph 100B (4)(b) of the Local Government Act 1972, she considered that the "Notice of Motion – Tata Steel" should be considered at the meeting as a matter of urgency.

Reason for Urgency: Given that Tata Steel recently announced their intention to cut thousands of jobs this year which will have huge local and regional impacts, this is the only opportunity for this Council to consider and debate this Motion to put pressure on Tata Steel and Government.

83. Announcements of the Leader of the Council.

i) Tata Steel

The Leader of the Council referred to the recent Tata Steel announcement which will lead to approximately 2,800 job losses. He stated that all 22 Council

Leader's in Wales were working with the Welsh Local Government Association to lobby Tata Steel to reconsider the decision.

The impact of the proposal was devastating with a projected loss of £150m to the economy and potentially three times that for the associated supply chain elements.

84. Public Questions.

There were no Public Questions asked.

85. Corporate Parenting Pledges.

The Cabinet Member for Care Services submitted a report that outlined work completed with care experienced children and young people based in Swansea, regarding the Council's duty to be Corporate Parents. The report outlined the seven pledge areas related to children's rights that have been co-produced between Councillors and young people.

The Cabinet Member for Care Services welcomed several recipients of care to the meeting and Rose & Aaron were invited to address Council.

Resolved that:

- 1) The report and attached pledges be approved.

86. Progress Report on Swansea Councils Children & Young People's Rights Scheme 2021 – 2023.

The Cabinet Member for Community submitted a report that outlined the progress made regarding implementation of a whole Council approach to the refreshed Children & Young People's Rights Scheme.

Resolved that:

- 1) The 2021/2023 progress report on the implementation of a whole Council approach to the refreshed Children's Rights Scheme be approved.
- 2) Permission be granted to amend the reporting cycle to five years in line with Welsh Government. Work will be on-going throughout this period with progress reports produced mid-term and at the end of the cycle.
- 3) The Children's Rights Scheme 2021 be amended to reflect the revised reporting cycle.

87. Adoption of the Council Tax Reduction Scheme.

The Section 151 Officer submitted a report that outlined the requirement to annually consider whether to revise or replace the Council's existing Council Tax Reduction Scheme and the requirement to either adopt a new scheme or re-adopt the existing

scheme by 31 January 2024. It also recommended the re-adoption of the current scheme as set out in Section 3 of the report for the period 2024/2025.

Resolved that:

- 1) The Council Tax Reduction Schemes and Prescribed Requirements (Wales) Regulations 2013 (the "Prescribed Requirements Regulations") by the National Assembly for Wales (Now Senedd Cymru) on 26 November 2013, as amended, be noted.
- 2) The amendments to the "Prescribed Requirements Regulations" contained in The Council Tax Reduction Schemes (Prescribed Requirements and Default Scheme) (Amendment) (Wales) Regulations 2024, considered by Senedd Cymru on 16 January 2024 be noted.
- 3) The outcome of the consultation exercise undertaken by the Council in November 2023 on the discretionary areas of the current scheme be noted.
- 4) The discretionary areas of the current scheme (2023/2024) (as set out in Section 3 of the report) remain unchanged for the period 2024/2025.
- 5) The Council adopts the scheme as set out in Section 3 of the report, to include any mandatory amendments which may be necessary as a result of The Council Tax Reduction Schemes (Prescribed Requirements and Default Scheme) (Wales) (Amendment) Regulations 2024.

88. Housing Revenue Account (HRA) Rent Setting 2024/25.

The Cabinet Member for Service Transformation submitted a report that proposes an increase in rents and fees and charges for properties within the HRA for 2024/2025.

Resolved that:

- 1) Rents be increased in line with the Welsh Government policy as detailed in Section 3.1 of the report.
- 2) Fees, charges, and allowances be approved as outlined in Section 3.2 of the report.

Note:

- 1) Councillor C A Holley stated that he agreed that Swansea Council should not be charging for a Service Charge; however he would like an explanation of what Registered Social Landlords (RSL's) do in relation to Service Charges.

The Cabinet Member for Service Transformation stated that a written response would be provided.

- 2) Councillor P M Black asked if there was a service charge in place for the Warden Service?

The Cabinet Member for Service Transformation stated that a written response would be provided.

89. Review of Polling Districts, Polling Places and Polling Stations.

The Returning Officer submitted a report that seek approval for the proposed changes to Polling Districts, Polling Places & Polling Stations and to agree further investigation into the possible movement of several polling station venues.

Resolved that:

- 1) The consultation responses received in relation to the Review of Polling Districts and Polling Places which are summarised at Appendix 2 of the report be noted.
- 2) The final proposals to the Polling Districts and Polling Places as outlined in Appendix 3 of the report be approved.
- 3) The Returning Officer continue to monitor Polling Districts, Polling Places and Polling Stations where no suitable alternative venue is available at the present time.

90. Amendments to the Council Constitution - Constitution Working Group - Terms of Reference.

The Presiding Member, Monitoring Officer and Head of Democratic Services jointly submitted a report that informed Council of amendments to simplify, improve and / or add to the Council Constitution.

The amendments related to a recommendation of the Constitution Working Group to amend its Terms of Reference.

Resolved that:

- 1) The Terms of Reference of the Constitution Working Group be amended to include:

“e) *To consider any issue that requires cross Political Group discussion*”.

91. Adoption of the Naming Policy.

The Cabinet Member for Corporate Services & Performance submitted a report that recommended the adoption of a Naming Policy.

Resolved that:

- 1) The Naming Policy be adopted.

92. Councillors' Questions.

1) Part A 'Supplementary Questions'

Eight (8) Part A 'Supplementary Questions' were submitted. The relevant Cabinet Member(s) responded by way of written answers contained in the Council Summons.

Those supplementary questions required a written response are listed below.

Question 3

Councillor S J Rice asked "What is the breakdown between what the Council had spent on the Arena and what had come from external funding?"

The Leader of the Council stated that this information had been previously published as part of the Swansea Bay City Region; however, he would provide a written response.

Question 8

Councillor S Bennett asked "What action was being taken to remove plastics from River Tawe prior to high tides taking them into the sea?"

The Leader of the Council stated that a written response would be provided.

2) Part B 'Questions not requiring Supplementary Questions'

Twelve (12) Part B 'Questions not requiring Supplementary Questions' were submitted.

93. Urgent Item - Notice of Motion - Tata Steel

The Presiding Member stated that pursuant to paragraph 100B (4)(b) of the Local Government Act 1972, she considered that the "Notice of Motion from Councillors R C Stewart, D H Hopkins, A S Lewis, C Anderson, A Anthony, R Francis-Davies, L S Gibbard, H J Gwilliam, E J King, R V Smith, A H Stevens, C A Holley, W G Lewis, M B Lewis, L V Walton & N L Matthews in relation to Tata Steel should be considered at the meeting as a matter of urgency.

Reason for Urgency: Given that Tata Steel recently announced their intention to cut thousands of jobs this year which will have huge local and regional impacts, this is the only opportunity for this Council to consider and debate this Motion to put pressure on Tata Steel and Government.

94. Notice of Motion - Tata Steel

Proposed by Councillor R C Stewart and Seconded by Councillor C A Holley.

"This Council is deeply concerned following the announcement by Tata and the UK Government to cease virgin steel production at Port Talbot with the closure of both blast furnaces and the loss of some 2,500 jobs.

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The loss of 2,500 jobs will mean an annual direct loss of over £100m to the local economy and the loss of over £300m annually, when associated jobs and the supply chain impacts are included.

Leaders across Wales have already expressed their anger at this announcement.

Steel making in the UK is viewed as a strategic industry and part of the UK's critical national capability.

Closure of virgin steel-making capacity in the UK in this way, with a gap of several years and considerable uncertainty over investment in alternative electric arc technology, will leave the UK exposed and increasingly reliant on imported steel.

This will repeat the mistakes made in the energy market by leaving the UK the subject of market forces and reliant on foreign powers for its steel supply.

Whilst we fully support the need to decarbonise the economy and steel making, we are strongly of the view that there must be a managed transition towards low and zero carbon.

Tata's proposal will result in large scale direct job losses and far greater numbers of indirect job losses in associated service and supply companies. For the communities involved this will be disastrous. We have seen the impact of major industrial closures in Wales before and many of our communities have never fully recovered from the impact such events have on people's lives.

There is huge potential for new, green industry in Wales, especially associated with developments in the renewable and low carbon energy industry, currently being funded and delivered by the City Deal, that can help us transition to more sustainable ways of living and working.

Retaining one of the blast furnaces would avoid a situation from which there is no return. It would sustain more jobs whilst allowing more time for adjustments in the labour market and exploration of other technologies that may enable virgin steel production to be retained in Wales and the UK.

This council asks that the Leader as Chair of the City Region write to the UK Government and Tata to demand that the UK Government work with the Welsh Government, Tata, and the Unions to explore all opportunities to protect the UK steel making capability and protect jobs in the steel industry.

We ask that a fully representative regional task force be established to examine all the options to protect jobs and steel making opportunities."

Resolved that the Notice of Motion outlined above be adopted.

The meeting ended at 7.10 pm

Chair