

10 October, 2024

LLANELLI RURAL COUNCIL

Minute Nos: 173 – 176

At a Special Meeting of the **RECREATION AND WELFARE COMMITTEE** of the Llanelli Rural Council held at the Council Chamber, Vauxhall Buildings, Vauxhall, Llanelli, and via remote attendance on Thursday, 10 October, 2024 at 4.45 p.m.

Present: Cllr. D. M. Cundy (Chairman)

Cllrs.

T. M. Donoghue	J. S. Phillips
E. M. Evans	A. J. .Rogers
S. N. Lewis	W. E. Skinner
A. G. Morgan	A. G. Stephens

Absent: J. P. Hart

173. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Cllrs. M. V. Davies and O. Williams.

174. MEMBERS' DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Cllr. A. G. Stephens declared a personal interest in Minute No. 176 as he was a Trustee and Treasurer, Pro-Vision Llwynhendy and a member of Our Llwynhendy.

175. 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.

176. GWILI FIELDS, LLWYNHENDY

Cllr. A. G. Stephens declared a personal interest in the following matter as he was a Trustee and the Treasurer of Pro-vision Llwynhendy and a member of Our Llwynhendy.

Further to Minute No. 128, members received the report of the Community Development Officer informing of the outcome of the Sustainable Urban Drainage System (SUDs) application for the works at Gwili Fields, Llwynhendy.

10 October, 2024

Members were informed that officers recently met with the council's appointed architect to define the necessary initial drainage and landscaping works in order to deliver the project in line with the Shared Prosperity Fund (SPF) grant parameters and budget available. The SPF grant must be fully claimed by 31 December, 2024.

The contractor had provided costs for the following elements that must be completed to satisfy the criteria set in the conditions of the grant award. These works would be carried out first of all and claimed against the grant.

The total value of the planned phase 1 works was £121,000.25 and covered the following elements:

1. £31,690.20 Drainage works to the play area items only;
2. £33,605.50 Footpaths;
3. £32,307.00 Amphitheatre;
4. £23,397.55 Patio.

Phase 1 works included the preliminary costs associated with setting up the site. The contractor had outlined that works for phase 1 could begin on site on 15 October, 2024. Officers believed that ideally it was in the interests of the project to begin the phase 2 environmental works as soon as phase 1 works had been completed so as not to incur additional site set up costs and to deliver the project whole, thereby avoiding the contractor having to return to site at a later date. Phase 2 works included further drainage works, excavation, BMX trails, soft landscaping, tree / shrub planting and the creation of a wetland area.

The price of the approved tender submission was £256,539.95. The balance, minus phase 1 costs, was £135,539.70. The itemised breakdown of prices in the tender were detailed and negotiations were ongoing with the contractor to ensure that only the necessary elements were delivered within the available budget. Notwithstanding this ongoing exercise, the scheduled works had exceeded the original budget estimate and this was primarily attributed to the cost of drainage works, which amounted to £103,000 for the entire site. This was unforeseen when setting the original budget estimate as the impact of SUDs was unknown and was not a factor at the time. To keep costs to a minimum, the drainage works have been prioritised and limited to just the phase 1 works on an actual and necessary basis as itemised above so that the project could claim the capital contribution pledged by Our Llwynhendy and crucially, the SPF grant by the allotted deadline, which was quickly approaching at the end of the year. The contractor had confirmed that all phase 1 works would be completed before the 31 December 2024 deadline.

Thereupon members were reminded that the play scheme equipment and drainage and landscaping works to Gwili Fields was solely intended to be met from Our Llwynhendy's capital contribution and the SPF grant award. However, given the phase 1 costs had exceeded the original budget estimate of £262,500, it was now necessary to use some of the council's earmarked capital reserve for the hub project. This was imperative, as phase 1 works needed to commence immediately. Incurring any delay, would jeopardise drawing down the SPF grant by 31 December 2024 and by extension Our Llwynhendy's capital contribution. Our Llwynhendy's stance in supporting the hub project had always been premised on giving priority to developing the green space and recreational facilities, first and foremost.

10 October, 2024

The council's earmarked reserve currently stood at £176,627 and the following table depicted costs and sources of funding including the extent of phase 1 works as negotiated with the contractor:

Cost	Service	SPF £162,500	Our Llwynhendy £100,000	To be agreed
£199,999.99	Play Equipment	£99,999.99	£100,000	
£31,690.20	Phase 1 - Play Area	£31,690.20		
£33,605.50	Phase 1 - Paths	£30,809.81		£2,795.69
£32,307	Phase 1 - Amphitheatre			£32,307
£23,397.55	Phase 1 - Patio			£23,397.55
£2,880	SUDs Structural Engineer			£2,880
£3,750	Library pre Tender Structural Engineer			£3,750
£135,539.70	Phase 2 SUDs work			£135,539.70
		£162,500	£100,000	£200,669.94

Phase 1 works had a shortfall of £58,500.24 plus other professional fees which amounted to £6,630 giving a total of £65,130.24. This sum would have to be met from the earmarked reserve. This would reduce the earmarked reserve to £111,496.76 and members were invited to consider how the earmarked reserve could be replenished to its original sum of £200,000. This was important because this sum had been identified for the library building works.

Following discussion, it was

RESOLVED that:

1. The SAB approval of the council's SUDs application for Gwili Fields be noted.
2. The phase 1 drainage and landscaping works totalling £121,000.25 be approved and that the funding deficit of £65,130.24 be met from the earmarked reserve.

It was also

RECOMMENDED that the council gives consideration to:

1. Raising the precept for 2025/26 in order to replenish the earmarked reserve, if additional funding could not be identified via further stakeholder pledges or additional grants.
2. Similarly, how the remaining phase 2 environmental works totalling £135,539.70 (subsequent to the deduction of any additional savings being identified in the accepted tender) could be met alongside the total funding needed for the construction works required to the library building, should it transpire that no further stakeholder pledges were forthcoming and the council's grant bid(s) for building works proving to be unsuccessful.
3. The preparation of a general financial appraisal/plan of the resources needed to deliver all facets of the Llwynhendy Hub project and other council projects including the staffing resources required to sustain future services through increasing general capability and capacity. The appraisal/plan would identify the additional operating costs and how these costs could be possibly funded and sustained through the council's annual budget process over the next few years leading up to the next set of ordinary local government elections in 2027.

.....
The Meeting concluded at 5.17 p.m.
.....