

**Minutes of the Strong Communities Select Committee meeting
held in the Council Chamber, County Hall, Usk on
Thursday 12th March 2015 at 10.00 a.m.**

PRESENT: County Councillor S.G.M. Howarth (Chairman)

County Councillors: D.L.S. Dovey, A. Easson, R. Edwards, V.E. Smith and K. Williams

OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE:

Ms. K. Beirne	- Chief Officer, Enterprise
Mr. M. Howcroft	- Assistant Head of Finance
Mr. R. O'Dwyer	- Head of Property Services & Facilities Management
Mr. R. Nancarrow	- Shared Facilities Manager
Mr. J. McConnachie	- Training Lead
Mrs. L. Knight-Davies	- Senior Innovation Officer
Miss H. Ilett	- Scrutiny Manager
Mr. R. Williams	- Democratic Services Officer

SCRUTINY OF CRIME AND DISORDER MATTERS

1. There were no matters to discuss.

2. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from County Councillors S. Jones and S. White.

3. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Declarations of interest are identified under the relevant minute.

4. PUBLIC OPEN FORUM

There were no members of the public present.

5. CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES

The minutes of the Strong Communities Select Committee meeting held on Thursday 18th September 2014 were confirmed as an accurate record and signed by the Chairman.

In doing so, the following points were noted:

- The Scrutiny Manager read out to the Select Committee a letter that had been addressed to the Chairman of the Select Committee from a resident of Osbaston, Monmouth regarding planning application DC/2013/01071 and made reference to the number of objections to the application. The resident asked that the Select Committee investigates this matter.

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We resolved to receive the letter and that the Chairman would write back to the resident informing him that an officer would respond to his letter in due course.

- The local Member for Llanbadoc asked that a list of all Council meetings be forwarded to her in order that she might inform local residents of upcoming meetings within the Council. The local Member for St. Kingsmark also requested this information. The Chairman considered that the Select Committee needed to discuss ways in which the Select Committee could engage with the local community and the Town and Community Councils with help from the Communications Team.

6. DRAFT PEOPLE AND ORGANISATIONAL DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY – UPDATE REPORT

We scrutinised an update report regarding the draft People and Organisational Development Strategy. The Select Committee was also provided with a presentation which outlined the detail of the staff conference survey.

A draft strategy was approved by Cabinet in October 2014 to allow engagement and feedback before it is presented to Cabinet for approval.

Having received the report and presentation, the following points were noted:

- The final draft of the report will be presented to Cabinet in April / May 2015.
- Having an open day for members of the public for them to see what the Council is doing would be beneficial. This could be incorporated into the Strategy. It was noted that some services were already doing this, e.g., Leisure Services.
- In response to a Select Committee Member's question regarding I.T. provision for school based staff, the Chief Officer, Enterprise stated that a Teacher and Head Teacher Conference would shortly be held in which sessions on I.T. provision would be discussed. Investment in the I.T. infrastructure will be undertaken. It was noted that clear plans were being put in place to ensure that all schools' I.T. provision would be provided via the network. This would include access to the Hub.
- Reference was made to the Williams Report and white paper and whether the public had been consulted regarding Local Government Re-organisation. It was noted that the process was in its early stages of development and that staff were being updated as and when required. The Council will respond to the White Paper in due course.

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- It was pleasing to see that the Authority was providing appropriate training with a view to developing staff.
- In response to questions raised by a Select Committee Member, the Chief Officer, Enterprise stated that the benefits of agile working were evident, i.e., capital receipts generated, staff feedback has been positive, benefits to the public / customers has been identified.
- Check in, Check out (CICO) was proving beneficial to managers and staff.
- Staff were feeling valued.
- Talent Lab – Has been developed over the previous two years.
- The Hub identified the types of training being provided via Talent Lab. Training was focussed on achieving outcomes.
- Monmouthshire has developed its own coaching model. Managers trained in coaching generally performed 22% higher than managers that had been trained via more traditional methods.
- Agile working was about working with the customers.
- Private companies can help the Authority develop its internal talent by working in collaboration with companies.
- The training plan has been on-going for a number of years. There will be enough data available to be presented to Cabinet in April / May 2015.

We resolved:

- (i) to receive the report and presentation and noted their content;
- (ii) that the final draft of the report be emailed to Select Committee Members as part of the consultation process, before the report is presented to Cabinet.

7. FUTURE PROVISION OF PUBLIC CONVENIENCES

County Councillor A. Easson declared a personal, non-prejudicial interest pursuant to the Members' Code of Conduct as he is a member of Caldicot Town Council.

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County Councillor D.L.S. Dovey declared a personal, non-prejudicial interest pursuant to the Members' Code of Conduct as he is a member of Chepstow Town Council.

We scrutinised an update report on the provision of public conveniences at various sites within the County.

Select Committee Members were provided with a list of toilets where Monmouthshire County Council retains an interest and approved proposals for their future provision. The Select Committee outlined the following issues:

Tintern Car Park

- Total costs equated to £24,935.
- There was a revenue stream there for Tintern Community Council, Cadw and the local public house if the running of the toilets were taken over by them.
- The local Member for St. Arvans had been involved in discussions regarding the future provision of the toilet and should be included in future discussions.
- Cadw had its own toilets located within the Abbey. Consultation could be investigated with Cadw with view to opening up these toilets to the public.

TIC Chepstow

The management and cleaning of this toilet was in the process of being transferred to Chepstow Town Council.

Welsh Street / Bank Street, Chepstow

This toilet was in the process of being transferred to Chepstow Town Council.

Jubilee Way, Caldicot

This toilet was in the process of being transferred to Caldicot Town Council.

Maryport Street, Usk

Discussions are being held with Usk Town Council regarding the potential transfer of this toilet.

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Cattle Market, Monmouth

Monmouthshire County Council was currently responsible for this toilet and will retain responsibility until 2016/17. It will then transfer to Monmouth Town Council.

Agincourt Street, Monmouth

Funded by Monmouth Town Council. Transfer of asset being arranged.

Toilets within Abergavenny

We resolved:

- (i) that a report be presented to a future Select Committee meeting regarding these toilets and provide details of potential capital receipts;
- (ii) that the Head of Property Services & Facilities Management identifies who was currently paying for the up keep of the two toilets located within the Market Hall.

Caldicot Castle

The future of toilet provision at this location was linked to the future development of the Castle which would be funded via the Countryside Division's budget.

A449 Toilet provision

These were the responsibility of Welsh Government and were currently in a poor condition. However, the County Council had a cleansing contract with Welsh Government. The Welsh Government was currently reviewing its toilet provision.

Raglan Toilets

We resolved that Ben Winstanley, Sustainability Surveyor, be invited to a future Select Committee meeting to provide the Committee with an update on Raglan toilets.

Toilets at Woodside ,Usk

We resolved that a report on the running costs of this toilet be presented to a future Select Committee meeting.

We resolved to receive the report and noted its content.

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8. CAPITAL BUDGET MONITORING 2014/15 MONTH 9 OUTTURN FORECAST STATEMENT

County Councillor V.E. Smith declared a personal, non-prejudicial interest pursuant to the Members' Code of Conduct in respect of information relating to Usk School and Coleg Gwent.

We scrutinised the report in which Select Committee Members were provided with information on the capital forecast outturn position of the Authority at the end of month 9 for the 2014/15 financial year.

Having received the report, the following points were noted:

- Reference was made to the levels of slippage and that the authority needed to look for a different format in which budget holders needed to be more accountable to their managers regarding slippage. If that was not the case then the Authority should be looking to remove that from the programme. It was noted that capital schemes tended to take longer than revenue schemes. Therefore, slipping capital funds did not seem to be the right way forward in the current climate.
- Schemes needed to be more robust before being presented to the Select Committee. Slippage of capital funds needed to be considered as a priority and not carried over without proper reasoning.
- The Scrutiny Manager stated that a report by the Community Infrastructure Coordinator regarding the 3g pitch at Caldicot will be subject to an individual Cabinet Member's decision. The report had been emailed to Members for comment but no responses had been received by the officer. Concern had been expressed regarding the cost of this scheme and it was considered that Caldicot School should be funding this project. It was noted that the project had exceeded its budget and additional resources had been requested.
- Cattle Market Capital Funding – about £150,000 to £200,000 slippage. There were some issues relating to water that needed to be addressed.

We resolved:

- (i) to receive the report and noted its content;
- (ii) to support the recommendations for Cabinet, as follows:
 - That Members consider the position concerning 3rd quarter capital monitoring with a revised budget of £16.1 million, month 9 spending of £8.2 million and forecast spend of a further £7.7million in the last 3 months of the financial year, to derive an outturn underspend of £187,000.

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- That, in light of previous concerns about the level of progress with capital projects, Cabinet considers the slippage levels of £9.1 million identified in Appendix 1, and

- accepts slippage proposals totalling £8,159,000 subject to final outturn position being confirmed.
- de-prioritises schemes totalling £771,000 whose funding is of a general nature subject to the final outturn position being confirmed:

Property Maintenance Schemes	£185,000
Infrastructure Schemes	£218,000
ESR Access for All	£136,000
General Access for All	£200,000
RDP	£ 16,000
Cemeteries	£ 15,000

- Refers ICT schemes totalling £195,000 whose funding is from the IT transformation reserve to the Digital Board for them to consider whether the scheme should be decommitted or slipped as appropriate in the light of other pressures on the IT transformation Reserve
- That Cabinet seeks confirmation that practice designed to mitigate the level of slippage going forward in future years will be improved such as:
 - Ensuring that capital schemes are planned before the beginning of the financial year so that spend can take place in the better weather rather than risk being deferred due to inclement weather later in the year.
 - Ensuring that there is clear agreement of interested parties as to what is being delivered, that any other funding streams brought to the project by third parties is confirmed, and that the project can progress significantly in the year the budget is requested to be profiled.
 - Ensuring that project managers more carefully consider the plans to complete their schemes and estimate realistic timescales for completion so that budgets can be more accurately profiled.
 - Utilises in part the £771,000 scheme decommitment above to fund the £395,000 new capital priorities of the 2015-16 budget report as and unfinanced additional expenditure of £87,000 manifest at month 9 subject to final outturn position.

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9. REVENUE MONITORING 2014/15 MONTH 9 OUTTURN FORECAST STATEMENT

County Councillor V.E. Smith declared a personal, non-prejudicial interest pursuant to the Members' Code of Conduct in respect of information relating to Usk School and Coleg Gwent.

We scrutinised the report in which Select Committee Members were provided with information on the forecast revenue outturn position of the Authority at the end of month 9 for the 2014/15 financial year.

Having received the report, the following points were noted:

- Outdoor Education Centres – Monmouthshire County Council, Torfaen County Borough Council and Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council have formed a partnership. Newport County Borough Council was considering other options.

We resolved:

- (i) to receive the report and noted its content;
- (ii) to support a caveated use of reserves in relation to redundancy costs incurred by services this year totalling £545,000, whilst services will continue to find compensatory savings additional to the mandates to mitigate the net cost pressure by the end of the financial year.

10. STRONG COMMUNITIES SELECT COMMITTEE WORK PROGRAMME 2014 – 15

We received the Work Programme for the Strong Communities Select Committee. In doing so, the following points were noted:

- A special Meeting of the Strong Communities Select Committee will be held on 23rd April 2015 at 2.00pm to scrutinise two reports regarding issues relating to waste.
- that a report regarding toilets within Abergavenny be added to the Work programme to be presented to a future Select Committee meeting and to provide details of potential capital receipts.
- that Ben Winstanley, Estates Manager, be invited to a future Select Committee meeting to provide the Committee with an update on Raglan toilets.

We resolved to receive the work programme and noted its content.

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11. CABINET FORWARD WORK PLANNER

We resolved to receive the Cabinet Forward Work Planner and noted its content.

The meeting ended at 1.34pm.