

**Minutes of the Special Meeting of the Strong Communities Select Committee  
held at County Hall, Usk on Tuesday 18<sup>th</sup> November 2014 at 1.30 p.m.**

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

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

County Councillors D.L. Edwards, R. Greenland, R.G. Harris, P. Murphy  
and P. Hobson attended the meeting by invitation of the Chairman.

**OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE:**

Ms. K. Beirne	- Chief Officer, Enterprise
Mr. R. Hoggins	- Head of Operations
Mrs. D. Hill-Howells	- Head of Community Lead Delivery
Ms. R. Jowitt	- Head of Waste and Street Services
Ms. A. Bowen	- Senior Policy and Performance Officer
Mr. N. Leaworthy	- Commercial & Operations Manager, Waste & Street Services
Miss H. Ilett	- Scrutiny Manager
Mr. R. Williams	- Democratic Services Officer

**ALSO IN ATTENDANCE:**

Mr. O. Griffiths - Waste Resources Action Programme (WRAP)

**APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

1. Apologies for absence were received from County Councillor R.P. Jordan.

**DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

2. There were no declarations of interest.

**RECYCLING REVIEW**

3. We scrutinised a report regarding the recycling review prior to submission to Cabinet on 3<sup>rd</sup> December 2014 on the progress made to the strategic recycling review since the review was last brought to the Select Committee on 17<sup>th</sup> October 2013.

Having received the report, the following points were noted:

- The bullet point recommendations were cross cutting and could be reduced by merging some of them.
- In response to a Select Committee Member's question, it was noted that nappy collections were still being collected. However, a trial was being undertaken in some areas to see if it would be possible to increase the number of rounds.

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- A market assessment has been undertaken with no nappy recycler coming forward. Therefore, collections have continued.
- One Stop Shops were now asking members of the public for identification before issuing food waste bags in order to ensure that only residents of Monmouthshire were eligible to receive them.
- Tiger bags were available for a limited period with stocks only available for one year.
- There was an increase in the use of Monmouthshire's waste disposal sites from residents outside of Monmouthshire. The sites were not heavily staffed but this matter needed to be monitored.
- Efficiencies were being made on the Operational side.
- Upgrading of the Transfer Station was being undertaken. Funding was being received by the Welsh Government and Waste Resources Action Programme (WRAP) in order to review changing to waste collection method.
- Anaerobic Digestion (AD) – Monmouthshire County Council collects around 3000 tonnes of food waste per year. This was not of sufficient scale to build a County Council only AD plant. Having met with the Welsh Government a more cost effective way for Monmouthshire would be to sign a Memorandum of Understanding with three other local Authorities with a view to joining a regional Anaerobic Digestion hub. If value for money could be obtained, a report would be presented to the Select Committee before being received by Cabinet.
- Green Waste – The Welsh Government was funding a piece of work to determine whether green waste recycling could be provided in County.

We resolved to support the following recommendations which will be presented to Cabinet for consideration:

- That the existing method kerbside collection of dry recycling materials be continued subject to further Review.
- That gaps have been identified in the evidence available and data on the "necessity" to change i.e. a stronger evidence base is needed than currently exists on whether MCC ought to change. That further data needs thorough analysis before any final decision can be brought before Members and therefore it is recommended that an update report be brought to the Select Committee and Cabinet in 2015.
- Food and garden waste kerbside collections should be split, due to both the financial and environmental benefit of doing so.

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- Work should progress in terms of Monmouthshire County Council joining a regional Anaerobic Digestion hub.
- The timing of the food and green collection split will dovetail with the move to Anaerobic Digestion (AD), and could be aligned to a dry recycling change, but is not dependent on it;.
- Monmouthshire County Council should progress with studies looking at the business case for an open windrow site in Monmouthshire.
- Monmouthshire County Council should look into the potential provision of a reuse shop at the CA Sites.
- Monmouthshire County Council should also progress with the community composting initiative.

**PROVISION OF COMMUNITY HUBS AND A CENTRALISED TELEPHONY SERVICE**

- 4.- We scrutinised a report regarding the provision of Community Hubs and a centralised telephony service. The proposal would create community hubs in Abergavenny, Caldicot, Chepstow and Monmouth through the combining of the library service and One Stop Shop front desk service into a single venue. Also, improving the telephony, email and social media responses by centralising available resources into a single Contact Team.

Having received the report, the following points were noted:

- This was one of the Council's budget mandates.
- There would be a reduction in staff from 43 Full Time Equivalent (FTE) to 30 FTE staff creating a revenue saving in the sum of £300,000. Staff at risk were being made aware of their position and were being consulted.
- The Hub concept has been established in other local Authorities and was working well.
- Chepstow Hub – The existing building could be used with some minor changes as it currently houses the One Stop Shop and the library.
- Monmouth Hub – various options were available for the venue. A consultation process would be undertaken.
- Caldicot Hub – Locate the Hub in the pedestrianised area for the long term. However, temporarily locate the Hub within the library.
- Abergavenny Hub – Numerous options for consideration. A report was being prepared to be considered by Cabinet.
- Usk Hub – The scheme was ready and awaiting funding.

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- The Mandate report would be presented to the Select Committee for scrutiny before being presented to Cabinet. Further information would be required such as costings and capital assets.
- In response to a Select Committee Member's question regarding One Stop Shop Staff, the Head of Operations informed the Select Committee that staff have been emailing their views regarding the creation of the Hubs. Staff consider that the creation of the Hubs required them to have new job descriptions and person specifications in order for the broader function being provided by the staff was recognised.
- The Hub Model already existed throughout Wales. It was about having the right people with the right skill sets in the right location.
- In response to a Select Committee Member's question regarding opening hours of the Community Hubs, the Head of Operations stated that there was a need to identify the best use of resources to offer a service available for longer hours.
- In response to a Select Committee Member's question regarding the need for further data, the Head of Operations stated that he could provide this information to the Select Committee. All initial findings would be available at the Select Committee Meeting in December 2014.
- The Shared Resource Centre (SRS) was looking to amalgamate the telephony system, to be used by the Hubs, into Monmouthshire's system.

We resolved:

- (i) to receive the report and noted its content:
- (ii) that the Select Committee would scrutinise the mandate further at its meeting in December 2014.

**COUNTRYSIDE ACCESS**

- 5.- We resolved to defer consideration of this item to the next meeting of the Strong Communities Select Committee on 20<sup>th</sup> November 2014.

**The meeting terminated at 4.30pm.**