

26th June 2014

Dear Councillor

CABINET

You are requested to attend a **Cabinet** meeting to be held at **The Council Chamber, County Hall, Rhadyr, Usk, NP15 1GA on Wednesday, 2nd July 2014, at 2.00 p.m.**

AGENDA

1. Apologies for Absence
2. Declarations of Interest
3. Consideration of reports from Select Committees (none)
4. To consider the following reports (copies attached):
 - (i) **ADDITIONAL GRANT FUNDING FOR LOCAL AUTHORITIES TO DELIVER THE 'WALES RETAIL RELIEF SCHEME' AND TO SUPORT BUSINESSES MOST NEGATIVELY IMPACTED BY THE POSTPONEMENT OF REVALUATION**
Division/Wards Affected: N/A
Purpose: To provide Members with an update on the 'Wales Retail Relief Scheme' and to agree how the Authority allocates additional funding awarded, by the Welsh Government under the 'Local Needs Scheme' aimed at supporting businesses most negatively impacted by the postponement of revaluation..
Author: Ruth Donovan, Assistant Head of Finance, Revenues, Systems & Exchequer
Contact Details: ruthdonovan@monmouthshire.gov.uk

(ii) **FUTURE OF CEMETERY PROVISION IN NORTH EAST MONMOUTHSHIRE**

Division/Wards Affected: Central Monmouthshire

Purpose: To update Cabinet on the current position regarding the proposed site in the North East of the County; For Cabinet to make a decision on progressing with this site given the information shown in the update and depending on the outcome of 1.2, for Cabinet to make a decision regarding future burial provision in Central Monmouthshire.

Author: Debbie McCarty / Alan Browne – Area Services Officers

Contact Details: debbiemccarty@monmouthshire.gov.uk / alanbrowne@monmouthshire.gov.uk

Yours sincerely,

Paul Matthews
Chief Executive

CABINET PORTFOLIOS 2013

County Councillor	Area of Responsibility	Partnership and External Working	Ward
P.A. Fox (Leader)	Organisational Development Whole Council Performance, Whole Council Strategy Development, Corporate Services, Democracy.	WLGA Council WLGA Coordinating Board Local Service Board	Portskewett
R.J.W. Greenland (Deputy Leader)	Innovation, Enterprise & Leisure Innovation Agenda, Economic Development, Tourism, Social Enterprise, Leisure, Libraries & Culture, Information Technology, Information Systems.	WLGA Council Capital Region Tourism	Devauden
P.A.D. Hobson (Deputy Leader)	Community Development Community Planning/Total Place, Equalities, Area Working, Citizen Engagement, Public Relations, Sustainability, Parks & Open Spaces, Community Safety.	Community Safety Partnership Equalities and Diversity Group	Larkfield
E.J. Hackett Pain	Schools and Learning School Improvement, Pre-School Learning, Additional Learning Needs, Children's Disabilities, Families First, Youth Service, Adult Education.	Joint Education Group (EAS) WJEC	Wyesham
G. Howard	Environment, Public Services & Housing Development Control, Building Control, Housing Service, Trading Standards, Public Protection, Environment & Countryside.	SEWTA SEWSPG	Llanelly Hill
G. Burrows	Social Care & Health Adult Social Services including Integrated services, Learning disabilities, Mental Health. Children's Services including Safeguarding, Looked after Children, Youth Offending, Health and Wellbeing.	Gwent Frailty Board Older Persons Strategy Partnership Group	Mitchel Troy
P. Murphy	Resources Accountancy, Internal Audit, Estates & Property Services, Procurement, Human Resources & Training, Health & Safety.	Prosiect Gwrydd Wales Purchasing Consortium	Caerwent
S.B. Jones	County Operations Highways, Transport, Traffic & Network Management, Waste & Recycling, Engineering, Landscapes, Flood Risk.	SEWTA Prosiect Gwrydd	Goytre Fawr

Sustainable and Resilient Communities

Outcomes we are working towards

Nobody Is Left Behind

- Older people are able to live their good life
- People have access to appropriate and affordable housing
- People have good access and mobility

People Are Confident, Capable and Involved

- People's lives are not affected by alcohol and drug misuse
- Families are supported
- People feel safe

Our County Thrives

- Business and enterprise
- People have access to practical and flexible learning
- People protect and enhance the environment

Our priorities

- Schools
- Protection of vulnerable people
- Supporting Business and Job Creation

Our Values

- **Openness:** we aspire to be open and honest to develop trusting relationships.
- **Fairness:** we aspire to provide fair choice, opportunities and experiences and become an organisation built on mutual respect.
- **Flexibility:** we aspire to be flexible in our thinking and action to become an effective and efficient organisation.
- **Teamwork:** we aspire to work together to share our successes and failures by building on our strengths and supporting one another to achieve our goals.



REPORT

AGENDA ITEM I

Subject: ADDITIONAL GRANT FUNDING FOR LOCAL AUTHORITIES TO DELIVER THE 'WALES RETAIL RELIEF SCHEME' AND TO SUPPORT BUSINESSES MOST NEGATIVELY IMPACTED BY THE POSTPONEMENT OF REVALUATION

Directorate: Chief Executives

Meeting: Cabinet

Date: 2nd July 2014

Divisions/Wards Affected: N/A

1. PURPOSE:

To provide Members with an update on the 'Wales Retail Relief Scheme' and to agree how the Authority allocates additional funding awarded, by the Welsh Government under the 'Local Needs Scheme' aimed at supporting businesses most negatively impacted by the postponement of revaluation.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS:

- 2.1 That Cabinet agrees to implement the 'Wales Retail Relief Scheme' in accordance with the guidelines stipulated by the Welsh Government.
- 2.2 That Cabinet agrees to extend the Small Business Rate Relief Scheme to support local businesses most negatively affected by the postponement of revaluation, under the Local Needs Scheme.

3. BACKGROUND AND KEY ISSUES:

- 3.1 In October 2013 the Welsh Government announced a series of measures aimed at bringing long term empty properties back into use and to stimulate construction and development. Two new schemes – ‘Open for Business’ and ‘New Development Schemes’ were introduced. ‘Open for Business’ allows 50% discretionary rate relief for 12 months and is available from 1st October 2013 to March 2015. The aim of this scheme is to support businesses in their first year or those considering a move into larger premises closer to a town center or shopping area. The ‘New Development Scheme’ provides full exemption from the empty business rate charge for all newly built commercial properties that are unoccupied at any time during the first 18 months following completion and is available from 1st October 2013 to 1st October 2016. To date there has been no take up of either of these schemes in Monmouthshire.
- 3.2 The Welsh Government has recently announced additional grant funding to Local Authorities to deliver two new additional schemes, in 2014/15:
- The ‘Wales Retail Relief Scheme’. This scheme is aimed at providing assistance to local retail businesses.
 - ‘The Local Needs Scheme’ is aimed at supporting businesses most negatively affected by the postponement of revaluation which was scheduled to take effect from the 1st April 2015
- 3.3 The ‘Wales Retail Relief Scheme’ is initially available for one financial year (2014/15) and is aimed at providing support to retail businesses by offering a discount of up to £1,000 on their business rate bill. The relief is available to all occupied retail properties with a ratable value of £50,000 or less, that are wholly or mainly being used as retail premises (i.e. shops, restaurants, cafes and drinking establishments).
- 3.4 The Authority has been awarded £476,576 grant funding for this purpose. We currently estimate that there are some 583 retail premises in Monmouthshire that would qualify for this relief. The relief cannot be awarded automatically, establishments will have to apply. Therefore the exact amount of relief awarded will depend on those that decide to apply. Should all 583 retail premises apply, it is estimated this relief will amount to £532,000, well in excess of the initial grant awarded. However the Welsh Government have indicated that should relief be awarded over and above the amount of the grant award then funding would be increased accordingly.
- 3.5 As the Wales Retail Relief Scheme requires retail premises to apply for the relief, we plan to write to those who would qualify notifying them of the scheme and providing an application form. We also plan to publicise the scheme on the Council’s website and with local Chambers of Commerce, to ensure that we get as much take up as possible.

- 3.6 The second scheme is to provide enhanced relief for non-domestic rates (NDR) aimed at supporting businesses most negatively impacted by the postponement of revaluation. Monmouthshire County Council has been awarded £138,920 to administer this scheme for the 2014/15 financial year.
- 3.7 This scheme is much less prescriptive than the first, with each Local Authority being left to decide how best to provide this relief in a way that supports local economic development priorities and those businesses affected most by the postponement of revaluation.
- 3.8 Local Authorities across Wales have looked to the Valuation Office for Wales to provide local information to help identify those businesses most affected by the postponement in revaluation. However this information is not available. It has therefore been left to each Local Authority to adopt a scheme that best suits their needs.
- 3.9 As this additional money comes with no funding for administration, any scheme adopted needs to be fair to administer and be both simple and cheap to implement.
- 3.10 With this in mind the proposal would be to extend the current Small Business Rate Relief Scheme (SBR). An extension of this scheme would be simple to administer as the additional relief could be applied to existing accounts without the need for an application process. This would also meet the criteria set by the Welsh Government providing 'targeted additional relief to business already entitled to other reliefs'.
- 3.11 We currently have 3,127 businesses registered within Monmouthshire of which 1,533 currently qualify for Small Business Rate Relief (970 receiving 100% relief), under the existing regulations. By extending the threshold from £6,000 to £8,800 a further 179 business would receive 100% relief. It is estimated that this would cost £138,251 and would utilise the majority of the grant awarded.
- 3.12 As businesses do not have to apply for this additional relief, this can be applied directly to their account. There will however be the requirement to send out amended bills to all concerned. We also intend to publish details of this additional relief on our website.

4. REASONS:

- 4.1 The Welsh Government has announced additional grant funding for Local Authorities to deliver the two new schemes noted in bullet point 3.2 above.

5. RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS:

- 5.1 Additional grant funding totaling £615,496 has been awarded to Monmouthshire County Council. This money is only available for the 2014/15 financial year and must be claimed by timescales prescribed by the Welsh Government.

6. SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT AND EQUALITY IMPLICATIONS:

6.1 There are no Sustainable Development or Equality implications with the proposal.

7. CONSULTEES:

Strategic Leadership Team
Cabinet
Head of Finance

8. Background Papers:

8.1 Wales Retail Relief: <http://wales.gov.uk/docs/det/publications/140513walesreliefguidanceen.pdf>

Welsh Government announcement:

<http://wales.gov.uk/newsroom/businessandconomy/2014/8665206/?lang=en>

9. Authors:

Ruth Donovan – Assistant Head of Finance: Revenues, Systems & Exchequer
Email: ruthdonovan@monmouthshire.gov.uk

Appendix

The “Equality Challenge” (Screening document)

Name of the Officer completing “the Equality challenge” Ruth Donovan		Please give a brief description of the aims proposed policy or service reconfiguration The proposal seeks to implement additional grant funding awarded by the Welsh Government for the Wales Retail Relief Scheme and a scheme to support business most negatively impacted by the postponement of revaluation	
Name of the Division or service area Revenues, Systems & Exchequer		Date “Challenge” form completed 13 th June 2014	
Protected characteristic affected	Negative impact Please give details	Neutral impact Please give details	Positive Impact Please give details
Age		X	
Disability		X	
Marriage + Civil Partnership		X	
Pregnancy and maternity		X	
Race		X	
Religion or Belief		X	
Sex (was Gender)		X	
Sexual Orientation		X	
Transgender		X	

Welsh Language		X	
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What are the potential negative Impacts.	Ideas as to how we can look to MITIGATE the negative impacts (include any reasonable adjustments or engagement with affected parties).
➤ N/A	➤
➤	➤
➤	➤
➤	➤

The next steps

- If you have assessed the proposal/s as having a **positive impact please give full details** below:

N/A

- If you have assessed the proposal/s as having a **Negative Impact** could you please provide us with details of what you propose to do to mitigate the negative impact:

N/A

Signed: Ruth Donovan **Designation:** Assistant Head of Finance: Revenues, Systems & Exchequer **Dated:** 13/06/14



monmouthshire
sir fynwy

Appendix

Equality Impact Assessment Form

and

Sustainable Development Checklist

EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT FORM

Name of policy or change to service (Proposal)	Directorate:	Department:
Additional Grant Funding to Local Authorities regarding Business Rates	Chief Executives	Revenues, Systems & Exchequer
Policy author / service lead	Name of assessor	Date of assessment:
Ruth Donovan	Ruth Donovan	13 th June 2014

1. Have you completed the Equality Challenge form? **Yes**

2. What is the **Aim/s** of the Policy or the proposed change to the policy or service (the proposal)

The aim of the grant finding awarded by the Welsh Government is to:

- Provide assistance to local businesses during the current economic climate, inject money into the economy and support jobs
- Support local businesses most negatively impacted by the postponement of revaluation

3. From your findings from the “Equality Challenge” form did you identify any people or groups of people with protected characteristics that this proposal was likely to affect in a **negative** way? Please tick appropriate boxes below.

Age		Race	
Disability		Religion or Belief	
Gender reassignment		Sex	
Marriage or civil partnership		Sexual Orientation	
Pregnancy and maternity		Welsh Language	

4. Please give details of any consultation(s) or engagement carried out in the development /re-development of this proposal.

This is a Welsh Government initiative that the Authority is implementing as the Billing Agent

5. Please list the data that has been used for this proposal? eg Household survey data, Welsh Govt data, ONS data, MCC service user data, Staff personnel data etc.

Business Rate customers as per Northgate system

6. As a result did you take any actions to mitigate your proposal? Please give details below.

No

7. Final stage – What was decided?

• **No change made to proposal/s – please give details**

Proceed as per grant instructions issued by Welsh Government

• **Slight changes made to proposal/s – please give details**

• **Major changes made to the proposal/s to mitigate any significant negative impact – please give details**

Signed: Ruth Donovan **Designation:** Assistant Head of Finance: Revenues, Systems & Exchequer **Dated:** 13/06/14

Appendix

The “Sustainability Challenge”

Name of the Officer completing “the Sustainability challenge” Ruth Donovan		Please give a brief description of the aims proposed policy or service reconfiguration Additional Grant Funding to Local Authorities regarding Business Rates	
Name of the Division or service area Revenues, Systems & Exchequer		Date “Challenge” form completed 13 th June 2014	
Aspect of sustainability affected	Negative impact Please give details	Neutral impact Please give details	Positive Impact Please give details
PEOPLE			
Ensure that more people have access to healthy food		X	
Improve housing quality and provision		X	
Reduce ill health and improve healthcare provision		X	
Promote independence		X	
Encourage community participation/action and voluntary work		X	
Targets socially excluded		X	

Help reduce crime and fear of crime		X	
Improve access to education and training		X	
Have a positive impact on people and places in other countries		X	
PLANET			
Reduce, reuse and recycle waste and water		X	
Reduce carbon dioxide emissions		X	
Prevent or reduce pollution of the air, land and water		X	
Protect or enhance wildlife habitats (e.g. trees, hedgerows, open spaces)		X	
Protect or enhance visual appearance of environment		X	
PROFIT			
Protect local shops and services			X
Link local production with local consumption		X	

Improve environmental awareness of local businesses		X	
Increase employment for local people		X	
Preserve and enhance local identity and culture		X	
Consider ethical purchasing issues, such as Fairtrade, sustainable timber (FSC logo) etc		X	
Increase and improve access to leisure, recreation or cultural facilities		X	

What are the potential negative Impacts	Ideas as to how we can look to MITIGATE the negative impacts (include any reasonable adjustments)
➤ n/a	➤
➤	➤
➤	➤
➤	➤

The next steps

- If you have assessed the proposal/s as having a **positive impact please give full details** below

N/A

- If you have assessed the proposal/s as having a **Negative Impact** could you please provide us with details of what you propose to do to mitigate the negative impact:

Signed: Ruth Donovan

Dated: 13th June 2014

SUBJECT: Future of Cemetery Provision in North East Monmouthshire

MEETING: Cabinet

DATE: 2nd July 2014

DIVISION/WARDS AFFECTED: Central Monmouthshire

1. PURPOSE:

- 1.1 To update Cabinet on the current position regarding the proposed site in the North East of the County.
- 1.2 For Cabinet to make a decision on progressing with this site given the information shown in the update.
- 1.3 Depending on the outcome of 1.2, for Cabinet to make a decision regarding future burial provision in Central Monmouthshire.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS:

- 2.1 That Cabinet agrees not to pursue the development of the previously proposed site.
- 2.2 With regard to the principle of delivering future burial space, Cabinet acknowledges Previous debates at Council, scrutiny and area committees; and concerns about long-term Capacity. Cabinet therefore, asks that the Strong Communities Select Committee considers the Council's options and ways forward for future cemetery provision.

3. KEY ISSUES:

- 3.1 Since previous Cabinet report (Appendix 1) issues have arisen which give rise to concerns about the viability of the site as a cemetery.
- 3.2 On further investigation of a bore hole near to the site it has been ascertained that only half the site could be developed as burial ground as advised by our consultants and Natural Resource Wales (NRW) Guidelines.

- 3.3 If developed as a cemetery, continuous 6 monthly testing will have to be carried out due to the nature of the site, with possible implications for its longer term use
- 3.4 During extensive investigations for suitable burial provision in Central Monmouthshire, no other viable sites have been identified.

4. REASONS:

- 4.1 The Authority has been advised that no land can be used for burials within a 250 metre radius of a bore hole. An unregistered bore hole is located within 125 metres of the site. Registration is not required for drawing water for domestic purposes up to a certain volume. Further NRW has indicated that it would not support a planning application based on the current plans because of the location of the bore hole.
- 4.2 Officers are concerned that the requirement of 6 monthly testing as advised by consultants, could result in the cessation of burials in a given area of the site or the whole site. There are also concerns about the budgetary implication of 6 monthly testing.
- 4.3 Cabinet will be aware of the extensive amount work that has gone into searching for suitable land for use as a cemetery. No suitable land was identified beyond the site in the North East of Monmouthshire. Officers are concerned that if this exercise was to be repeated it would not only be resource intensive but is unlikely to identify any further suitable sites on which to instigate testing.

5. RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS:

- 5.1 None

6. SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT AND EQUALITY IMPLICATIONS:

The significant equality impacts identified in the assessment (Appendix 2) are summarised below for members' consideration:

7. CONSULTEES:

Cabinet Members
Senior Leadership Team
Local Member Cllr D. Blakebrough

8. BACKGROUND PAPERS:

Electronic reports of ground testing are available from the report author

9. AUTHOR:

Debbie McCarty & Alan Browne Area Services Officers

10. CONTACT DETAILS:

E-mail:

debbiemccarty@monmouthshire.gov.uk

Tel:07712750545

alanbrowne@monmouthshire.gov.uk

Tel: 07833716715

The “Equality Initial Challenge”

Name: Debbie McCarty Service area: Cemeteries Date completed: 13/05/14		Please give a brief description of what you are aiming to do.	
Protected characteristic	Potential Negative impact Please give details	Potential Neutral impact Please give details	Potential Positive Impact Please give details
Age		Reach status quo with burial provision in the North East of the County	
Disability			
Marriage + Civil Partnership			
Pregnancy and maternity			
Race			
Religion or Belief			
Sex (was Gender)			
Sexual Orientation			
Transgender			
Welsh Language			

Please give details about any potential negative Impacts .	How do you propose to MITIGATE these negative impacts
➤ <i>Shortage of burial space</i>	➤ Refer to Strong Communities Scrutiny Committee for further discussion
➤	➤
➤	➤
➤	➤

Signed

D. McCarty

Designation

Area Services Officer **Dated** 13/05/14

EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT FORM

What are you impact assessing	Service area
Cemetery Provision	Cemeteries
Policy author / service lead	Name of assessor and date
Debra Hill-Howells	D.McCarty 13//05/14

1. What are you proposing to do?

Due to the shortage of burial space in this area, I am advising that select committee undertakes a scrutiny review to identify ways forward given the constraints we have to operate within by other agencies.

2. Are your proposals going to affect any people or groups of people with protected characteristics in a **negative** way? If **YES** please tick appropriate boxes below.

Age		Race	
Disability		Religion or Belief	
Gender reassignment		Sex	
Marriage or civil partnership		Sexual Orientation	
Pregnancy and maternity		Welsh Language	

3. Please give details of the negative impact

4. Did you take any actions to mitigate your proposal? Please give details below including any consultation or engagement.

5. Please list the data that has been used to develop this proposal? eg Household survey data, Welsh Govt data, ONS data, MCC service user data, Staff personnel data etc..

Signed...D.McCarty.....**Designation**...Area Services Officer.....**Dated**.....13/05/14.....

The “Sustainability Challenge”

Name of the Officer completing “the Sustainability challenge” Debbie McCarty		Please give a brief description of the aims proposed policy or service reconfiguration Future Cemetery Provision for North East Monmouthshire	
Name of the Division or service area Cemeteries		Date “Challenge” form completed 13/05/14	
Aspect of sustainability affected	Negative impact Please give details	Neutral impact Please give details	Positive Impact Please give details
PEOPLE		x	
Ensure that more people have access to healthy food		x	
Improve housing quality and provision		x	
Reduce ill health and improve healthcare provision		x	
Promote independence		x	
Encourage community participation/action and		X	

voluntary work			
Targets socially excluded		x	
Help reduce crime and fear of crime		x	
Improve access to education and training		x	
Have a positive impact on people and places in other countries		x	
PLANET		x	
Reduce, reuse and recycle waste and water		x	
Reduce carbon dioxide emissions		x	
Prevent or reduce pollution of the air, land and water		x	
Protect or enhance wildlife habitats (e.g. trees, hedgerows, open spaces)		x	
Protect or enhance visual appearance of environment		x	
PROFIT			
Protect local shops and		x	

services			
Link local production with local consumption		x	
Improve environmental awareness of local businesses		x	
Increase employment for local people		x	
Preserve and enhance local identity and culture		x	
Consider ethical purchasing issues, such as Fairtrade, sustainable timber (FSC logo) etc		x	
Increase and improve access to leisure, recreation or cultural facilities		x	

What are the potential negative Impacts	Ideas as to how we can look to MITIGATE the negative impacts (include any reasonable adjustments)
➤	➤
➤	➤
➤	➤

➤	➤
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The next steps

- If you have assessed the proposal/s as having a **positive impact please give full details** below

- If you have assessed the proposal/s as having a **Negative Impact** could you please provide us with details of what you propose to do to mitigate the negative impact:

Signed

D.McCarty

Dated 13/05/14