

Monmouthshire Select Committee Minutes

Meeting of Strong Communities Select Committee held at Remote Meeting on Thursday, 29th April, 2021 at 10.00 am

Councillors Present

County Councillor L.Dymock (Chairman)
County Councillor A. Webb (Vice Chairman)

County Councillors: A. Easson, L. Guppy,
V. Smith and J.Treharne

Officers in Attendance

Hazel Ilett, Scrutiny Manager
David Jones, Head of Public Protection

APOLOGIES: None

1. Declarations of Interest.

The committee agreed to record any declarations of interest as and when appropriate in discussing the reports.

2. Open Public Forum.

3. To scrutinise progress on implementing Monmouthshire's Local Toilet Strategy prior to updating Welsh Government (report to follow).

David Jones, the Head of Public Protection presented the report that had been circulated as part of the published agenda. David explained that the purpose of the report was discuss progress on implementing the toilet strategy that was agreed in June 2019. He explained that it is a requirement to report back to Welsh Government on the progress on implementing the actions over the last two years and he invited the committee to make any further recommendations.

David discussed the report's content in detail, highlighting the action points and the statutory guidance, drawing on the work undertaken to map all the facilities and took members through the key actions outlined in paragraphs 3.7 and 3.8 and appendix 1. The covid pandemic had held the team back to a degree in terms of visiting the toilets which were closed at that time, but he explained the reparations that had been undertaken and improvements to some facilities. He explained that from an equalities and future generations perspective, we have more toilets per head of population than many other counties. David drew attention to the 10 main actions outlined in the report and discussed each in turn, prior to taking questions from members of the committee.

Member Challenge:

The chair thanked David for his comprehensive presentation of the report and offered thanks to the team for their work during challenging and unprecedented times. She invited questions from the committee and agreed to sum up the questions in detail to provide to David and the cabinet member as follows:

- Members request that the possibility of a toilet at Severn Tunnel Junction be explored in partnership with the provider 'Transport for Wales'
- The Committee highlighted the need for signage in toilets to advise who is responsible for cleaning and how often the toilets are cleaned.
- Members drew attention to the need for safety chains, suggesting there had been some issues with toilets in Caldicot.
- They sought clarification that telephony issues have also been resolved, that Legionella Testing had also been undertaken following the closure during the pandemic.
- Members asked that the Cabinet explore whether it was feasible to charge for the use toilets.
- The committee asked that officers explore again with private facilities the possibility of opening to the public.
- Members questioned why White Horse Lane toilets are still open despite the Select Committee's recommendation they should be closed given that the facilities offered are poor. Members suggest considering better facilities offered in other countries such as New Zealand and then charging for them.
- There was concern that Usk Toilet feels unsafe due to its poor layout and consideration also needed to be given to the size of toilets, traditionally being very narrow in terms of ensuring accessibility.
- There were also concerns around disabled access and that signage is needed to advise where the keys are held.

The Select Committee asked for further clarity on:

- 1) The costs in maintaining toilets
- 2) whether money saved on cleaning during the pandemic could be put towards maintenance work
- 3) How the £17k can be used most effectively

The chair offered her thanks to the team for their hard work in progressing these matters to date. The officer thanked councillor Smith and Webb for all their hard work in visiting the facilities together with cabinet member Councillor Jane Pratt.

4. Strong Communities Select Committee Forward Work Programme.

No additional items were raised.

5. Cabinet & Council Forward Work Programme.

No additional items were raised.

The committee thanked the chair for excellent chairing during the past year and she thanked them for their kindness and support.

6. To confirm minutes of the previous meeting.

7. Next Meeting: Thursday 17th June 2021 at 10.00am.

The meeting ended at **10.50 am**