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MONMOUTHSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

Minutes of the meeting of Economy and Development Select Committee held at County Hall, The Rhadyr, Usk, NP15 1GA on Thursday, 9th February, 2017 at 10.00 am

PRESENT: County Councillor S. Jones (Chairman)

County Councillors: D.Dovey, D. Edwards B. Hayward, J. Prosser, A. Watts and A. Wintle

Also in attendance County Councillor(s): V. Smith

OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE:

Hazel Ilett	Scrutiny Manager
Kellie Beirne	Chief Officer, Enterprise
Cath Fallon	Head of Economy and Enterprise
Mark Howcroft	Assistant Head of Finance
Paula Harris	Democratic Services Officer
Rachel Lewis	Principal Planning Policy Officer
Mark Hand	Head of Planning, Housing and Place-Shaping

1. Apologies

County Councillors D. Evans and S. White.

2. Declarations of Interest

None received.

3. Open Public Forum

There were no members of the public present intending to address the Select Committee.

4. To confirm the minutes of the previous meeting held on the 5th January 2017

The minutes of the Economy and Development Select Committee dated 5th January 2017 were confirmed and signed by the Chair.

5. Future Monmouthshire Presentation

Context:

The Committee received a presentation from the Chief Officer for Enterprise and Head of Economy and Enterprise on Future Monmouthshire.

Key Issues:

The presentation provided a 'how to' for sustainable and resilient communities' outlining;

- Delivery-focussed foresight programme, beginning today.

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- Keeps our county (and therefore, council) 'going' and 'growing'
- Identifies shifts and changes needed in Monmouthshire & positions our council as the key enabler in bringing them about.
- Puts WFG at heart of what we do – guiding policy *and* practice.
- Clarity about REAL problems 'we' are trying to solve.
- Embeds 'budget' process as day-job but in a purpose-led way.
- Demand-side management.
- Art of possible & engages creative communities of commitment.

And the reasons for doing it;

Time of austerity, growing demand & expectations – the way we respond will affect 900,000 plus people.

- Business as usual & burning platforms not compatible.
- £, demography, localism, WFG, inequality & Brexit
- Relevance, legitimacy and viability
- Nationally/ regionally/ locally more effective public services vital to growing GVA
- Last 4 yrs. budget – reduction & income generation to 'keep it all going'
- Are we sometimes missing the bigger questions:
 - ❖ People led or service led? Refer or take responsibility?
 - ❖ Narrow focus or consequences social failure?
 - ❖ Standardised or customised offer?
 - ❖ Relationships with communities and partners?
 - ❖ Financial risk and economic development?

Member Scrutiny:

A member suggested that the way to keep young people in the county was to stop building executive housing which was better suited to retirees and to build more two bedroom houses which would be more financially viable.

It was also suggested that Monmouthshire would benefit from more high tech business developments which would create the correct type of jobs giving young people the incentive to stay local. At present there are a lot of minimum wage and retail jobs which pay poorly. Low wages make it impossible for young people to afford property in Monmouthshire.

A member congratulated the Chief Officer and her team on the presentation and commented that the main priority was to change the mind-set and attitude of people. He asked that the

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presentation was played to all members of staff as it sets out all of the scenarios of a very complicated subject in a format which is easy to understand.

In respect to innovation, with Monmouth being predominately a tourism county, it was asked how we could improve that image. At present we have no provision for training or supporting young people in tourism related careers.

Future Monmouth was endorsed by a member who stressed how important it was that people were on board with the message and asked how this will be effectively implemented and do we have the resources to do it now and in the long term.

A member commented that as a Council we should be concentrating on our services rather than the entrepreneurial aspect as we need to address the County's social problems with particular focus waste services, leisure services on the needs of the elderly.

A Member of the committee spoke in favour of being proactive in terms of anticipating the impact the housing market will have on local people and advised that we have a responsibility to protect the work class people of this county. The RICS have predicted that rents will increase by 25% in the next five years and within his ward there are council houses which have been sold on and now estate agents are facilitating property developers. This leaves people at the mercy of the market and even in the wealthiest areas of the county 10% of people use food banks. The member spoke of the need for council houses to attempt to repair the broken housing market.

In respect to the Council's role in the future of the county a member agreed that the Council had a large part to play in shaping services. With the development of two new secondary schools it was felt to be the perfect time to look at developing pupils and help them in terms of understanding careers available to them. A suggestion was made to take pupils out of schools and into work environments to open their minds to new opportunities, developments and challenges.

The Chair raised the knowledge and experience members can add to the process with their invaluable local knowledge and diverse backgrounds. It was agreed that engaging the members would be a priority going forward.

A member commented on the importance of supporting local businesses during the procurement process and that taking the lowest price was not always the wisest option.

The use of consultants was questioned, as the cost appeared to be substantial. A member spoke of the combined knowledge of the councillors being put to better use and as members thinking what is best for the county rather than their political party.

The Chair raised the question of national government legislating in areas that affect us and asked how we can best horizon scan and influence decisions made at a government level.

The importance of stakeholder engagement and the importance of bringing delivery partners along with was raised. It was acknowledged that none of this work will be done in isolation and there are options for community and business partnerships to be involved with members playing a pivotal part in liaising with stakeholders.

A member commented that invention can be done in two ways, to enable or compete. An example was given of some recent planning decisions which was felt to have kept businesses out rather than enable businesses to come into Monmouth.

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Committee's Conclusion:

It was felt that there was a lot of interest in this item and it would be useful to have an informal workshop, not in a scrutiny setting to allow for idea generation and for members to be a sounding board for officers. It was also felt that using tools such as survey monkey would be useful to gauge the level of interest prior to the workshop.

It was felt, without being critical that the some of the message was not new but an ethos anyway and although there may be a change in mind-set, many members are already engaged in this work. The priority is now to give this new impetus and think about what members can expect to see next.

6. Supplementary Planning Guidance on Tourism

Context:

To advise Members of the preparation of Draft Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG) on Sustainable Tourism Accommodation to provide clarification on the interpretation of the policies of the Monmouthshire Local Development Plan (LDP).

Recommendations:

1. That the Economy and Development Select Committee notes the contents of this report and the Draft Sustainable Tourism Accommodation SPG and comments accordingly.
2. To seek Select Committee's endorsement of the SPG, with a recommendation to Cabinet Member that the SPG be publicised for public consultation.
3. That the Select Committee considers the public consultation responses and any associated amendments to the SPG at a future meeting, prior to recommending the SPG for formal adoption.

Key Issues:

1 The Monmouthshire Local Development Plan (2011-2021) was adopted in February 2014 to become the adopted development plan for the County (excluding that part within the Brecon Beacons National Park). This statutory development plan contains a number of policies relevant to tourism which are set out in Appendix A of the Draft SPG (attached as Appendix 1). Legislation requires that planning applications are determined in accordance with the LDP, unless material planning considerations indicate otherwise. Consequently, the effectiveness and appropriateness of the LDP policies is essential in securing desired tourism outcomes. However, it is worth noting that the LDP does not have to cover all eventualities. Indeed, Welsh Government guidance on producing LDPs requires that LDPs do not duplicate national planning policy. Topics or types of tourism not covered by specific LDP policies can be considered under national planning policy and/or material planning considerations.

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2. The Economic and Development Select Committee, at its meeting on 13 October 2016, received a report which provided an update on the effectiveness of the LDP policy framework in enabling/delivering tourism related development since the Plan's adoption and reviewed the extent to which the LDP is supporting sustainable forms of tourism accommodation. Particular consideration was given to the policy support for proposals for 'glamping' accommodation - an identified key growth area that the Council wishes to support in principle. The report subsequently recommended that draft SPG be prepared to provide clarity on how proposals for sustainable tourism accommodation will be considered and that the SPG be reported back to this Select Committee prior to the SPG being circulated for public consultation.

3. Selective use of SPG is a means of setting out more detailed thematic or site specific guidance on the way in which the policies of an LDP will be applied in particular circumstances or areas. PPW (Edition 9, 2016) at paragraph 2.3.3 states that:

'SPG does not form part of the development plan but it must be consistent with the plan and with national policy. It must derive from and be clearly cross referenced to a generic LDP policy, specific policies for places, and/or – in the case of a masterplan or site brief – a plan allocation. SPG cannot be linked to national policy alone; there must be an LDP policy or policy criterion that provides the development plan 'hook', whilst the reasoned justification provides clarification of the related national policy.'

4. Paragraph 2.3.4 of PPW further emphasises that SPG can be a material consideration in the determination of planning applications, provided that it is consistent with the development plan and appropriate consultation has been undertaken:

'Only the policies in the development plan have special status under section 38(6) of the 2004 Act in deciding planning applications, but SPG may be taken into account as a material consideration. In making decisions on matters that come before it, the Welsh Government and the Planning Inspectorate will give substantial weight to approved SPG which derives from and is consistent with the development plan, and has been the subject of consultation.'

Draft Sustainable Tourism Accommodation SPG

5. The Draft Sustainable Tourism Accommodation SPG is attached to this report as an **Appendix 1**. The SPG is intended to provide certainty and clarity for applicants, officers and Members in the interpretation and implementation of the existing LDP policy framework in relation to proposals for sustainable forms of visitor accommodation. For the purposes of this SPG, sustainable visitor accommodation is apply to other forms of sustainable visitor accommodation. The guidance relates to proposals outside settlement boundaries (as identified on the LDP proposals maps).The SPG provides an overview of the national and local planning policy context in relation to sustainable tourism, clarifies what is meant by sustainable tourism accommodation in relation to Strategic Policy S11 and outlines the various types of sustainable tourism accommodation to which this SPG relates. The main part of the SPG (Section 4) provides guidance on the interpretation and implementation of the LDP policy framework in relation to proposals for sustainable forms of visitor accommodation, concerned primarily with glamping facilities, although it would also Information is also provided with regard to submitting a planning application for sustainable visitor accommodation, including details of the Council's pre-planning application advice service.

6. Further detail/information is provided in the appendices to the SPG. Appendix B sets out the key policy considerations for assessing particular types of glamping accommodation, namely yurts, tepees, bell tents, wooden pods/tents, shepherd's huts and tree houses. These types of glamping facilities are specifically included as they have becoming increasingly popular in

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recent years and are likely to continue to be so. A list of example planning conditions that may apply to planning permissions for glamping proposals is provided in Appendix C.

Next Steps

7. It is intended to report the Draft Sustainable Tourism Accommodation SPG to Planning Committee, with a view to seeking endorsement to issue it for consultation purposes.

8. As referred to in paragraph 4 above, for SPG to be given weight in the consideration of planning applications, appropriate consultation needs to be undertaken and any comments received should be taken into account in the

Council's decision making process. Following a resolution to consult, targeted notifications will be sent to those considered to have an interest in the SPG topic, although all town and community councils will be consulted and a notice will be placed in the press. All consultation replies will be analysed and responses/amendments reported for Members' consideration when seeking a resolution for the adoption of any SPG document.

Member Scrutiny:

The Chair spoke of not pre-empting what comes from public consultation and mentioned of the importance of the committee having a thorough look at the feedback from interested parties after the consultation finishes.

It was asked when the consultation would start and we were told that it would start in after the being presented at the March planning committee and it was unlikely that the results would be back with the Economy and Development Select Committee before the election.

A member expressed his disappointment that we treat tourism and tourism accommodation as one item and do not distinguish between the different types of tourists who come to the county. There are those who come to the county for the scenery, those who come for historical interest and those who come for business reason, all of which require very different accommodation. It was asked that a paragraph was added to the report to reflect this.

Committee's Conclusion:

The engagement with interested parties was welcomes and the proactive nature of engagement, especially with town and community councils.

The committee are happy to endorse the report and look forward to seeing the results of the public consultation.

7. Budget Monitoring

Context:

The purpose of this report is to provide Members with information on the forecast revenue outturn position of the Authority at the end of period 3 which represents month 9 financial information for the 2016/17 financial year.

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This report will also be considered by Select Committees as part of their responsibility to,

- assess whether effective budget monitoring is taking place,
- monitor the extent to which budgets are spent in accordance with agreed budget and policy framework,
- challenge the reasonableness of projected over or underspends, and monitor the achievement of predicted efficiency gains or progress in relation to savings proposals.

Recommendations to Cabinet:

1. That Cabinet notes the extent of forecast revenue underspend using period 3 data of £79,000, an improvement of £919,000 on previous reported position at period 2.
2. That Cabinet expects Chief Officers to continue to review the levels of over and underspends and reallocate budgets to reduce the extent of compensatory positions needing to be reported from at quarterly cycles.
3. That Cabinet appreciates the extent of predicted schools reserve usage, its effect of forecast outturn reserve levels and the related anticipation that a further 6 schools will be in a deficit position by end of 2016-17.
4. That Cabinet considers the capital monitoring, specific over and underspends, and importantly that Cabinet recognises the risk associated with having to rely on a use of capital receipts in the year of sale and the potential for this to have significant revenue pressures should receipts be delayed and temporary borrowing be required.
5. That Cabinet approves an additional investment of £30,000 into the Disabled Facilities Grant capital budget in order to respond to demands being placed on the current programme, funded by a virement from existing Highways Maintenance and Access for All budgets.
6. That Cabinet approves a £30k increase to Woodstock Way linkage scheme afforded by an equivalent underspend to another area improvement scheme (Abergavenny).

Member Scrutiny:

Clarification was sought in regard to the underspend in Abergavenny which afforded funds to the Woodstock Way linkage scheme and the committee was told this related to work which was need to be done for the Eisteddfod which was never undertaken.

In regard to capital slippage it was asked why it would make the treasury position worse. In response we were told that if we do not get the capital receipts in that we use in part funding for our capital programme that will necessitate us having to borrow when we wouldn't normally, those are additional costs effecting the appropriations account and treasury. These are capital receipts from sales of assets and land.

It was asked what analysis takes place along the build of the school and how closely is the spending on the school scrutinised. We were told in terms of project management there is a detailed budget and finance colleagues meet on a monthly basis.

It was asked, since there was no information on special schools what was the position on Mountain House School, the committee was told that the officer has agreed with CYP Select

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Committee that it would be helpful to their consideration of school balances if when a recovery plan is agreed they can understand what the three year requirement is.

It was noted that after May 2017 the CYP Select committee will receive a presentation on school balances

A question was raised regarding funding for a pool in Monmouth and in answer we were told that the original budget 21st century schools and the agreement with Welsh government assumed affording a replacement pool so that is subsumed within the 21st century school programme already. The Member then replied that the Leader of the council had categorically said that the pool will not come out of that funding and that the pool will be supplied with the leisure centre which will need an additional six million capital funding. The officer offered to provide a written response before the next committee meeting (**ACTION M.H.**).

Committee's Conclusion:

There were several points which members felt needed further clarification, with the commitment to school funding paramount. It was felt that members would benefit from attending the CYP meeting to observe the school balances presentation.

It was asked if a recommendation for the select committee could be put in the papers.

8. Economy and Development Scrutiny Forward Work Programme

We scrutinised the Economy and Development Select Committee Forward Work Programme. In doing so, the following points were noted:

Affordable housing meeting on the 14th February
Adults, E&D and Strong Communities Select Committees inviting members of the Planning Committee.

All 4 Select Committees joint meeting on the 27th February for the ASDM.

The meeting of the 25th April to be brought forward to the 6th April at 2pm. Items being;

- Invite Welsh Government.
- BT – to discussing the roll out of Broadband.
- Director of the Velothon to present on ROI of the Velothon.
- Youth enterprise delivery plan 2017/18.

9. Cabinet & Council forward work programme

We scrutinised the Council and Cabinet Business Forward Plan, no items were highlighted for scrutiny.

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10. To confirm the date and time of the next meeting

6th April 2017 2pm, pre-meeting at 1.30pm.

The meeting ended at 12.45 pm

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