

MONMOUTHSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

Agenda Item 4

Minutes of the meeting of Monmouthshire County Council held at County Hall, Usk on Thursday 13th November 2014 at 2.00 p.m.

PRESENT: County Councillor J. Prosser (Chairman)
County Councillor B. Strong (Vice Chairman)

County Councillors: D. Batrouni, D. Blakebrough, G.C. Burrows, P.R. Clarke, J.E. Crook, G.L. Down, A. Easson, D.L. Edwards, P.S. Farley, D. Evans, P.A. Fox, J. George, R. J. W. Greenland, L. Guppy, E. J. Hackett Pain, R.G. Harris, M. Hickman, R.J. Higginson, P.A.D. Hobson, G. Howard, S.G.M. Howarth, D.W.H. Hones, P. Jones, S. Jones, S.B. Jones, R.P. Jordan, P. Murphy, M. Powell, F. Taylor, A.C. Watts, P.A. Watts, A.E. Webb and K. Williams.

OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE:

Mr P. Matthews	Chief Executive
Mrs K. Beirne	Chief Officer, Enterprise
Ms S. McGuinness	Chief Officer, Children and Young People
Mr W. Mclean	Head of Policy and Engagement.
Mrs J. Robson	Head of Finance/Section 151 Officer
Mr P. Davies	Head of Commercial & People Development
Mrs C. Fallon	Head of Economy and Enterprise
Mr R. Tranter	Head of Legal/Temporary Monitoring Officer
Mrs S. King	Senior Democratic Services Officer

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from County Councillors R. Chapman, D. Dovey, R. Edwards, R. Hayward, J.I. Marshall, V.E. Smith, S. White and A. Wintle.

2. CHAIRMAN'S REPORT AND RECEIPT OF PETITIONS

We received and noted the Chairman's report.

Council were reminded that there was a Safeguarding seminar being held on Monday 17th November, members were encouraged to attend.

County Councillor D. Blakebrough, presented a petition in relation to 'make Trellech safe', B4293 road. The petition was passed to the appropriate officer.

3. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

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4. MINUTES

a) Council Meeting 25th September 2014

We confirmed and signed the minutes of the meeting held on 25th September 2014, subject to the following amendment:

Addition PRESENT: County Councillors*J. George*,... *A.E. Webb* .

b) Extraordinary Council Meeting 22nd October 2014

We confirmed and signed the minutes of the extraordinary meeting held on 22nd October 2014, subject to the following amendment:

Amend *J. Robson – Head of Finance* (not Head of Legal)

During considering the minutes we noted the following:

- Members would be updated in relation to the Local Government reform at the earliest opportunity. We noted that the issue was being discussed between local authority Leaders, however, discussions had not developed to provide feedback at the present time.
- We were reminded that Council had agreed not to pursue a voluntary merger.
- It was requested that Political Leadership Group were updated regularly.

5. PUBLIC FORUM

There were no public forum items received.

6. COMMITTEE MINUTES

We resolved that the following minutes be received:

(a) Internal Monitoring Board 20th October 2014

We received the minutes.

7. NOTICES OF MOTION

(a) Submitted by County Councillor D. Batrouni

'That this Council immediately makes changes to its Post 16 SEN policy with the following amendments:

(i) The college course is full time and follows on immediately from school attendance.

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(ii) The student is resident in Monmouthshire and under 19 years of age on 1st September prior to the start of the course.

(iii) The college to be attended is more than 2 miles from home and it is the nearest establishment at which the Authority, through the Corporate Director LLL, is satisfied that an appropriate course can be offered

(iv) The Authority is satisfied through staff assessment and supporting documentation that without the provision of specialised transport the student would be unable to access the course, considering the nature of their disability (as defined by A), and/or the nature of the journey. This decision to be taken by the Corporate Director for LLL.

A. The Authority will define disability as written in the Equality Act which provides that a person has a disability if:

- They have a physical or mental impairment.*
- The impairment has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on the person's ability to carry out normal day-to-day activity.*

(v) Subject to the discretion of the Chief Officer, the Authority will normally only meet 50% of the costs involved in (iv) from the date of commencement of the course up to a maximum of £5000 and would expect the college providing the course to meet the remaining costs.

(vi) The Authority will communicate the decision to parent(s), carer(s) or guardian(s) regarding the exact reason for the successful or unsuccessful application. This will be done in a timely manner, no longer than 7 working days from the decision, to enable parents time to appeal and/or make other arrangements before term starts where possible and practicable.

(vii) Still subject to (i), (ii) and (iii), once a child has been successful in their application, an annual application for transport for the continuation of the course will need to be made where the applicants process towards independence will be reviewed.'

During discussion the following points were noted:

- In introducing the motion, Councillor Batrouni highlighted that some members had discussed issues with families, in terms of what had been experienced and what changes had been required. Concern was expressed in relation to time for appeal and communication to parents. Appropriate information should be conveyed in a timely manner.
- The Cabinet Member, Councillor E. Hackett Pain, supported the motion and advised that most information would be contained within the policy, requirements would be stated within the Equality Act.
- It was suggested that further work was required around the ALN review, increased time for communication with parents and opportunity for them to make choices and ensure arrangements were in place.
- Some members expressed concern that suitable transport arrangements were not in place and that information was not conveyed appropriately.
- A member advised that the issue had been discussed with parents and welcomed further work by the executive member. It was suggested that a cross directorate steering group could be established to look at ALN Post 16 transport, in which parents could be involved.

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- We recognised that there was an opportunity for the policy to be addressed as a whole. We were informed that a transport education advisory board had already been established to original look at the issue of post 16 transport.
- In terms of transport for ALN, a detailed independent assessment would be undertaken for every child.

County Councillor Howarth proposed an amendment which was duly seconded:

'the Council set up an advisory group, with time limit, to look at SEN policy on transport and education, in conjunction with the other bodies of the council i.e. social services. Members would be part of the cross party.'

Upon being put to the vote the amendment was carried and became the substantive motion.

We voted on the substantive motion, which was carried.

8. MONMOUTHSHIRE BUSINESS GROWTH AND ENTERPRISE STRATEGY

We received the Monmouthshire Business Growth and Enterprise Strategy, which followed consultation during the summer period. The draft Business Growth and Enterprise Strategy and appended Action Plan had been updated and the finalised version presented to Council for approval.

In presenting the strategy, the Cabinet member highlighted that the priorities included business growth and job creation. There was a need for an effective growth strategy and the draft document had been consulted on and amended, where necessary.

The Chair of the Economy and Development select committee welcomed the paper, particularly coordinated approach and involvement from the business sector.

The Cabinet member comments were echoed by the Head of Commercial and People Development. We were informed that Enterprise was a strategic aspect of the authority, in terms of enterprise, business growth and job creation. The strategy linked with local development strategy and rural development programme would allow access to funding sources. Projects would be delivered across the County and the team had been enhanced, which would be essential for delivery.

The Head of Economy and Enterprise presented on the Monmouthshire Business Growth and Enterprise Strategy 2014-2020:

Purpose of Strategy

- Previous Economic Development strategy produced 2008
- Entering a unique time of opportunity – new team and new funds (RDP)
- Need a strategy that is fit for future purpose providing strategic context and direction for future activities

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- To achieve this Monmouthshire Business and Enterprise need to understand our businesses needs
- Enable us to provide a bespoke service which is not only relevant but flexible enough to adapt to the existing and changing needs of Monmouthshire businesses

How did we start the process? Opened up a conversation.....

- One to one's with Chambers
- Joint Chamber conversations
- Wider business & community consultation
- One to one's with our business support partners

Context of our conversations?

- Our vision:
 - ***To build the enterprise capacity and reinvent our future***
- Our key priorities
 - ***Supporting business growth***
 - ***Build the enterprise capacity and reinvent our future (through cultivating entrepreneurs and encouraging inward investment)***

The timeline

- Initial conversations started July 2014
- Throughout the summer individual conversations were held
- Joint conversations held and networks forged
- Wider public engagement in September
 - Call to action via press releases
 - RDP engagement – drop in sessions, on line survey, postcard campaign
- Select committee scrutiny undertaken in September
- Engagement cycle closed October
- Redraft undertaken and presented to Council today

What did we achieve?

- Production of a 'living' strategy that is a true reflection of Monmouthshire's future business needs and supported by business our community
- A strategy to guide the development of a bespoke business support and advice service working with our business community to help them achieve their business aspirations
- A strategy to guide the ethos of a team to be flexible and adaptable not only to business needs but to the needs of our communities and the Authority

Next Steps

- Introduction to the strategy's 'Trello' board, an on line management tool to enable Members and partners to map progress against strategy's action plan
- Regular six monthly review of strategy and action plan to ensure strategy remains fit for future purpose and impacts and performance targets are being achieved

During discussion we noted the following points:

- In response to a question regarding how to combat lower than average wage, it was noted that ongoing business support needs to be provided to existing

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businesses in order to grow and bring in higher value positions. In addition, inward investment could properly showcase authority and there was a need to attract businesses into the County.

- Members thanked officers for the report and presentation. A query was raised regarding engagement and collaborative working. We noted the point and were informed that the team were involved in the apprenticeship scheme and Cardiff city metro, both covered areas of economic development.
- Further information was requested in how superfast broadband would affect member wards and whether there was sufficient budget. In response, we were advised that investment had been put forward for Superfast Cymru, which should result in a significant change in broadband and landscape. Wales would have 95% coverage on superfast broadband by June 2016.
- In addition, schemes would be introduced by the Welsh Government to address the additional 5%, it was highlighted that the project would be important in supporting micro businesses. A presentation and report would be submitted to Cabinet in the near future.
- The Enterprise team structure had been established and consisted of officers who were enterprising in nature. Projects would be developed through working in conjunction with others and business partners. Significant amount of funding would be introduced through the Rural Development Programme. There had also been interest expressed from Monmouthshire Lottery and Crowdfunding solutions. Reports would be considered by Cabinet.
- A question was raised regarding availability of funding. We were informed that an action plan was in place and that European funding would be considered. It was anticipated that projects would be delivered through existing resources, this was demonstrated in the action plan.
- Members highlighted the importance of transport links and improved connections within the County, as well as promoting local businesses and improved broadband.

County Councillor A. Easson left at 3.45pm

- Officers advised that work was being undertaken with Town Teams, support and guidance would be provided to local businesses.
- The Chief Officer Enterprise, summarised and thanked the officers for the report and presentation.

We thanked officers for the presentation and report and welcomed the strategy.

We resolved to agree recommendations:

1. To approve the Monmouthshire Business Growth and Enterprise Strategy.
2. To endorse and promote the appended Action Plan as a 'living' document to be updated and refined as further evidence of business need is established.

County Councillor P. Farley left at 4pm.

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**9. FEEDBACK FROM THE OCTOBER MONMOUTHSHIRE ENGAGES EVENTS AND
FUTURE ENGAGEMENT STRATEGIES**

We received a report, which provided feedback to the Council from the recent round of Monmouthshire Engages and identified the strategies that would be used to ensure that future engagement and consultations are effective in meeting legal requirements, as well as Monmouthshire's aspiration of a listening organisation, working with Communities to become sustainable and resilient

The report considered future of engagement structure, going forward and the understanding of engagement and consultation.

During discussion we noted the following points:

- Clarification was requested regarding the legal position. We were advised that there was a need to undertake a consultation exercise, need to consult with groups that are affected, take account of responses and be seen to take account of responses. The effect on equality must be considered and any effects should be mitigated.
- Members supported engagement and noted that a new Communications Manager had been appointed, so that different opportunities of engagement could be considered.
- The Leader thanked members of the public that had contributed to the engagement events. We noted that a panel would be established, so that equality characters were considered.
- There was a requirement to be open and engage fully, it would be fundamental that appropriate information was conveyed.
- A key aspect would be for service users and key stakeholders to be considered.
- In terms of the budget, mandates had been published and would be considered by scrutiny committees.

County Councillor A. Webb left at 4.45pm.

We resolved to agree recommendations:

That Council:

- i) Received the feedback from the Monmouthshire Engages events;
- ii) Considered the initial feedback from the Community Survey; and
- iii) Considered the appropriateness of future engagement and consultation

County Councillors D. Blakebrough, M. Hickman and P. Jordan left at 5pm

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10. MEMBERS' QUESTIONS

(a) From County Councillor A. Easson to County Councillor P. Hobson (deferred from meeting on 31st July 2014)

“At full Council on January 16th 2014, the decision to sanction Health and Safety works at Park Street School, prior to handing the property over to ACT was confirmed after an earlier call-in. The decision included the apportionment of £56,000 to the total cost of these works. Would Cllr Hobson provide a detailed update to Council, on works so far completed, works outstanding ,with timescale for their , the cost expended to date on these works. Does he expect there to be any overrun on costs, if so where will the funding come from.

Furthermore, in anticipation of a successful conclusion to these works by Mon CC to make the building safe for hand-over, is he aware of an external grants providers that have given firm promises to further the ambitions of ACT.”

We noted that a response had been provided in writing.

(b) From County Councillor D. Batrouni to County Councillor P. Murphy

“Does the Council plan to increase the living wage for council staff as recently outlined by the Living Wage Foundation?”

In response, we were advised that it would be considered each year as part of the budget.

The meeting ended at 5.00 p.m