

MONMOUTHSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

Minutes of the meeting of Monmouthshire County Council held at County Hall, Usk on Thursday 26th February 2015 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, R.F. Chapman, P.R. Clarke, J.E. Crook, D.L.S. Dovey, G.L. Down, A. Easson, D.L. Edwards, R. Edwards, D.J. Evans, P.S. Farley, P.A. Fox, R. J. W. Greenland, L. Guppy, E. J. Hackett Pain, R.G. Harris, R.J.C. Hayward, M. Hickman, 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, V.E. Smith, F. Taylor, P.A. Watts, S. White, K. Williams and A. Wintle.

OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE:

Mr P. Matthews	Chief Executive
Mrs K. Beirne	Chief Officer, Enterprise
Mr S. Burch	Chief Officer, Health and Social Care
Mrs J. Robson	Head of Finance/Section 151 Officer
Mr M. Howcroft	Assistant Head of Finance
Mr R. Hoggins	Head of Operations
Mrs D. Hill Howells	Head of Community Led Delivery
Mr R. Tranter	Head of Legal/Monitoring Officer
Mrs S. King	Senior Democratic Services Officer

1. WELCOME AND APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

The Chairman opened the meeting and advised that there were exempt items included on the agenda, which required consideration of press and public to be excluded.

We resolved that the report of the Chief Officer, Social Care and Health – Delegated Chief Executive Decision to approve a foster carer loan, would be deferred to the end of the meeting, due to the sensitive nature of reports included within the item.

Apologies for absence were received from County Councillors J. George, R.J. Higginson, J. Marshall, A. Watts, A. Webb.

2. CHAIRMAN'S REPORT AND RECEIPT OF PETITIONS

We received and noted the Chairman's report.

The Chairman advised that he had been presented with a plaque on behalf of Monmouthshire County Council for the award to Monmouthshire for White Ribbon Status.

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In addition, the Chairman had been presented with a silver award which recognised Monmouthshire County Council with regard to the Armed Forces Covenant.

There were no petitions presented.

3. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Declarations of interest were noted under the relevant agenda item.

4. MINUTES**a) Council Meeting 22nd January 2015 – 10am**

The minutes of the meeting held on 22nd January 2015 at 10.00am, were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman, subject to the following amendment:

Addition:

APOLOGIES... Councillors A. Easson and K. Williams.

A member requested that an action sheet was included with the minutes on future agendas.

During consideration of the minutes, Councillor Burrows advised that as a result of the motion raised by Councillor Batrouni regarding deprivation, a letter had been sent to the minister however, an acknowledgement or reply had not been received.

b) Council Meeting 22nd January 2015 – 2pm

The minutes of the meeting held on 22nd January 2015 at 2.00pm, were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

We noted that an action point had been requested, following discussion of index of multiple deprivation and the motion raised by Councillor Batrouni, that a report of actions and outcomes was provided by the Leader (with portfolio which included narrowing the gap).

A member queried that a comment made had not been included in the minutes, following discussion of the ALN mandate. Council were reminded that minutes were not a verbatim record of the meeting. Officers confirmed that the meeting had been recorded and content would be checked for accuracy.

5. PUBLIC FORUM ITEMS

There were no public forum items received.

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'The Council welcomes Labour's commitment to devolve licensing powers relating to the extraction and exploitation of onshore shale gas and supports Welsh Labour's plan for an immediate moratorium on fracking in Wales. This Council notes that a small part of South West Monmouthshire has a Petroleum Exploration and Development Licences (PEDLS) on it and the 14th license round covers a large part of Monmouthshire. By supporting a moratorium, the Council sends a clear message that we do not want fracking in Monmouthshire.'

We noted the following points:

- In presenting the motion Councillor Batrouni expressed great concern regarding fracking in Monmouthshire.
- Council presented varied views in relation to fracking and forms of energy.
- We discussed the requirement for energy and alternatives to oil. There was a need to ensure that safe technology was used.
- Members generally supported the principle of the motion.

County Councillor R. Greenland proposed an amendment which was duly seconded:

'This Council supports an immediate moratorium on fracking in Wales. We note that a small part of South West Monmouthshire has Petroleum Exploration and Development Licences (PEDLS) on it and the 14th licence round covers a large part of Monmouthshire. By supporting a moratorium, the Council sends a clear message that we wish to pause which will allow the impact on our environment and homes to be properly assessed and understood.'

We debated the amendment:

- Support was expressed for a moratorium and we identified a need to understand the implications of fracking.
- Members recognised the importance of considering how future generations would be affected by proposed renewable energy methods. We expressed environmental and public health concerns.
- We agreed that the issue could be considered further, once additional details were obtained.
- A member supported fracking as an alternative energy source, as it would not damage the aesthetic aspects of the Countryside.
- We recognised that the issue was being progressed nationally, however, we highlighted the importance of this being decided in Wales, particularly as areas of Monmouthshire were affected.
- We agreed that further information was required regarding the process and implications of fracking.

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

Upon being put to the vote the substantive motion was carried.

'This Council supports an immediate moratorium on fracking in Wales. We note that a small part of South West Monmouthshire has Petroleum Exploration and Development Licences (PEDLS) on it and the 14th licence round covers a large part of Monmouthshire. By supporting a moratorium, the Council sends a clear message that we wish to pause which will allow the impact on our environment and homes to be properly assessed and understood.'

7. COMMITTEE MINUTES

We resolved that the following minutes be received:

(a) Democratic Services Committee 13th October 2014

The Chair of Democratic Services advised that the action sheet was regularly updated for Democratic Services Committee.

We agreed that this would be included on future Democratic Services minutes for Council meetings.

We resolved that the minutes be received.

(b) Democratic Services Committee 24th November 2014

The Chair of Democratic Services thanked the leader for attending the recent meeting, held in February 2015.

The committee had discussed the white paper and members welcomed the seminar that was to be held.

We resolved that the minutes be received.

7. HEAD OF FINANCE REPORTS**a) COUNCIL TAX RESOLUTION 2015/16**

Council were presented with the Council Tax Resolution 2015/16, the purpose of which was identified as:

1. The Council is bound by Statute to specific timescales for Council Tax setting and is also required to make certain defined resolutions. The

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recommendations that form the major part of this report are designed to comply with those Statutory Provisions.

2. The recommended resolutions also draw together the Council Tax implications of precepts notified by the Office of Police and Crime Commissioner for Gwent and Town and Community Councils, thereby enabling the County Council to establish its Headline Council Tax levels at the various property bands within each Town or Community area.

We resolved:

That the following be approved:

1. It is recommended it be noted that, at its meeting on 22nd January 2015, Council calculated the amounts set out below for the year 2015/16 in accordance with sections 32 and 33 of the [Local Government Finance Act 1992](#) ("the Act").

For information, sections 32 and 33 of the 1992 Act have been extensively amended by Schedule 12 to the Local Government (Wales) Act 1994. Both are further amended by the Local Authorities (Alteration of Requisite Calculations) (Wales) Regulations 2002 (the "2002 regulations") and The Local Authorities (Alteration of Requisite Calculations) (Wales) Regulations 2013. Section 33 is further amended by the Local Government Reorganisation (Calculation of Basic Amount of Council Tax) (Wales) Order 1996. All necessary legislative and statutory amendments have been taken into account in calculating the following amounts: -

(a) 44,561.34 being the amount calculated by the Council, in accordance with Section 33 of the Act and The Regulations (as amended by Regulations 1999 no. 2935), as its Council Tax base for the year;

(b) Part of the Council's Area, being the amounts calculated by the Council, in accordance with Section 34 of the Act, as the amounts of its Council Tax base for the year for dwellings in those parts of the area to which one or more special items relate:

Community	Council Tax Base for 2015/16	Community	Council Tax Base for 2015/16
Abergavenny	4,767.73	Llanhennock	282.38
Caerwent	1,081.43	Llanover	802.59
Caldicot	3,956.07	Llantillio Croesenny	452.11
Chepstow	5,367.76	Llantillio Pertholey	1,584.17

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Community	Council Tax Base for 2015/16	Community	Council Tax Base for 2015/16
Crucorney	733.07	Llantrissant Fawr	258.31
Devauden	631.72	Magor with Undy	2,866.20
Goetre Fawr	1,184.11	Mathern	608.58
Grosmont	493.70	Mitchell Troy	734.70
Gwehelog Fawr	287.77	Monmouth	4,964.57
Llanarth	485.78	Portskewett	1,016.94
Llanbadoc	462.56	Raglan	1,065.48
Llanelly Hill	1,865.81	Rogiet	708.00
Llanfoist Fawr	1,785.61	Shirenewton	726.51
Llangattock Vibon Abel	652.33	St.Arvals	453.41
Llangwm	268.30	Tintern	491.33
Llangybi	531.38	Trellech	1,630.04
		Usk	1,360.89
		Total	44,561.34

2. That the following amounts be now calculated by the Council for the year 2015/16 in accordance with Sections 32 to 36 of the Act and sections 47 and 49 of the [Local Government Finance Act 1988](#) (as amended):

- (a) £144,214,168 being the aggregate of the amounts the Council estimates for the items set out in Section 32(2) (a) to (d) of the Act less the aggregate of the amounts the Council estimates for the items set out in Section 32 (3) (a) and (c) of the Act calculated by the Council, in accordance with Section 32(4) of the Act, as its budget requirement for the year
- (b) £93,556,716 being the aggregate of the sums which the Council estimates will be payable for the year into its Council fund in respect of redistributed non-domestic rates and revenue support grant in accordance with Section 33 (3)
- (c) £6,000 being the cost to the authority of discretionary non-domestic rate relief anticipated to be granted (under sections 47 and 49 of the [Local Government Finance Act 1988](#) , as amended)

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- (d) £ 1,136.94 being the amount at 2.2(a) and 2.2(c) above less the amount at 2.2(b) above, all divided by the amount at 2.1(a) above, calculated by the Council, in accordance with Section 33(1) of the Act, as the basic amount of its Council Tax for the year
- (e) £1,869,891 being the aggregate amount of all special items referred to in Section 34 of the Act (Town and Community Precepts)
- (f) £1,094.98 being the amount at 2.2(d) above less the result given by dividing the amount at 2.2(e) above by the amount at 2.1(a) above calculated by the Council in accordance with Section 34(2) of the Act, as the basic amounts of its Council Tax for the year for dwellings in those parts of the area to which no special item relates.
- (g) Part of the Council's Area, being the amounts of the special item or items relating to dwellings in those parts of the Council's area mentioned above divided in each case by the amounts at 2.1(b) above, calculated by the Council, in accordance with Section 34(3) of the Act, as the basic amounts of its Council Tax for the year for dwellings in those parts of the area to which one or more special items relate:

Community Council	Precept Band D Equivalent £'s	Community Council	Precept Band D Equivalent £'s
Abergavenny	53.70	Llanover	13.08
Caerwent	38.84	Llantillio Croesenny	11.94
Caldicot	64.82	Llantillio Pertholey	25.44
Chepstow	72.56	Llantrissant Fawr	17.42
Crucorney	10.91	Magor with Undy	52.04
Devauden	12.66	Mathern	26.42
Goetre Fawr	23.65	Mitchell Troy	10.55
Grosmont	12.15	Monmouth	47.61
Gwehelog Fawr	15.64	Portskewett	20.16
Llanarth	13.38	Raglan	29.70
Llanbadoc	23.50	Rogiet	47.20
Llanelly Hill	35.62	Shirenewton	23.33
Llanfoist Fawr	31.92	St.Arvals	22.69

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Llangattock Vibon Abel	13.80	Tintern	33.93
Llangwm	10.06	Trellech	15.34
Llangybi	16.84	Usk	59.52
Llanhennock	15.58		
Llanhennock	15.58		

- (h) The County Council Area, being the amounts given by multiplying the amount at 2.2(f) above by the number which, in the proportion set out in Section 5(1) of the Act, is applicable to dwellings listed in a particular valuation band divided by the number which in that proportion is applicable to dwellings listed in valuation Band D calculated by the Council, in accordance with Section 36(1) of the Act, as the amounts to be taken into account for the year in respect of categories of dwellings listed in different valuation bands.

Council Tax Band	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I
Proportion	6	7	8	9	11	13	15	18	21
Council Tax Charge	729.99	851.65	973.32	1094.98	1338.31	1581.64	1824.97	2189.96	2554.95

- (i) Part of the Council's Area, being the amounts given by multiplying the amounts at 2.2(g) and 2.2(h) above by the number which, in the proportion set out in Section 5(1) of the Act, is applicable to dwellings listed in a particular valuation band divided by the number which in that proportion is applicable to dwellings listed in valuation Band D calculated by the Council, in accordance with Section 36(1) of the Act, as the amounts to be taken into account for the year in respect of categories of dwellings listed in different valuation bands: -

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Council Tax Band	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I
Abergavenny	765.79	893.42	1021.05	1148.68	1403.94	1659.21	1914.47	2297.36	2680.25
Caerwent	755.88	881.86	1007.84	1133.82	1385.78	1637.74	1889.70	2267.64	2645.58
Caldicot	773.20	902.07	1030.94	1159.80	1417.53	1675.27	1933.00	2319.60	2706.20
Chepstow	778.36	908.09	1037.82	1167.54	1426.99	1686.45	1945.90	2335.08	2724.26
Crucorney	737.26	860.14	983.02	1105.89	1351.64	1597.40	1843.15	2211.78	2580.41
Devauden	738.43	861.50	984.57	1107.64	1353.78	1599.93	1846.07	2215.28	2584.49
Goetre	745.76	870.04	994.34	1118.63	1367.22	1615.80	1864.39	2237.26	2610.13
Grosmont	738.09	861.10	984.12	1107.13	1353.16	1599.19	1845.22	2214.26	2583.30
Gwehelog	740.42	863.81	987.22	1110.62	1357.43	1604.23	1851.04	2221.24	2591.44
Llanarth	738.91	862.06	985.21	1108.36	1354.66	1600.97	1847.27	2216.72	2586.17
Llanbadock	745.66	869.93	994.21	1118.48	1367.03	1615.58	1864.14	2236.96	2609.78
Llanelly Hill	753.74	879.35	1004.98	1130.60	1381.85	1633.09	1884.34	2261.20	2638.06
Llanfoist	751.27	876.48	1001.69	1126.90	1377.32	1627.75	1878.17	2253.80	2629.43
Llangattock V A	739.19	862.38	985.59	1108.78	1355.18	1601.57	1847.97	2217.56	2587.15
Llangwm	736.70	859.47	982.26	1105.04	1350.61	1596.17	1841.74	2210.08	2578.42
Llangybi	741.22	864.75	988.29	1111.82	1358.89	1605.96	1853.04	2223.64	2594.24
Llanhennock	740.38	863.77	987.17	1110.56	1357.35	1604.14	1850.94	2221.12	2591.30
Llanover	738.71	861.82	984.95	1108.06	1354.30	1600.53	1846.77	2216.12	2585.47
Llantillio Croess	737.95	860.94	983.93	1106.92	1352.90	1598.89	1844.87	2213.84	2582.81
Llantillio Pertholey	746.95	871.44	995.93	1120.42	1369.40	1618.39	1867.37	2240.84	2614.31
Llantrissant	741.60	865.20	988.80	1112.40	1359.60	1606.80	1854.00	2224.80	2595.60

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Magor with Undy	764.68	892.13	1019.58	1147.02	1401.91	1656.81	1911.70	2294.04	2676.38
Mathern	747.60	872.20	996.80	1121.40	1370.60	1619.80	1869.00	2242.80	2616.60
Mitchell Troy	737.02	859.86	982.70	1105.53	1351.20	1596.88	1842.55	2211.06	2579.57
Monmouth	761.73	888.68	1015.64	1142.59	1396.50	1650.41	1904.32	2285.18	2666.04
Portskewett	743.43	867.33	991.24	1115.14	1362.95	1610.76	1858.57	2230.28	2601.99
Raglan	749.79	874.75	999.72	1124.68	1374.61	1624.54	1874.47	2249.36	2624.25
Rogiet	761.46	888.36	1015.28	1142.18	1396.00	1649.82	1903.64	2284.36	2665.08
Shirenewton	745.54	869.80	994.06	1118.31	1366.82	1615.34	1863.85	2236.62	2609.39
St. Arvans	745.12	869.30	993.49	1117.67	1366.04	1614.41	1862.79	2235.34	2607.89
Tintern	752.61	878.04	1003.48	1128.91	1379.78	1630.65	1881.52	2257.82	2634.12
Trellech	740.22	863.58	986.96	1110.32	1357.06	1603.80	1850.54	2220.64	2590.74
Usk	769.67	897.94	1026.23	1154.50	1411.06	1667.61	1924.17	2309.00	2693.83

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3. That it be noted for the year 2015/16 that the Office of Police and Crime Commissioner for Gwent has notified the following amounts in precepts issued to the Council, in accordance with Section 40 of the Act, for each of the dwellings shown above: -

Council Tax Band	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I
Proportion	6	7	8	9	11	13	15	18	21
Council Tax Charge	141.08	164.59	188.11	211.62	258.65	305.67	352.70	423.24	493.78

4. That, having calculated the aggregate in each case of the amounts at 2.2(i) and 2.3 above, the Council, in accordance with Section 30(2) of the Act, hereby sets the following amounts as the amounts of Council Tax for the year 2015/16 for each of the categories of dwellings shown below: -

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	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I
Abergavenny	906.87	1058.01	1209.16	1360.30	1662.59	1964.88	2267.17	2720.60	3174.03
Caerwent	896.96	1046.45	1195.95	1345.44	1644.43	1943.41	2242.40	2690.88	3139.36
Caldicot	914.28	1066.66	1219.05	1371.42	1676.18	1980.94	2285.70	2742.84	3199.98
Chepstow	919.44	1072.68	1225.93	1379.16	1685.64	1992.12	2298.60	2758.32	3218.04
Crucorney	878.34	1024.73	1171.13	1317.51	1610.29	1903.07	2195.85	2635.02	3074.19
Devauden	879.51	1026.09	1172.68	1319.26	1612.43	1905.60	2198.77	2638.52	3078.27
Goetre	886.84	1034.63	1182.45	1330.25	1625.87	1921.47	2217.09	2660.50	3103.91
Grosmont	879.17	1025.69	1172.23	1318.75	1611.81	1904.86	2197.92	2637.50	3077.08
Gwehelog	881.50	1028.40	1175.33	1322.24	1616.08	1909.90	2203.74	2644.48	3085.22
Llanarth	879.99	1026.65	1173.32	1319.98	1613.31	1906.64	2199.97	2639.96	3079.95
Llanbadock	886.74	1034.52	1182.32	1330.10	1625.68	1921.25	2216.84	2660.20	3103.56
Llanelly Hill	894.82	1043.94	1193.09	1342.22	1640.50	1938.76	2237.04	2684.44	3131.84
Llanfoist	892.35	1041.07	1189.80	1338.52	1635.97	1933.42	2230.87	2677.04	3123.21
Llangattock V A	880.27	1026.97	1173.70	1320.40	1613.83	1907.24	2200.67	2640.80	3080.93
Llangwm	877.78	1024.06	1170.37	1316.66	1609.26	1901.84	2194.44	2633.32	3072.20
Llangybi	882.30	1029.34	1176.40	1323.44	1617.54	1911.63	2205.74	2646.88	3088.02
Llanhennock	881.46	1028.36	1175.28	1322.18	1616.00	1909.81	2203.64	2644.36	3085.08
Llanover	879.79	1026.41	1173.06	1319.68	1612.95	1906.20	2199.47	2639.36	3079.25
Llantillio Croess	879.03	1025.53	1172.04	1318.54	1611.55	1904.56	2197.57	2637.08	3076.59
Llantillio Pertholey	888.03	1036.03	1184.04	1332.04	1628.05	1924.06	2220.07	2664.08	3108.09
Llantrissant	882.68	1029.79	1176.91	1324.02	1618.25	1912.47	2206.70	2648.04	3089.38
Magor with Undy	905.76	1056.72	1207.69	1358.64	1660.56	1962.48	2264.40	2717.28	3170.16
Mathern	888.68	1036.79	1184.91	1333.02	1629.25	1925.47	2221.70	2666.04	3110.38

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Mitchell Troy	878.10	1024.45	1170.81	1317.15	1609.85	1902.55	2195.25	2634.30	3073.35
Monmouth	902.81	1053.27	1203.75	1354.21	1655.15	1956.08	2257.02	2708.42	3159.82
Portskewett	884.51	1031.92	1179.35	1326.76	1621.60	1916.43	2211.27	2653.52	3095.77
Raglan	890.87	1039.34	1187.83	1336.30	1633.26	1930.21	2227.17	2672.60	3118.03
Rogiet	902.54	1052.95	1203.39	1353.80	1654.65	1955.49	2256.34	2707.60	3158.86
Shirenewton	886.62	1034.39	1182.17	1329.93	1625.47	1921.01	2216.55	2659.86	3103.17
St. Arvans	886.20	1033.89	1181.60	1329.29	1624.69	1920.08	2215.49	2658.58	3101.67
Tintern	893.69	1042.63	1191.59	1340.53	1638.43	1936.32	2234.22	2681.06	3127.90
Trellech	881.30	1028.17	1175.07	1321.94	1615.71	1909.47	2203.24	2643.88	3084.52
Usk	910.75	1062.53	1214.34	1366.12	1669.71	1973.28	2276.87	2732.24	3187.61

5. That Mrs J. Robson, Mr M. Howcroft, Miss R. Donovan, Mrs. S. Deacy, Mrs. W. Woods and Mrs. S. Knight be authorised under Section 223 of the Local Government Act 1972 to prosecute and appear on behalf of Monmouthshire County Council in proceedings before a Magistrates Court for the purpose of applying for Liability Orders in respect of Council Tax and Non-Domestic Rates.

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b) TREASURY MANAGEMENT POLICY STATEMENT AND STRATEGY STATEMENT, MRP POLICY STATEMENT AND INVESTMENT STRATEGY 2015/16

We were presented with the Treasury Management Policy Statement and Strategy Statement, MRP Policy Statement and Investment Strategy 2015/16. Council were asked to adopt the annual Treasury Management Policy Statement and the Treasury Management Strategy Statement and Investment Strategy for 2015/16 to 2018/19 incorporating the Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP) Statement for 2015/16.

During debate, the following issues were highlighted:

- We thanked officers for the informative report.
- Figures were requested regarding the receipts from the Cattle Market. We were informed that the figures could be provided, however, were not part of the treasury management strategy.
- A member queried whether a change to recommendations could be proposed. Officers clarified that change in recommendations would result in a change to the priorities of the strategy.
- Further detail would be provided regarding estimates and actual, comparative data.
- Officers clarified that pool funds related to investments in a variety of assets. Additional information would be provided.

We resolved:

That the following be approved:

It is recommended that the proposed Treasury Management Policy Statement for 2015/16 (appendix 2) and proposed Treasury Management Strategy and Investment Strategy 2015/16 to 2018/19 (appendix 1), including the Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP) Statement for 2015/16, be approved together with the Treasury Limits as required by section 3 of the Local Government Act 2003.

8. ABERGAVENNY: VIBRANT & VIABLE PLACES TOWN CENTRE LOAN FUND

We received a report which sought Council's approval of the Cabinet decision to accept Welsh Government repayable funding award of £1,250,000 to establish a fund to improve redundant and underutilised sites and premises in Abergavenny Town Centre.

We debated the report:

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- In presenting the report the Cabinet member advised that repayable funding must be drawn down by 31st March 2015. Monmouthshire County Council had been successful in its application for £1,250,000.00 of repayable funding under the Welsh Governments Vibrant and Viable Places initiative.
- The award would enable the authority to establish a fund that could provide interest free town centre loans for a period of 5 years to enable the redevelopment of redundant sites and premises in Abergavenny Town Centre.
- Repayable funding would need to be repaid in full by March 31st 2030. If the funding repayable is less than the award (i.e. loan default) then the Welsh Government will share 50% of the reduction to a maximum amount of 2.5% of the funding awarded.
- The programme board in Bryn y Cwm would bring forward proposals and recommendations. However, decisions would be made by the Cabinet appointed Place Programme Board.
- Council accepted the report and welcomed similar initiatives in other areas.
- The fund would be used for town centre regeneration in Abergavenny and boundaries of the town.
- Members welcomed the opportunity to rejuvenate areas of Abergavenny and supported proposals for regeneration.
- We agreed that a clear process was required in terms of how the fund was allocated and how decisions were made.
- We were informed that the loan was an opportunity for end responsibility to be retained by the authority.

We resolved that recommendations be approved:

Full Council agree the Cabinet decision to accept repayable funding of £1,250,000 from Welsh Government to establish a Fund to improve redundant and underutilised sites and premises in Abergavenny Town Centre.

9. REPORTS FROM THE HEAD OF OPERATIONS

a) WITHDRAWAL OF DECISION TO BUILD NEW LIBRARY IN ABERGAVENTNY

We were presented with a report which informed Council of the decision to rescind the decision taken by Council to build a new library on the old cattle market site, Abergavenny and adjust the capital budget accordingly.

A considerable amount of work had been undertaken by officers and we had listened to community suggestions. A number of options were being considered, which included the possibility of moving to the town hall.

During debate we noted:

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- Members were supportive of the recommendations within the report and welcomed the central hub idea. We agreed that costs of a new build could not be justified.
- The recommendation was understandable and widely accepted, however, further debate on the future of the library was required.
- It was suggested that money should be used on the outskirts of Bryn y Cwm and not just within Abergavenny.
- Some concerns were expressed regarding the process, which had started in 2010. However, it was accepted that the decision was correct.
- Members were reminded that officers were working on options appraisals for a number of buildings for community hubs and the most viable option would be considered.
- Considerable amount of work had been undertaken with the town team and programme board. The decision would bring forward wider priorities plus opportunity for business improvement district.

We resolved that recommendations be approved:

1. That members rescind the decision taken in 2010 to build a new library on the old cattle market site, Abergavenny, thereby releasing funding of £3.433m.
2. That Cabinet recommend to Council specific capital budgets to develop a Community Hub along with projects to improve the public realm that supports regeneration of the town centre (the Better Bryn Y Cwm Plan) from the funding released in 2.1

b) LOCAL TRANSPORT PLAN

Council were presented with the Review of Monmouthshire Local Transport Plan, which reviewed the Monmouthshire Local Transport Plan (LTP) as provided to Welsh Government and agree any further comments that members wished to make.

During debate we noted:

- Rogiet and Severn Tunnel were omitted from the report, we requested that these were included.
- We recognised the invaluable contribution that had been given by the external members of the Strategic Transport Group and thanked the chair of the group for the work that had been undertaken.
- In building the transport plan the authority had been required to adhere to Welsh Government guidelines. Trunk roads and rail were devolved to Welsh Government and schemes could not be included. However, an appendix would be added so that issues were acknowledged.
-

We resolved that recommendations be approved:

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That members review the LTP and approve any further comments for submission to Welsh Government.

10. MOBILE HOME WALES ACT

We were presented with the Mobile Homes (Wales) Act 2013, which considered the Council's approach to discharging its responsibilities under the Mobile Homes (Wales) Act 2013.

During debate we requested clarification regarding whether the authority fees could only be raised in accordance with CPI.

We resolved that recommendations were approved:

1. Delegate the authority to issue and vary Caravan Site licenses, and set conditions, as set out in Appendix One.
2. Delegate authority and enforcement powers to officers as set out in Appendix One.
3. Delegate responsibility for determining a fit and proper person policy to the Licensing and Regulatory Committee.
4. Adopt the fees policy set out in Appendix Three and delegate authority to the Licensing and Regulatory Committee to set future fees following annual reviews.
5. Agree the schedule of enforcement charges set out in Appendix Three, delegating authority to the Licensing and Regulatory committee to review charges in the future.

11. COUNCIL DIARY 2015/16

We were presented with the 2015/16 Council Diary and recognised that it provided the framework of meetings for the year, at times there may be a need to alter dates and set up additional special meetings.

An amendment was proposed and duly seconded:

- Standards committee to consider timing of meetings.
- Political Leadership Group clashes were avoided, where possible.
- Only one Individual Cabinet Member Decision was held during August 2015.

We noted the following during debate:

- It was requested that in accordance with equalities work that had been undertaken, Council considered changing time of Council meetings from 2pm to 5pm.
- We debated the pros and cons of alternative Council times.
- Reasons in favour of 5pm meetings, included, flexibility to accommodate working life/working members, increasing diversity,

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- Reasons against changing the time of meetings, included, clash with other bodies that members represented (school governors and town/community councils),
- We resolved that the Democratic Services committee would be tasked with gathering evidence and considering effects of changing the time of Council meetings.

The Chairman apologised as he had to leave the meeting and invited Councillor Strong, as vice Chair to take the meeting.

Councillor Prosser left at 5.00pm.

We resolved that the time of planning site visits should be decided by the Planning Committee.

Councillor Greenland left at 5.15pm.

We resolved that the diary be agreed, with the appropriate amendments and subject to the time of Council meetings being reviewed by the Democratic Services Committee.

We agreed that the diary would be included on the agenda for the next meeting.

12. MEMBERS' QUESTIONS

(a) From County Councillor D. Batrouni to County Councillor P. Murphy:

"What is his view on the future financial stability of Monmouthshire's Youth Service?"

In response:

'There is no doubt that the severity of funding reductions will have an impact on the ongoing operation of the Youth Service – a position no different to that of other Council services. However as you would expect, there is a strong ambition and commitment to sustain and improve such a vital service. In the approved budget mandate for 15/16 there is a requirement to find some £200k. Whilst plans are being progressed to develop the projects and solutions that will help close this gap – it is clear that these will take time to develop and bed in. The Youth Service could take the easy option and simply cut the cloth accordingly – shrinking structures and service levels. The desire instead is to professionally market and grow the offer and promote our uniqueness in delivering the only dedicated Youth Service of its kind in Wales. As things stand currently, we await confirmation of additional grant funding for 15/16 and it could be that in the short-term, securing external funds helps sustain the service whilst the plans and projects are put in place to evolve and adapt it. Building service resilience is important and there are many options and opportunities through which to achieve this. This is likely to mean the service will look and feel different in the future. The Youth Service embraces this and accepts

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the need to change and redesign – not just because of the financial situation - but because it needs to stay relevant and meaningful to young people. Should it be the case that the external grant income provides additional unbudgeted income in 15/16, affording a longer lead-in time to develop the initiatives stated in the budget mandate, changes will be reported through cabinet and progress captured through rigorous quarterly financial monitoring.'

(b) From County Councillor D. Batrouni to County Councillor G. Howard:

"How many complaints have the Council received about the Mark Group?"

In response:

'Thank you for the question Dimitri. It might be helpful to give members some background information so they understand the context of the question.

We saw from Will's presentation at the last Council how significant levels of deprivation exist in pockets around the County and that this can be missed by traditional funding formulae; so we recognise the great effort of the housing team in their work to bring this £2.7million project to Monmouthshire.

As a result and over the last year and a half, the Mark Group has been installing External Wall Insulation across Monmouthshire, particularly in Thornwell, using ECO energy efficiency funding. This has been provided through the utility companies' obligation to central government.

During that time, the homes of 243 social housing tenants and 80 private households, have benefited from the installation of external wall insulation, and a further 26 private properties are just being finished off. These works should have a long term benefit to the residents in making their homes sustainably warm, reducing bills and carbon emissions, and ultimately contributing to better health. The properties also look smart once completed.

The programme would have been larger but the Mark Group's funding was reduced by the Government's 2013/14 'Autumn statement' which reduced the level of ECO funding, albeit that the ECO scheme has been extended for a further two years to 2017.

The funding change was after the Mark Group had surveyed in excess of 100 properties in batches, which unfortunately led to some uncertainty and delay whilst funding arrangements were clarified. During this time, some customers contacted the Mark Group for updates, and the Chief Officer for Enterprise wrote to the Mark Groups CEO who in his reply acknowledged that some of the communications were not always handled as they should have been and some customers were inconvenienced.

Correspondingly the Council received approximately 30 contacts, mostly during spring of last year. Most of these sought clarity about when works would start and

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a number expressed dissatisfaction about Mark Group's customer liaison arrangements.

Obviously, negative feedback is extremely disappointing, but responding to and resolving these issues was a priority for officers.

Nonetheless, we have direct feedback from a number of individual residents who have been delighted and very complementary about both the quality of the work and the manner in which it's been conducted. However, as with all projects of this nature we will learn from the experience for future such projects.

County Councillor Hickman left at 5.20pm

13. CONSIDERATION TO EXCLUDE PRESS AND PUBLIC

We resolved to exclude the press and public from the meeting during consideration of the following item of business.

14. DELEGATED CHIEF EXECUTIVE DECISION TO APPROVE A FOSTER CARER LOAN

We received a report which informed Council of the delegated Chief Executive decision to approve a foster carer loan.

We resolved to note recommendations within the report.

The meeting ended at 5.30 p.m