

MONMOUTHSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

Minutes of the meeting of Monmouthshire County Council held at County Hall, Usk on Thursday 22nd January 2015 at 10.00 a.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, D.L.S. Dovey, G.L. Down, D.L. Edwards, R.M. Edwards, P.S. Farley, P.A. Fox, R. J. W. Greenland, E. J. Hacket Pain, R.G. Harris, R.J.C. Hayward, M. Hickman, R.J. Higginson, P.A.D. Hobson, G. Howard, S.G.M. Howarth, D.W.H. Hones, P. Jones, S.B. Jones, R.P. Jordan, P. Murphy, M. Powell, J.L. Prosser, V.E. Smith, F. Taylor, A.C. Watts, A.E. Webb and S. White.

OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE:

Mrs K. Beirne	Chief Officer, Enterprise
Mr S. Burch	Chief Officer, Social Care and Health
Ms S. McGuinness	Chief Officer, Children and Young People
Mrs T. Harry	Head of Democracy and Regulatory Services
Mr W. Mclean	Head of Policy and Engagement
Mrs J. Robson	Head of Finance/Section 151 Officer
Mr R. Tranter	Head of Legal/Temporary Monitoring Officer
Mr. R. Hoggins	Head of Operations
Mr, G. Ashworth	Head of Planning
Mr. M. Davies	Head of Development Plans
Ms. S. Wiggam	Senior Strategy & Policy Officer, Planning
Mr R. Williams	Democratic Services Officer

1. A MINUTE'S SILENCE

Members and officers stood for a minute's silence as a mark of respect to reflect upon Neil Allmark, a Monmouthshire County Council Employee, who had sadly passed away and to reflect upon the tragedies that had occurred in France.

2. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from County Councillors D.J. Evans, L. Guppy J.I. Marshall and A. Wintle, and from Paul Matthews, Chief Executive.

3. CHAIRMAN'S REPORT AND RECEIPT OF PETITIONS

We received and noted the Chairman's report.

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The Chairman welcomed Ruth and Josh Chohan, South Wales Fire and Rescue cadets, to the Council Meeting.

Council was reminded that the Chairman was holding a Charity Ball on St. Valentine's Day at the Angel Hotel, Abergavenny, in support of his two charities. Tickets were available to be purchased.

County Councillor G. Howard presented a petition in relation to Crawshay Bailey Close, Gilwern. The petition was passed to the appropriate officer.

The Cabinet Member for Social Care and Health informed Council that on 12th November 2014 the All Wales Continuous Awards took place at the Swalec Stadium in Cardiff. Monmouthshire County Council's Children's Services had won the category for Innovation. Monmouthshire County Council, with two other local authorities, had also been shortlisted for the National awards which were to be held at York Racecourse next month. Officers from the Children's Services were presented with the award by the Chairman of Monmouthshire County Council.

The Cabinet Member for Innovation, Enterprise and Leisure provided Members with an update on Mabey Bridge. In doing so, the following information was noted:

- Mabey Bridge consists of three divisions: the Modular Bridge division based in Lydney, the Infrastructure division based in the centre of Chepstow and the Renewable Wind division at Newhouse Farm.
- The Company had requested in December 2015 to meet with representative of the Authority to hold an open discussion regarding the company's future. The Cabinet Member for Enterprise, the Chief Executive, the Chief Officer, Enterprise and the Head of Commercial and People Development had met with their Group Chief Executive and a consultant working for the company. An open and frank discussion was held in which the company outlined the problem that it was experiencing.
- The company considers that the division based in Lydney has a good future and intends to retain this division.
- The division based in the centre of Chepstow has been generating a loss for some years due to global competition in the heavy bridge market, threatening the viability of the whole business. The Company believes that there was no future in this division in their ownership or in any other ownership. Therefore, the company considers that it has no option but to announce the closure of this division. All contracts will be honoured leading to a phased closure of that division. Enhanced redundancy packages would be offered and it was hoped that enough staff would request voluntary redundancy to reduce the number of compulsory redundancies. Phased redundancies would be put in place.

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- The company believes that the Renewables division has a future but in a company bigger than themselves. This division has been offered up for sale and the Company is currently discussing this matter with a potential buyer.
- The Welsh Government had been made aware of this development.
- Monmouthshire County Councils Economic Development team would be providing support to the company to help manage the process.
- There were likely to be over 100 people made redundant.
- The company had met with employees and held talks regarding potential redundancies.

Having received the update by the Cabinet Member, the following points were noted:

- Members expressed their sadness regarding the issues affecting Mabey Bridge.
- Concern was expressed by the local Member for Thornwell that he had not been consulted on this matter. He feared that high quality staff will be lost to Monmouthshire. It was noted that officers had informed the local Members as soon as was possible. However, an oversight had been made with regard to the local Member for St. Mary's ward in which he had not been consulted and an apology had been made.
- The local Member for Shirenewton informed Members that the Renewables division was located within his ward and expressed his hope that as many jobs could be saved where possible.
- It was noted that the company was doing all that it could to mitigate against job losses.
- Further updates would be brought to Council at future meetings.

4. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Declarations of Interest are identified under the relevant minute.

5. MINUTES

We received the minutes of the Council meeting dated 13th November 2014 which were confirmed and seconded.

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In doing so, reference was made to page 9 of the minutes – reference to the proposed amendment:

‘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.’

Some Members considered that it had been agreed that parents had been included in the establishment of a new advisory group and that all political parties would be represented on this group.

However, other Members considered that, at the last meeting, a group would come together to look at the items discussed in that motion and these issues would come to the existing advisory group. Issues have come forward and the advisory group has looked at these issues.

It was noted that parents had got together regarding this matter and Councillor Batrouni had minuted their meeting and had sent the parents’ views to the Cabinet Member for Schools and Learning. The Cabinet Member for Schools and Learning stated that the points raised by the parents had been considered and the changes would be made.

The Chairman asked Members to vote on the accuracy of the minutes. A vote was taken and the vote in favour of the minutes being an accurate record of the meeting held on 13th November 2014 was carried.

We resolved to receive the minutes as an accurate record of the meeting.

6. PUBLIC FORUM

There were no public forum items received.

7. THE LINKS BETWEEN THE WELSH INDEX OF MULTIPLE DEPRIVATION (2014). MONMOUTHSHIRE’S LOCAL SERVICE BOARD AND THE FUTURE GENERATIONS BILL

We received a report and presentation, which was introduced by the Cabinet Member for Community Development regarding the links between the Welsh Index of Multiple Deprivation (WIMD), Monmouthshire’s Local Service Board and the Future Generations Bill.

In doing so the following information was noted:

- Monmouthshire has 43 wards but has 56 Lower Super Output Areas (LSOAs). There is an inconsistency between the two measures.

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Welsh Index of Multiple Deprivation (WIMD)

- The WIMD is the official measure of relative deprivation for small areas in Wales. It is designed to identify those small areas in Wales where there are the highest concentrations of several different types of deprivation.
- The WIMD was published on 26th November 2014.
- Deprivation is the lack of access to opportunities and resources which we might expect in our society.
- Material deprivation is having insufficient physical resources – food, shelter and clothing necessary to sustain a certain standard of life. Social deprivation refers to the ability of an individual to participate in the normal social life of the community.

The WIMD measures the eight domains:

- | | | |
|------------------------|---|-------|
| • Income | - | 23.5% |
| • Employment | - | 23.5% |
| • Health | - | 14% |
| • Education | - | 14% |
| • Access to Services | - | 10% |
| • Community Safety | - | 5% |
| • Physical Environment | - | 5% |
| • Housing | - | 5% |

These combine to give an overall ranking of 1 – 1909.
1 is the most deprived and 1909 is the least deprived.

The analysis of LSOAs is by percentiles – the 10% most deprived; the 20% most deprived; the 30% most deprived and the 50% most deprived.

The WIMD and Monmouthshire:

- Monmouthshire has 56 LSOAs.
- 0 in the top 10% deprived.
- 0 in the top 20% deprived.
- 7.1% (4) in the top 30% deprived.
- 23.2 (13) in the top 50% deprived.

Members were provided with a graph outlining the LSOAs within their wards.

Income Domain:

- This is constructed using three different indicators, i.e., the number of Supported Asylum Seekers, the number of people receiving tax credits and working tax

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credits, and income related benefit claimants. All of these are added together and then divided by the adult population of that LSOA to identify the figure.

Employment Domain:

- Is constructed on a similar basis to Income Domain. The numbers receiving job seekers allowance, incapacity benefit / severe disablement allowance and employment and support allowance are added together and divided by the population within that LSOA.

Health Domain:

- This is measured in the following ways – Limiting long term illness, all cause death rate, low birth rate and cancer incidences. In Monmouthshire there are significant differences in death rates around the county. The rate of people who are impacted by a long term life limiting illness is twice the rate between our lowest and our highest areas. Generally, the health of citizens in Monmouthshire is good compared to the rest of Wales.

Education Domain:

- This is calculated using a three year average and is measured in the following ways – Key Stage 4 Level 2 Inclusive, Key Stage 4 capped point score, not entering higher education, no qualifications, repeat absenteeism, Key Stage 2 average point score.

Access to Services Domain:

- This domain captures the average time taken to get to any one of the following services – Pharmacy, food shops, G.P. Surgery, public library, post office, primary school, leisure centre, petrol station and secondary school, both by public and private transport. It takes them both together and averages the time out and divides it by the LSOA. This demonstrates that people who do not have access to private transport are highly challenged.

This means that:

- 12 of the LSOAs are in the top 10% ranking.
- 21 of the LSOAs are in the top 20% ranking.
- 26 of the LSOAs are in the top 30% ranking.
- 38 of the LSOAs are in the top 50% ranking.

Community Safety Domain:

- This is measured in the following ways – Police recorded criminal damage, Police recorded violent crime, Police recorded anti-social behaviour, Police recorded theft, Police recorded burglary, Fire incidences, Police recorded criminal damage.

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Physical Environment Domain:

- This is measured in the following ways – Proximity to waste and industrial sites, Flood risk and air quality.

Housing Domain:

- This is measured in the following ways – Overcrowding (bedroom measure) and the percentage of housing that does not have central heating.

The Local Service Board (LSB)

The role of the LSB is to bring people together to work from partnership agencies to look at specific challenges in terms of evidenced local needs and to put in place proper processes and procedures.

LSB Priorities and Key Programmes 2014/15:

- Vulnerable people and access to services.
- Improving attainment.
- Reducing low birth weight babies (Anti-poverty).
- Alcohol reduction.

The Well-being of Future Generations Bill

- The Welsh Government has introduced the Well-being of Future Generations Bill to the Senydd.
- The Well-being of the Future Generations Bill will, in law, ensure that Wales wants to be prosperous, resilient, healthier, a more equal Wales with cohesive communities and a vibrant culture with a thriving Welsh language.

Public Service Board

- Local Service Boards will be replaced by Public Service Boards.
- Monmouthshire's current model is well placed to make the transition from the LSB to a Public Service Board.
- We will be expected to work more sustainably by putting in place early interventions

How big a step is this?

- We already have sustainable and resilient communities at the heart of our Single Integrated Plan (SIP).
- Our themes and outcomes reflect social, economic and environmental wellbeing.

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- We know from the WIMD that deprivation remains a challenge for people in Monmouthshire.
- We need to review and refresh our local needs assessment.
- We need to review and refresh our 'sustainability checklist' to ensure that it captures the aspirations of the bill but also the means of delivery.
- We will publish a new 'Wellbeing Plan' in the first year of the new administration.

The Chairman thanked the Head of Policy and Engagement for an interesting and informative presentation.

Having received the presentation, the following points were noted:

- There was a clear link between low wages and education achievement.
- We must not lose sight of people in Monmouthshire living on low wages and must continue to help bring more jobs into the County.
- It was clear from the presentation the need to address rural deprivation within Monmouthshire.
- Monmouthshire is one of 11 early adopters of the Future Generations Bill and we are a year ahead of the rest of the local authorities in Wales working to find a response to it, which the Welsh Government can then build its statutory guidance to all authorities. A key area for the Authority is to ensure the checklist is far more robust and is able to demonstrate that the actions are sustainable and that they impact on the six aspirations.
- In response to a question raised regarding tackling areas of deprivation located close to more affluent areas, it was acknowledged that this was a huge challenge but by identifying the areas requiring support and then working with partners, these issues may be overcome.
- A meeting of the Local Service Board was recently held in which issues regarding rural deprivation were discussed. Data was now available to identify these areas with a view to addressing these issues.
- It was noted that Monmouthshire's figures for 2014 regarding wages were now above the Wales average. However, female wages were below the Wales average. This was an area that needed to be addressed.
- The next refresh of the whole index will be available in 2017. However, the indicators that lead up to the index are often collected more frequently. We are trying to link the data and evidence to the Council's policy decisions more clearly.

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- People who hold multiple employment - It is difficult to understand the challenges that people are facing and statistics do not always convey this. This is an area that needs to be addressed.
- In response to a Member's question, it was noted that in terms of this index officers are aware of the challenges being faced which has been captured in their developmental work. The localism agenda is embedded in the work that has been undertaken through the budgets and mandates.

We resolved to note:

- (i) the changes in the relative measures of deprivation for the 56 lower super output areas in Monmouthshire;
- (ii) the role that the Local Service Board is taking in addressing the challenges in those areas identified as having specific needs as a result of deprivation;
- (iii) the changes that will result from the progress of the Future Generations Bill and its impact upon the statutory planning arrangements for the Council.

8. NOTICES OF MOTION

(a) Submitted by County Councillor D. Batrouni

'That this Council creates and introduces a bespoke impact assessment on child poverty and social mobility to be inserted in front of budget mandates now and henceforth. It will be called the Child Poverty and Social Mobility test. That the Council notes Child poverty has increased in recent years, with one ward in Monmouthshire having a child poverty rate over 40%, three over 30% and 11 others over 20%. The Council determines this is not acceptable and further notes this negatively impacts upon social mobility. It is envisaged the bespoke assessment could include FSM and non-FSM differentials, demographic data for service users, where known, and the utilisation of Welsh Index of Multiple Deprivation data.'

Due to the delay in receiving this motion, County Councillor Batrouni requested that the words 'now' and 'and' in line three be removed from the motion and that the amended motion becomes the substantive motion.

Council agreed to accept the amended motion and that it becomes the substantive motion.

The motion was seconded by County Councillor Farley.

County Councillor Fox proposed an amendment which was duly seconded by County Councillor Murphy:

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'That this Council will introduce a bespoke assessment on child poverty and social mobility within the new sustainability assessment. It will address our aspiration for an equal Wales. That the Council notes Child poverty has increased in recent years, with one ward in Monmouthshire having a child poverty rate over 40%, three over 30% and 11 others over 20%. The Council determines this is not acceptable and further notes this negatively impacts upon social mobility. It is envisaged the bespoke assessment could include FSM and non-FSM differentials, demographic data for service users, where known, and the utilisation of Welsh Index of Multiple Deprivation data.'

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

We voted on the substantive motion, which was carried.

(b) Submitted by County Councillor R. Greenland

County Councillor F. Taylor declared a personal, non-prejudicial interest under the Members' Code of Conduct in respect of this motion as she is a member of Aneurin Bevan University Health Board.

'This Council supports the additional money promised to the Health Service in England and the consequential £123 million being passported to Wales through the Chancellor's autumn statement.

The Welsh Government drastically reduced funding to local government in Wales this year to support the Health Service. The effect of that additional reduction coming on top of several consecutive years of cuts has seen valued discretionary services closing across Wales. In Monmouthshire we are fighting to preserve services but even here it will be more difficult to retain many of them as time goes on.

We request the Welsh Government to use the windfall from Westminster to repay local government the funding diverted to the Health Service to help protect valuable local government services across Wales'.

Due to the delay in receiving this motion, County Councillor Greenland requested that the Council considers the following amended motion:

'This Council supports the additional money promised to the Health Service in England and the consequential £123 million being passported to Wales through the Chancellor's autumn statement.

The Welsh Government drastically reduced funding to local government in Wales this year to support the Health Service. The effect of that additional reduction coming on top of several consecutive years of cuts has seen valued discretionary services closing across Wales. In Monmouthshire we are fighting to preserve services but even here it will be more difficult to retain many of them as time goes on.

We note with disappointment that we are to receive none of the £123 million received from central government despite all other Gwent councils sharing £9 million between

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them, given to relieve deprivation. Yet again deprived families in Monmouthshire are being ignored by the Welsh Government.'

County Councillor Fox seconded the amended motion.

Having received the amended motion, the following points were noted:

- Having spoken with representatives within the Welsh Government to ascertain why Monmouthshire County Council had not received a share of the £9 million we had been informed that it was a result of the Barnett formula that had been used. As it has been established that there are areas of deprivation in Monmouthshire it was considered that the formula needed to be amended as the current criteria being used to determine allocation of funding was flawed.
- The Cabinet Member for Social Care and Health informed the Council that he had written to Jane Hutt, the Welsh Government Minister for Finance, regarding this matter to address the 'myths' relating to Monmouthshire with regard to deprivation and poverty.

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

We voted on the substantive motion, which was carried.

9. REPORT OF THE CABINET MEMBER, SOCIAL CARE AND HEALTH

We received a report by the Cabinet Member for Social Care and Health regarding a selection of issues relating to the portfolio responsibilities within his remit of Adults and Children's Social Care.

In doing so, information regarding the following issues was received:

- Safeguarding and Corporate Parenting.
- Mardy Park.
- My Day My Life.
- The Raglan Project.
- Gwent Frailty.

We resolved to receive the report and noted its content.

10. GEORGE ASHWORTH – HEAD OF PLANNING

The Chairman informed Members that George Ashworth, Head of Planning, would shortly be retiring.

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The Chairman and Members of the Committee expressed their gratitude to George for his professional and helpful advice over many years of service to Monmouthshire County Council.

Members of the Council wished George a long and happy retirement.

11. MONMOUTHSHIRE LOCAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN AFFORDABLE HOUSING SUPPLEMENTARY PLANNING GUIDANCE

We received a report regarding the draft Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG) on Affordable Housing and to consider whether to endorse it to support the policies of the Monmouthshire Local Development Plan (LDP), with a view to issuing for consultation purposes.

Having received the report the following points were noted:

- Concern was expressed that the Council would not apply its normal policy of requiring 'pepper potting' of affordable housing throughout a development and that this might lead to social stigmatisation. However, it was noted that these were very small sites and in order to make these site viable, this was the most appropriate option.
- It was noted that the Social Housing Grant was a 'one off' payment. There was a need to undertake this as soon as possible and therefore could not wait to apply 'pepper potting' of affordable housing.
- Concern was expressed that affordable housing was needed in rural areas as many young people were being forced to move away.
- Affordable housing was built to a better standard than properties built to be sold on the open market.
- It was noted that the Planning Committee, where possible, ensured that affordable housing was evenly dispersed amongst houses that were sold on the open market.
- In response to a question raised regarding the need for all new build future planning applications including the erection of solar panels, the Cabinet Member for Environment, Public Services and Housing stated that he had raised this matter with the Welsh Government Minister.

We resolved to endorse the Draft Affordable Housing Supplementary Planning Grant with a view to issuing for consultation purposes.

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12. MONMOUTHSHIRE LOCAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN: COMMUNITY INFRASTRUCTURE LEVY

We received a report in which Members were provided with an update on progress made on preparatory work for a Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) and to consider whether to endorse a Preliminary Draft Charging Schedule (PDCS), with a view to issuing for consultation purposes.

In response to a Member's question regarding clarification of some aspects of the report, the Head of Planning informed Members that the majority of the large sites will go through the planning process before the CIL was implemented and will be subject to Section 106 funding. For a time there will be Section 106 funding applications and CIL running alongside each other. However, there will be no duplication of funding as a result of an application being received. The Whole Place Plan will provide support in aiding in the CIL spend.

We resolved to:

- (i) receive the report and note its content;
- (ii) endorse the Preliminary Draft Charging Schedule (PDCS), with a view to issuing for consultation purposes.

13. MEMBERS' QUESTIONS

There were no Members' questions received.

The meeting ended at 1.15p.m