

**Minutes of the Extraordinary Meeting of Monmouthshire County Council  
held in the Council Chamber at County Hall, Usk  
on Friday 23<sup>rd</sup> May 2014 at 10.00a.m.**

**PRESENT:** County Councillor J.L. Prosser (Chairman)

County Councillors: D. Batrouni, G.C. Burrows, P.R. Clarke, D.L.S. Dovey, D.L. Edwards, R. Edwards, D.J. Evans, P.S. Farley, P.A. Fox, R.J.W. Greenland, E.J. Hackett Pain, R.G. Harris, M. Hickman, R.J. Higginson, S.G.M. Howarth, D.W.H. Jones, S. Jones, S.B. Jones, R.P. Jordan, P. Murphy, M. Powell, V.E. Smith, B. Strong, P.A. Watts, A.E. Webb, S. White and A.M. Wintle.

**OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE:**

Mr. P. Matthews	-	Chief Executive
Mr. S. Burch	-	Chief Officer, Social Care and Health
Mrs. K. Beirne	-	Chief Officer, Enterprise
Mr. S.M.W. Andrews	-	Monitoring Officer
Mrs. J. Robson	-	Head of Finance
Mrs. T. Harry	-	Head of Improvement and Democracy
Mr. P. Davies	-	Head of Commercial and People Development
Mrs. D. Hill-Howells	-	Head of Community Led Delivery
Mr. W. McLean	-	Head of Strategic Partnerships
Mr. M. Gatehouse	-	Improvement Officer
Mrs. S. King	-	Senior Democratic Services Officer

**ALSO IN ATTENDANCE:**

Ms. G. Carr	-	National Eisteddfod of Wales
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**APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

1.- Apologies for absence were received from County Councillors D. Blakebrough, J.E. Crook, A. Eason, J. George, L. Guppy, G. Howard and K. G. Williams.

The Chairman announced that it would be the last meeting attended by Mr M. Andrews, Monitoring Officer, as he would be entering retirement. The Chairman acknowledged the long service that he had undertaken and thanked M. Andrews on behalf of Monmouthshire County Council, members were invited to speak.

The Leader of the Council thanked M. Andrews and recognised the importance of having an officer to support and advise members and appreciated that he had been available.

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Councillor Batrouni, Leader of Labour Group, thanked M. Andrews for help that had been provided and highlighted that members respected the officer and wished him well for the future.

Councillor Hobson, Leader of Liberal Democrat group, wished M. Andrews the best of luck with his retirement and thanked him for the help and impartial advice.

Members offered best wishes to M. Andrews and expressed thanks for his support and contribution to Monmouthshire County Council.

The Chief Executive agreed and supported messages from members and advised that he would be missed, he wished M. Andrews best wishes.

In response, M. Andrews expressed thanks for all of the kind messages.

### **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

2.- There were no declarations of interest.

A member enquired when the Williams report would be discussed by members and the Council would be given an opportunity to respond.

It was noted that most Councils in Wales had not yet formally responded and correspondence had been sent that guidance would be issued in June 2014. Consultation should follow shortly.

### **NATIONAL EISTEDDFOD OF WALES**

3.- We welcomed Gwenllian Carr, from the National Eisteddfod of Wales and received a presentation and report in relation to proposals for Monmouthshire to host to the 2016 National Eisteddfod and the impact for the County, in terms of activity before, during and after the event.

During the presentation we noted the following:

- **Background**
  - One of the world's greatest cultural festivals, attracting over 150,000 visitors annually.
  - All kinds of activities for the whole family on a 35 acre site during the first week of August.
  - Held in North and South Wales alternately.
  - Wales' largest community development and regeneration project lasting two years locally.

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- **Benefit to the area**

- A chance to welcome thousands of visitors to the area – over 500 caravans in the Vale of Glamorgan, 2012 and many more people staying in hotels and guest houses locally.
- Economic effect on an area during the week: £6-£8 million.
- 150 hours of broadcasting on TV, radio and online. Bringing the world to the area and taking the area to the world.
- Largest BBC outside broadcast after Wimbledon.
- Monmouthshire Eisteddfod – every part of the county to be part of the community project.
- Bringing communities together in the name of the Eisteddfod – this can continue afterwards.
- Catalyst to strengthen and promote Welsh and the culture of Wales locally.
- Catalyst to promote Monmouthshire as a tourism destination.

- **Working together**

- A partnership between us and the local council.
- Working together to deliver the best project possible for local people and for Wales.
- Working together to promote Monmouthshire to a new target audience and potential return visitors.
- Working together throughout the two year preparatory and community project.
- **2014 – Carmarthenshire** promoting tourism and benefit for the language; **20013 – Denbighshire** promoting tourism; **2012 – Vale of Glamorgan** promoting tourism; **2011 – Wrexham** promoting tourism and benefit for the language; **2010 – Blaenau Gwent** promoting the country, tourism and language.

- **Community project**

- Create voluntary committees to work locally.
- Divide the area into workable wards for fundraising purposes.
- Organise and hold community events of all kinds to raise money and awareness.
- Create the list of competitions and organise events during the week itself.
- Hold outreach activities with children and young people in the period leading up to the festival.
- Create the Eisteddfod Choir.

- **Impact/Legacy**

- **Linguistic impact** – more people learning Welsh, choosing to send their children to Welsh language playgroups and schools.
- **Cultural impact** – more cultural and artistic activities happening locally.

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- **Economic impact** – particular boost for the tourism and hospitality sectors.
- **Community impact** – an opportunity for an area to continue working as a community; it brings communities together encouraging partnerships and creating an interest in democracy and local citizenship.
- **The way forward/Important milestones**
  - **Public Meeting** (set up committees/gain public interest)
  - **June/July 2015** – Proclamation festival
  - **October/November 2015**- Meet the Buyer events
  - **April 2016** – Concerts announced and tickets go on sale
  - **June/July 2016** – Consumer and business promotional and advertising campaign
  - **30 July – 6 August 2016** – Eisteddfod week
  - Details of main contacts

Members were invited to comment and ask questions, during discussion we noted the following:

- Council supported proposals to host the 2016 National Eisteddfod and welcomed opportunities that the event would bring to the County.
- In support, the Cabinet member highlighted:
  - That the proposed venue would be an extension of the town centre, close enough to be integrated, but wide enough to create a large venue.
  - It was recognised that the County would benefit from tourists attending the event. It was suggested that work could be undertaken with Arriva, to ensure public transport was effective and that event makers, guides and welcome hosts were introduced as part of the event.
  - In terms of investment and return, there was a requirement to ensure that there was a lasting legacy for the towns, communities and County.
  - The actual event would be held for one week in the Summer of 2016, but the preparation would start immediately and would have to be developed.
  - In relation to finance and exposure to the County in figures, those presented within the report would be current value and the amount would decrease as funding begins.

*Note: County Councillor A. Webb left at 10.41a.m.*

- The Leader thanked Ms Carr for attending and for an informed presentation. It was highlighted that Welsh culture should be celebrated and was excited about opportunities for Monmouthshire. Economic benefits would be obvious, but it was commended that the social return on investment would be measured. It was recognised that language and culture would be promoted through the event.

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- Members welcomed the emphasis on legacy and encouraged community groups to get involved in planning of the event.
- A member recognised the opportunity, due to involvement with local Eisteddfod projects and fully supported recommendations.
- We highlighted that each local area would be benefited by the Eisteddfod, particularly in relation to economic effect on local areas. The event was considered to be an opportunity to make an investment and bring visitors to the County, local residents were encouraged to become involved.
- Members that had visited National Eisteddfods over previous years were impressed with the infrastructure, organisation of events and attention to detail within the layout. The proposed site would suit the event proposals.

We resolved:

1. To agree to host the 2016 National Eisteddfod, at Castle Meadows in Abergavenny.
2. To agree to fund the one off resources needed to support hosting the Eisteddfod, totally an estimated £580k, from the priority investment reserve, of which £300k relates to the requirement to underwrite the community fund raising target. Costs will be maintained to a minimum and we will look to maximise the return on this investment for Monmouthshire.

*Note: County Councillors P.A.D. Hobson and B. Jones left at 11.00a.m.*

### **IMPROVEMENT PLAN AND IMPROVEMENT OBJECTIVES 2014/15**

4.- We were presented with the Improvement Plan and Improvement Objectives proposed for 2014/15.

Having received the report the following points were noted:

- The setting of annual Improvement Objectives and the production of an Improvement Plan are statutory requirements under the Local Government (Wales) Measure 2009.
- The Improvement Plan is produced in two parts. Members were presented with the forward looking section of the plan, which was focused on commitments and aspirations. It presented an opportunity to set the key actions that would deliver priorities of education of young people, support for vulnerable people and supporting business and job creation.
- The plan contained four specific Improvement Objectives. Objectives 1 and 2 were refreshed versions of those agreed by Council last year. The new objective 3 titled '*We will enable our county to thrive*'. Brought together previous objectives which covered economic development, waste and whole place, which have clear synergies. Objective 4 focused on organisational

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effectiveness and related to ensuring that that Monmouthshire County Council was an efficient, effective and sustainable organisation.

- The plan is aligned with the three themes and nine outcome statements that members have previously committed to as partner in the Local Service Board. These are:
  - **Nobody is left behind:** Older people are able to live their good life; People have access to appropriate and affordable housing; People have good access and mobility.
  - **People Are Confident, Capable and Involved;** People's lives are not affected by alcohol and drug misuse; Families are supported ; People feel safe.
  - **Our County Thrives:** Business and enterprise; People have access to practical and flexible learning; People protect and enhance the environment.
- Performance data for 2013-14 has been included where appropriate. This allows members to understand the objectives for the year ahead in the context of the most recent performance. However members should be aware that measures have not yet been subject to audit and therefore may change before publication by Welsh Government in September.
- Part two of the plan, would focus on what we achieved in 2013-14 and would be presented to Council in October, when audited information from other councils becomes available. At this point we will have up-to-date comparative data. In the meantime the plan contains a hyperlink to the last set of published data.

During discussion members were invited to comment and ask questions, we noted the following points:

- The Chairman of Adults Select advised that a Joint Select Committee had been held and members discussed the plan in considerable detail and made constructive comments. These comments included drafting and presentation, but also proposed that more prominent items were included e.g. aspirations on transport side. Members sought reassurance that comments from scrutiny committees would be carried through to the final document and we were advised that hyperlinks within this version were working appropriately.
- The Improvement Officer thanked members for comments and confirmed that links were working. The comments received had reflected the Estyn journey, contained within objective 1 and observations on transport contained within objective 3.
- References had been made within the single integrated plan and a number of other points had been made e.g. comparison to other areas, the detailed plan was not available at this stage.
- Officers had retained the vision for the county, however, there was detail on Welsh Government information base where information could be compared. Further detail would be provided in October.

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- The area of Adult Education was identified as an area where a number of measures had been included in the final section. These were not performance indicators, three priorities and four objectives were strongly reflected within the report. Adult Education did not have a performance indicator and had been included within data for leisure centres and libraries, however, these were not comparable for adult education.
- A member commended the quality of the report and highlighted that it was well written. However, it was requested that quantitative data was provided to support the content and how objectives would be measured.
- Consistency was required, in relation to the way that reports were presented and how information was analysed. In response, we were advised that a change in improvement objectives had occurred and there had been a shift in improvement objectives from year to year. National Objectives would provide a common reference point, long term objectives would have aspiration and circumstances would result in new opportunities becoming available.
- We were informed that select committee had raised concerns regarding annotated diagrams and hyperlinks. Officers apologised and explained that it had been a software issue, when documents were converted.
- We were advised that the joint select committee had been informed and officers had explained that the included language is agreed and adopted by Council through the adoption of the single integrated plan. Work had been undertaken collaboratively with partners.
- It was important that the document was presented in an appropriate way and any other comments would be addressed.
- Detail would be analysed on a monthly basis and considered alongside key performance measures. When a service is changed it would result in a period of uncertainty. The aim would be to have improved targets, compared to the previous year.
- It was discussed that, within the transport area there should be a more strategic approach, however, this was not reflected within the report. It was proposed that '*a more strategic approach to transport*' was included within objective 3. The officers confirmed that they would look for this to be incorporated and a Countywide Strategic Transport group had been established which would address issues. Outcomes and achievements of the group would be reflected upon.

We resolved:

1. That Council adopt the nine outcomes described within the Single Integrated Plan as those that the local authority works towards and aligns its own plans to. The outcomes are shown in paragraph 3.4 and will replace the five population outcomes described in previous improvement plans.
2. That Council approve the Improvement Plan 2014-17.

**The meeting ended at 11.30a.m.**