

# MONMOUTHSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

## Minutes of the meeting of Monmouthshire County Council held at County Hall, Usk on Thursday 25<sup>th</sup> June 2015 at 2.00 p.m.

**PRESENT:** County Councillor B. Strong (Chairman)  
County Councillor R.J. Higginson (Vice Chairman)

County Councillors: D. Batrouni, D. Blakebrough, P.R. Clarke, J.E. Crook, D.L.S. Dovey, G.L. Down, A. Easson, R.M. Edwards, D.J. Evans, P.S. Farley, P.A. Fox, J. George, 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. Jones, P. Jones, S. Jones, S.B. Jones, R.P. Jordan, P. Murphy, M. Powell, J.L. Prosser, V.E. Smith, B. Strong, F. Taylor, P.A. Watts, A.E. Webb, S. White and A. Wintle.

### OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE:

Mr P. Matthews	Chief Executive
Mrs K. Beirne	Chief Officer, Enterprise
Ms S. McGuinness	Chief Officer, Children and Young People
Mrs J. Robson	Head of Finance/Section 151 Officer
Mr R. Hoggins	Head of Operations
Mr W. McLean	Head of Strategic Partnerships
Mrs T. Jelfs	Head of Children's Services
Mrs D. Hill Howells	Head of Community Led Delivery
Mr I. Saunders	Head of Tourism Leisure and Culture
Mrs T. Harry	Head of Democracy and Regulatory Services
Mr R. Tranter	Head of Legal/Monitoring Officer
Mrs S. King	Senior Democratic Services Officer

### 1. WELCOME AND APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from County Councillors G. C. Burrows, D.L. Edwards, J.I. Marshall and K.G. Williams.

### 2. CHAIRMAN'S REPORT AND RECEIPT OF PETITIONS

We welcomed pupils of Magor Church in Wales school, the pupils had been invited to hold a Q&A session with full Council. The pupils explained the benefits of a station in Magor and how this would impact positively on the community and residents.

During the session, members were invited to ask questions and we noted the following:

We thanked the pupils for taking part in the meeting and for their articulate and compelling representation in favour of a train station in Magor.

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Members recognised the importance of increased public transport to be provided in the area and wished the students well in future successes.

We received and noted the Chairman's report.

Councillor Howard presented a petition in relation to Bailey Close, Gilwern, this was passed to Chairman and would be forwarded to the appropriate officer.

### 3. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Declarations of interest were noted under the relevant agenda item.

### 4. MINUTES

#### a) Annual Meeting 12<sup>th</sup> May 2015

We resolved that the minutes of the Annual Meeting of the County Council held on 12<sup>th</sup> May 2015 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman, subject to the following amendments:

#### *Apologies Councillor Easson*

#### b) Council Meeting 14<sup>th</sup> May 2015

Councillor Howarth requested an update regarding the petition that had been presented at the meeting.

Officers confirmed that work had been undertaken but an update had not been reported to the appropriate committee.

### 5. PUBLIC FORUM ITEMS

There were no public forum items received.

### 6. NOTICES OF MOTION

#### a) Submitted by County Councillor D. Batrouni

*'That it is noted in the previous financial year that there were compensatory savings totalling £1.2m over and above the mandated savings set out. This Council further notes that these compensatory savings have not been subject to public scrutiny; that Councillors did not have a chance to vote for or against such proposals; and notes that to date no comprehensive breakdown of these savings have been provided to Councillors. The Labour opposition therefore asks that any*

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*compensatory savings in future financial years are brought to the attention of full Council and the public at the earliest opportunity and a detailed breakdown of these savings are provided as a matter of course at the end of the financial year.'*

We were informed that the motion was withdrawn.

#### **7. MINUTES OF MEETINGS:**

We resolved that the following minutes be received:

##### **1) Internal Monitoring Board 25<sup>th</sup> February 2015**

We resolved that the following minutes be received:

##### **2) Democratic Services Committee March 2015**

#### **8. A CITY DEAL FOR SOUTH EAST WALES**

We were presented with a report 'A City Deal for South East Wales', which had been agreed at Cabinet on 17<sup>th</sup> June 2015. The purpose was to provide and update on recent work to attract a City Deal for South East Wales and to seek authority to be a partner in progressing towards the preparation of a formal City Deal proposal.

Council were asked to endorse the decision agreed at Cabinet:

1. That Cabinet agree that Monmouthshire should become an active partner in progressing a City Deal for South East Wales and participate in preparatory work that may / will lead to the negotiation of a City Deal with UK Government, Welsh Government and surrounding authorities.
2. The Cabinet agree a sum of £30,300 to be taken from the Priority Investment Reserve as a contribution to an overall fund of £500,000 being established by the ten South East Wales Councils to take forward necessary specialist preparation of a detailed proposal over the next 18 months.
3. That Cabinet agree to this report being presented to full Council on 26 June 2015 to ensure all Members are aware of this work and have an opportunity to debate it.
4. That updates are brought to Cabinet / Council at appropriate times to enable Cabinet to decide whether they wish to remain part of this process.

We debated the following:

- Members expressed support for the decision and it was recognised that it would increase investment in Wales.

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- Clarification was requested regarding the benefits that would be achieved by the whole of Monmouthshire, particularly in relation to the transport infrastructure. In response, we were informed that schemes were being discussed and would add value and deliver significant growth opportunities, deals would be bespoke to the area and region.
- In response to a question regarding governance arrangements, this was identified as a fundamental factor to the successful deal. Regular meetings had been held between leaders of authorities, the governance arrangements would be finely cemented and governance was emerging for the city region.
- Council recognised the importance of the location of Monmouthshire and benefits that could be offered and used to maximise potential.

We resolved that the Cabinet decision be agreed:

1. That Cabinet agree that Monmouthshire should become an active partner in progressing a City Deal for South East Wales and participate in preparatory work that may / will lead to the negotiation of a City Deal with UK Government, Welsh Government and surrounding authorities.
2. The Cabinet agree a sum of £30,300 to be taken from the Priority Investment Reserve as a contribution to an overall fund of £500,000 being established by the ten South East Wales Councils to take forward necessary specialist preparation of a detailed proposal over the next 18 months.
3. That Cabinet agree to this report being presented to full Council on 26 June 2015 to ensure all Members are aware of this work and have an opportunity to debate it.
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### **9. ABERGAVENNY: VIBRANT & VIABLE PLACES – TOWN CENTRE LOAN FUND**

Council were presented with a report which sought Full Council's approval to set up a budget within the capital programme to manage the Welsh Government Vibrant and Viable Places repayable funding award of £1,250,000.

The award would enable a fund to be established by the authority which would provide 'interest free' town centre loans for a period of 5 years to enable redevelopment of redundant sites and premises in Abergavenny Town Centre.

Key terms of the award included:

- Repayable funding would need to be repaid in full by 31<sup>st</sup> March 2030. If the funding repayable is less than the award (ie from loan default) then Welsh Government will share 50% of the reduction to a maximise amount of 2.5% of the funding awarded.

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- Any repayable funding not being utilised 6 months after April 2016 must be returned.
- The maximum repayable period for Town Centre Loans is 5 years (to allow recycling).
- Funding can only be used to bring back into productive use vacant, underutilised and redundant sites and premises.
- Funding must be administered by a 'Board' established in the Local Authority area, the governance arrangements for which were agreed by Individual Cabinet Member report on 20th May 2015.
- Interest accrued by holding repayable funding must be recycled into the fund.
- Funding cannot be used for management, administration or operational purposes.
- However, as allowed by the terms, a one off fee of 5% will be charged for administering the loans applied for, as agreed within Individual Cabinet Member report approved on 20th May 2015.

We resolved that recommendations within the report be agreed:

1. Full Council agree to the setting up of a capital budget of £1,250,000 within the capital programme to manage the repayable loan funding award.

#### **10. BUSINESS CASE: MONMOUTH POOL**

Council were presented with a report which informed of the six lane pool option for replacement of the current pool at Monmouth Comprehensive and Leisure Centre site. The report identified revised costs for a 6 lane pool make the business case more affordable than originally presented.

At Council on September 25<sup>th</sup> a preferred option for a 25m 4 lane pool was agreed on the basis that more detailed work would be completed to examine the possibility of a six lane facility. The estimated costs of providing the pools at that time was £6 million for a four lane pool and £7.73 million for a six lane pool.

The planning application for the new school and leisure facilities was submitted with a four lane option, amendments to the scheme were pending consultation prior to planning committee in July.

Previous pool costs were indicative and since the previous report a scheme has been proposed configuring the new pool inside the footprint of the new school building.

The result of the new plans have significantly reduced the cost of a six lane pool from £7.73 million to a cost of £5.168 million bringing it below the original four lane option.

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The change of plan will provide a new pool however the build time will be increased to approximately two years, in line with the school building programme. The option of a four lane or six lane offer has been debated by officers, clubs and users and the opportunity to deliver a 6 lane facility is the preferred option for the service following analysis of a feasibility study and outline business case.

During debate we noted the following:

- Members supported the proposed 6 lane pool.
- Council were reassured that facilities would be designed to meet the requirements of a larger pool.
- We recognised the potential return on investment that could be introduced with a 6 lane pool.
- We thanked officers for the report and welcomed the improved pool facility.

We resolved that recommendations within the report be agreed:

1. That the Council considers the revised costs and business case associated with a 6 lane replacement pool at Monmouth, of £5.168million.
2. That Council accepts the financial risk of £50,000-£60,000 to entertain more detailed and tender work to introduce cost certainty and for this to be borne by the 21c feasibility budget.
3. And subject to that certainty  
Cabinet approves the addition of up to £1.168 million to the 2015-16 capital programme (in addition to the £4million subsumed with 21c schools initiative), to be funded by borrowing initially and ultimately by loan repayments afforded by Leisure services through cost reduction and income generation.

## 11. EVALUATION OF THE EFFECTIVENES OF SAFEGUARDING WITHIN MONMOUTHSHIRE

Council were presented with the Evaluation of the effectiveness of safeguarding report, which provided members with information and analysis regarding the safeguarding of children and young people. Comprehensive strategic and operational information was provided via a suite of four cross referenced reports:

- i) **Strategic Report for Safeguarding April 2015**; this provides an evaluative overview for Members on progress, areas for further work and includes case studies.
- ii) **Safeguarding Report Card April 2015**; this provides detailed evidence and analysis for Members wishing to review safeguarding performance in more depth.
- iii) **Service Improvement Plan for Safeguarding 2015 – 2016**; this is the annual plan for the safeguarding unit and lists the priorities and actions for the year.

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- iv) **Children's Services Improvement Plan 2015 – 2016**; this contains the priorities and actions for Children's Services, including the actions in response to the CSSIW inspection.

During debate we noted the following:

- In response to a question regarding robustness of audit, Council were informed that safeguarding aligned with the process. The framework allowed issues to be identified and there was confidence in a process which had developed significantly.
- There was a need for decisions to be in the child's best interest and the Council priority surrounding safeguarding.
- It was recognised that a vacancy had been frozen for some time, however this had now been released and priorities were considered when the post was implemented
- The Chair of Children and Young People Select committee affirmed the comprehensive nature of the report and advised that the service had been subject to scrutiny, and the committee had been reassured that policies and procedures had been put in place. Thanks were conveyed to the Chief Officer.
- We discussed the requirement for DBS checks and noted that these had superseded CRB checks, which resulted in different rules and regulations. We agreed that an advisory note would be circulated to members by the Monitoring Officer.
- Council commended officers on the excellent report.

We resolved to agree recommendations within the report:

That Council receives the attached reports, noting the progress and areas for further work and using them as the basis for challenge.

## 12. LICENSING ACT 2003 POLICY STATEMENT 2015

Council considered the proposed 'Licensing Act 2003 Policy Statement 2015', as previously debated by the Licensing and Regulatory Committee.

We resolved that recommendations within the report be agreed:

- 1) Members approve the updated Licensing Policy statement for adoption by Monmouthshire County Council, to come into force on 1st July 2015.

## 13. MEMBERS QUESTIONS

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County Councillors D. Dovey and P. Farley declared personal non-prejudicial interests, pursuant to the members' code of conduct, as school governors of Chepstow Comprehensive School.

**a) From County Councillor S. White to County Councillor B. Jones:**

*'The travellers uninvited stay in Monmouth last week, adds up to: their hygiene needs, loss of parking revenue, officers time, the huge amount of un recycled rubbish, to be picked up and dealt with out of working hours, so that Monmouth could accommodate the busy Friday market and parking, must amount to a considerable sum of money, this County can ill afford?*

*Please could you tell me and the Ratepayers of Monmouthshire, the full cost to us all?'*

In response:

*'The travellers arrived late evening on the 9<sup>th</sup> June. On the 10<sup>th</sup> June environmental health and the car park manager undertook a needs assessment to assess any welfare /educational needs which we would need to meet – none were identified.*

*A multi agency case conference was held on Thursday to discuss actions and it was agreed that we would issue a direction advising the travellers that they should leave the site by 7 pm the following day Friday 12 June.*

*The direction was served on the travellers and they left the site.*

*At 7.30 am on Friday the cleaners and sweepers cleared the site and the carpark was set up for the Friday market. By 9am the carpark and market were operating as usual.*

*The costs to the council were:*

*Loss of carpark income equating to an estimated £284.*

*The costs of dealing with the travellers and clearing up following their departure equated to £ 1,130.'*

**b) From County Councillor D. Batrouni to County Councillor E. Hackett  
Pain:**

*'What is the current situation regarding the reorganisation taking place at Chepstow School?'*

In response:

The Cabinet Member advised that the governing body would have responsibility for staffing and reorganisation.

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**c) From County Councillor D. Batrouni to County Councillor E. Hacket**

**Pain:**

*'What is the total amount spent on redundancy payments at Chepstow school for the financial years (i) 2014-15 (ii) 2013-14?'*

In response, the Cabinet member advised that figures for all teaching staff:

- i) 2013-14 £426,502.76
- ii) 2014-15 £369,207.22

**d) From County Councillor D. Batrouni to County Councillor E. Hacket**

**Pain:**

*'What is the present situation with the recruitment of a Headteacher at Pembroke school?'*

In response, the Cabinet Member advised that an Acting Head was in post until the Autumn term and the governing body had drawn up an advertisement with the specification for recruitment of a Headteacher

**e) From County Councillor D. Batrouni to County Councillor B. Jones:**

*'What is the cross-contamination rate for recyclable waste collected by the Council?'*

In response, the Cabinet member advised that overall would be approximately 5%.

**f) From County Councillor D. Batrouni to County Councillor E. Hacket**

**Pain:**

*'How many SEN children were affected by the "unrealistic savings target" for SEN transport as stated in recent Cabinet papers?'*

In response, the Cabinet member advised that there were no SEN children affected as it had not been implemented.

**The meeting ended at 7.30 p.m.**