

## MONMOUTHSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

**Minutes of the meeting of Economy and Development Select Committee held  
at The Council Chamber, County Hall, The Rhadyr, Usk, NP15 1GA on Thursday, 13th  
July, 2017 at 10.00 am**

**PRESENT:** County Councillor P.Pavia (Chairman)  
County Councillor D. Blakebrough (Vice Chairman)

County Councillors: J. Becker, A. Davies, D. Dovey, M. Feakins and  
B. Strong

Also in attendance, County Councillor V. Smith

### **OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE:**

Sian Hayward	Head of Digital
Sarah Stephens	Acting Assistant Director - Shared Resource Service
Richard Jones	Policy and Performance Officer
Hazel Ilett	Scrutiny Manager
Richard Williams	Democratic Services Officer

### **APOLOGIES:**

County Councillor R.Roden

#### **1. Declarations of Interest**

County Councillor D. Blakebrough declared a personal, non-prejudicial interest pursuant to the Members' Code of Conduct in respect of agenda item 5 – ICT in Schools Project Update, as she is a governor of Monmouth Comprehensive School.

County Councillor D.L.S. Dovey declared a personal, non-prejudicial interest pursuant to the Members' Code of Conduct in respect of agenda item 5 – ICT in Schools Project Update, as he is a governor of Chepstow Comprehensive School and a former Chair of Governors at Mounton House School.

County Councillor P. Pavia declared a personal, non-prejudicial interest pursuant to the Members' Code of Conduct in respect of agenda item 5 – ICT in Schools Project Update, as he is a governor of St. Mary's Roman Catholic Primary School.

County Councillor V. Smith declared a personal, non-prejudicial interest pursuant to the Members' Code of Conduct in respect of agenda item 5 – ICT in Schools Project Update, as she is a governor of Usk Primary School and has grandchildren attending Goytre Fawr Primary School.

#### **2. Public Open Forum**

There were no members of the public present.

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### **3. Confirmation of Minutes**

The minutes of the Economy and Development Select Committee meeting dated 13<sup>th</sup> June 2017 were confirmed and signed by the Chair.

### **4. ICT in Schools Project Update**

#### **Context:**

To provide a progress update on the investment programme for ICT in schools. This programme involved the upgrade and renewal of the ICT infrastructure in schools, providing a common platform and standard in line with Welsh Government and 21<sup>st</sup> Century Schools' aspirations.

#### **Key Issues:**

The investment programme is predicted to finish on time, within budget and to the required standard and specification. It is expected that all work will be fully completed over the summer period, with a post project review in September 2017 to address any residual issues. Schools are already reporting an overall increase in performance of the infrastructure upgrade and the level of technician support within the Service Level Agreement (SLA).

#### **Member Scrutiny:**

- With regard to moving schools to the Shared Resource Service (SRS) Infrastructure, this is a dedicated education infrastructure so it is not shared with the corporate infrastructure.
- All of the machines within the schools are connected to this programme providing access to internet sources, printing windows devices and I pads, for example. If a school requests something new, then this is looked at with a view to providing it to all schools, i.e., doing it once for all schools.
- Schools have the option to use the Cloud and some are doing this via the Hwb platform and google apps. Schools are being urged to use the Hwb, as it is a platform for Wales.
- A centralised network is being provided in which schools can connect their devices to. Machines are virus protected and are up to date.
- Capacity is regularly monitored and increased when required. More capacity is now available. This is funded and provided separately from the corporate network.
- Under the SLA arrangement there are 4 levels, namely, Comprehensive and the Group A, B & C primary schools.

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- It is paramount that each school maintains the level of equipment to ensure that the service being provided by the SRS can be sustainable. Schools will be required to update their equipment on a routine basis. An audit will be undertaken every year and SRS will rate equipment accordingly. This will help schools to manage their ICT budgets.
- The £885,000 had been costed out. A large part of the budget went on employing the four technicians to undertake the work required and upgrading the broadband lines to 100mb. Welsh Government has looked at what has been done with regard to increasing broadband lines to 100mb and is looking to fund 100mb provision across all schools in Wales.
- In response to a question raised regarding bandwidth and whether the system was adequate to support the present and future infrastructure, service provider constraints and whether capacity could be sold back to the open market, it was noted that officers would investigate the matter regarding selling back capacity. Bandwidth will be monitored with a view to ensuring that adequate capacity was available. The infrastructure itself is fully resilient and will create minimal disruption to schools should a server fail. New storage has been purchased and opportunities to store via the Cloud were also being looked at. Other authorities are keen to examine what Monmouthshire County Council has been undertaking.
- A rolling audit process will commence in April every year as part of the SLA delivery.
- The Team meets with schools in order to understand what they are trying to achieve with a view to checking off any infrastructure complexities that might occur. From a primary school perspective, many of the applications that schools are using are web based and the Team are available to ensure resilience of the systems used. In a secondary school capacity, it differs, as schools tend to operate 'higher end' machines. Therefore, the Team works with the schools to ensure the right equipment is required before purchasing it.
- The Education Achievement Service (EAS) goes into schools to coach how to teach in a digital world.
- A question was asked whether communities could benefit from using the 100MB lines that have been installed. It was noted that this matter would be investigated.
- Capacity has to be regularly reviewed and monitored.
- Schools have IT coordinators. However, a web based call logging system is in place within schools allowing individuals to log calls rather than this being undertaken by an IT coordinator. There is also a technician in post per cluster to respond to issues quickly.

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- The 100MB upgrade to Mounton House School will go live during the schools' summer holidays.
- Joint scrutiny between the Economy and Development Select Committee and the Children and Young People Select Committee could be undertaken in respect of the pipeline of development from primary school to secondary school.
- A user working group will be established whereby selected head teachers, with representatives of the authority, will review progress.
- Lines are monitored to see how well they are performing. Capacity maps can be provided to schools on a quarterly basis so that they might ascertain capacity levels. This will allow schools to plan, going forward.
- As part of the equipment refresh within schools, the aim was to remove all of the XP machines and the removal of any devices that could not support Windows 7. Replacement programmes for older versions of I Pads are also being brought forward so that they can support the latest versions of IOS.
- A post evaluation review will be undertaken with all schools within Monmouthshire which will run from September 2017.

#### Committee's Conclusion:

- The post evaluation review will be brought back to the Select Committee for scrutiny.
- A Joint Select Committee meeting will be held in the future between the Economy and Development Select Committee and the Children and Young People Select Committee to scrutinise the outcomes for young people in terms of the pathway from implementing the technology to delivering the teaching and learning and raising digital attainment levels.
- To establish whether bandwidth could be sold to the open market.
- To establish whether rural communities could use the 100MB bandwidth.

The Chair thanked the officers for presenting the report.

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### **5. Performance report 2016/17**

#### **Context:**

To scrutinise the 2016/17 performance information under the remit of the Economy and Development Select Committee. This includes:

- Reporting back on how well the Authority performed against the objectives which the previous Council set for 2016/17.
- Information on how the Authority performed against a range of nationally set measures used by all councils in Wales.

#### **Key Issues:**

The Council currently has an established performance framework, this is the way in which the Authority translates its vision - *building sustainable and resilient communities* - into action and ensures that everyone is pulling in the same direction to deliver real and tangible outcomes.

Over the coming years the shape of public services in Wales is likely to change significantly influenced by two very significant pieces of Welsh legislation, The Well-being of Future Generations Act and The Social Services and Well-being Act, as well as financial pressures, demographic changes, changes in customer needs and expectations and regulatory and policy changes. Services need to continue to think more about the long-term, work better with people and communities, look to prevent problems before they arise and take a more joined-up approach.

The Council has recently completed two substantial assessments of need as a result of this legislation. This information has provided a much deeper evidence base of well-being in the County and, as required by the Future Generations Act, this has been used to produce the Council's well-being objectives and statement 2017.

The shift in focus in the well-being objectives means that activities will need to be focused on longer term challenges at a community level rather than some of the internal process issues and outputs that could sometimes be found in its predecessor, The Improvement Plan. When dealing with more complex societal challenges it will take longer for measurable change to come about and longer still to be able to evidence those changes in a meaningful way. In the short-term there will continue to be milestones that can be used to track the Authority's improvement journey. This will be supported by a range of performance reports select committee can request as part of its work programme and the structure of performance reports received by committee will be revised to reflect this emphasis.

Appendix 2 of the report sets out performance achieved in 2016/17 against the actions and performance measures approved by Council in May 2016 as part of its Improvement Plan. As well as being presented to select committees, the objectives will be included alongside a further evaluation of performance in 2016/17 that will be reported to Council and published by October 2017. The Welsh Government has

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recently consulted on plans to repeal the Local Government (Wales) Measure 2009 which means this is likely to be the final plan and report in this format.

Appendix 3 of the report sets out further key performance indicators from the national set that are under the committee's remit. Benchmarking data compared to other Council's in Wales will be published in September 2017.

Activity that contributes to the delivery of some objectives cross cuts select committee remits and these have also been reported to the other relevant committees.

#### **Member Scrutiny:**

- Monmouthshire Public Service Board (PSB) has its own wellbeing objectives. The Council also has its own set of objectives. The Future Generations Act legislation requires the Authority to produce its own wellbeing objectives which were required to be published by March 2017. The PSB is required to publish its wellbeing objectives by March 2018. It is anticipated that there will be alignment between the two wellbeing objectives, as this would make sense.
- Some projects are behind the original timescale and there is no reviewed timescale or reviewed plan for completion against these projects. This was noted and could be implemented in future performance reports to the Select committee.
- In response to a question raised regarding how agile the report is and its ability to adapt to changes to the population, e.g., the proposed removal of the Severn Bridge tolls and the affect that this will have on house prices in Chepstow, it was noted that the framework is being updated in Council planning with a view to being in a position to address these issues that are likely to arise in the near future. The wellbeing assessment has identified house prices as being an issue and the Public Service Board is investigating ways in which to respond to the assessment.
- The Future Wellbeing Plan will identify potential changes and looks to establish ways in which to address these issues.
- Appendix 2 of the report, Objective 3 – there is an issue that needs to be addressed regarding affordable housing, Monmouthshire is falling behind in relation to some of its affordable housing targets.
- Cabinet approval of the Local Development Plan needs to be identified.
- More information regarding the Vibrant and Viable Places plan was required.
- Due to the decline in footfall in the County's libraries, a question was raised whether the Select Committee needed to review the remodelling of Community Hubs.

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- Due to the decline in the numbers of people accessing leisure centre services within the County there might be a need to review this matter with a view to ascertaining the financial impact that this might be creating.
- Tourism targets had not been met.

#### Committee's Conclusion:

The Chair thanked the Policy and Performance Officer for presenting the report.

We resolved that the Policy and Performance officer would collate responses to the following questions raised:

- Economic impact of Tourism in Monmouthshire.
- Affordable housing and the Local Development Plan (LDP) review.
- Financial performance of leisure services.
- Community Hubs and the decrease in library visitor numbers.
- Welsh Government's 'Vibrant and Viable Places' initiative.

## 6. Work Programme Report

### Context:

A 'planned approach' to Scrutiny Forward Work Programming is required in order to maximise the effectiveness and added value of scrutiny activity, ensuring focus upon topics of the highest priority for the Council and those which reflect the public interest.

### Key Issues:

Work programme discussion meetings have taken place between the new Chair of the Select Committee and the former chair. Chief Officers provided an overview of the Enterprise Directorate at the June 2017 Select Committee meeting, highlighting the following topics for consideration for future scrutiny:

- Broadband, Infrastructure and connectivity.
- Employability Grant.
- Rural Development Programme Update.
- Agri Urban Update.

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- Impact of the Severn Bridge Toll Reduction ~ South East Monmouthshire Future Economies Analysis.
- Rights of Way Improvement Plan ~ suggested joint scrutiny with Strong Communities Select Committee.
- Affordable Housing.
- Cardiff Capital Region City Deal.
- Local Development Plan.
- Tourism and the Destination Management Plan.
- Events Strategy and return on investment.
- Cycling and Walking Product.
- Outdoor Education Review.
- Alternative Service Delivery Model.
- Health and well-being goals (leisure provision, agreements with schools).

#### **Member Scrutiny:**

Having considered the report the following points were noted. Also, the following topics were identified by Select Committee Members for scrutiny:

- In addition to the topics outlined in the report it was agreed that an additional three or four topics should be agreed by the Select Committee to be added to the topics already identified.
- Some of the topics identified could potentially be merged and considered as one topic.
- In response to a Select Committee Member's question regarding bringing in academic opinion into a select committee meeting, it was noted that this would depend on the topic. The Scrutiny Manager would extend an invitation to the relevant people / organisation to attend such a meeting.
- Planning sessions can be arranged for Members to prepare and identify questions in advance of meetings with representatives from organisations that have been invited to attend a select committee meeting. This will depend on the topic.



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- Cross border issues should be added to the work programme with a view to working with local authorities that border Monmouthshire to scrutinise issues that affect all authorities.
- Outside of the select committee meetings members could meet with the public and talk about specific issues that are relevant to local people.
- The Future Monmouthshire agenda needs to be added to the work programme as an item for scrutiny. In time, topics such as affordable housing, could be added to an overarching theme that is Future Monmouthshire. Additional topics could also be considered under this overarching theme in which the Select Committee could scrutinise and make a difference.
- It was noted that Business Improvement for small businesses had been scrutinised by the Economy and Development Select Committee from the previous administration. The Scrutiny Manager considered that it might be useful for the Select Committee to have sight of this document and she would email it to Members for context.
- The following topics were suggested to be added to the Work Programme:
  - Impact of the Severn Bridge tolls.
  - Affordable housing and transport.
  - Tourism.
  - Enterprise that includes leveraging the City Deal.
- A workshop session would be held to discuss the Future Monmouthshire agenda with discussion to establish which items would be incorporated into this topic.
- The impact of the Severn Bridge tolls could be considered as part of the cross border issues. Each topic to be considered needs to be initially assessed, to determine whether it will have a cross border effect
- Broadband, Infrastructure and connectivity to be scrutinised at a Select Committee meeting.
- Employability Grant, as well as other reports identified in the report could be emailed to the Committee, initially. Members could then decide whether it required further scrutiny via the Select Committee.
- The Tourism and the Destination Management Plan will be presented to the Select Committee for Scrutiny in October 2017.
- The report regarding the return on Investment of the Velothon 2016 will be emailed to Select Committee Members by the Scrutiny Manager.

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- Topics agreed:
  - A workshop regarding the Future Monmouthshire Plan.
  - Broadband, Infrastructure and connectivity – September 2017.
  - Employability Grant and the Agri Urban update – the reports would be sent to Select Committee Members to ascertain whether there is a need for further scrutiny.
  - The Rural Development Programme Update report to be presented to the Select Committee.
  - The Scrutiny Manager to liaise with Scrutiny Managers within border authorities with a view to initiating dialogue regarding cross border issues for further discussion later in the year.
  - The Scrutiny Manager will arrange for some workshops to be established from September 2017.

#### Committee's Conclusion:

- The Chair thanked Select Committee Members and officers for submitting the topics for consideration by the Select Committee.

We resolved to adopt the process outlined in the report to develop the Select Committee work programme, taking into account:

- The responsibility to scrutinise performance and key risks in order to provide effective challenge to the Council's Executive.
- The duty to scrutinise wider public services provided to Monmouthshire residents as a result of powers afforded to them through the Local Government Measure.
- Capacity / resources when prioritising topics for scrutiny and agreeing their inclusion into the work programme.

#### **7. List of actions arising from the previous meeting**

We noted the list of actions arising from the previous meeting.

#### **8. Economy and Development Select Committee Forward Work Programme**

We resolved to receive and note the Economy and Development Select Committee Forward Work Programme.

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### **9. Council and Cabinet Business Forward Plan**

We resolved to receive and note the Council and Cabinet Business Forward Plan.

### **10. Next Meeting**

The next meeting of the Economy and Development Select Committee will be held on Thursday 7<sup>th</sup> September 2017 at 10.00am.

**The meeting ended at 1.25 pm.**