

MONMOUTHSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

Minutes of the meeting of County Council held on Thursday, 26th July, 2018 at 2.00 pm

PRESENT: County Councillor P. Clarke (Chairman)
County Councillor S. Woodhouse (Vice Chairman)

County Councillors: D. Batrouni, D. Blakebrough, M. Powell, V. Smith, D. Dovey, A. Easson, R. Edwards, D. Evans, P.A. Fox, R.J.W. Greenland, L. Guppy, R. Harris, J. Higginson, S. Howarth, P. Jones, S.B. Jones, P. Jordan, P. Murphy, B. Strong, F. Taylor, A. Watts, A. Webb, K. Williams, L.Dymock, M.Feakins, M.Groucutt, R.John, L.Jones, M.Lane, P.Pavia, J.Pratt, R.Roden, T.Thomas, J.Treharne and J.Watkins

OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE:

Paul Matthews	Chief Executive
Kellie Beirne	Deputy Chief Executive
Peter Davies	Chief Officer, Resources
Nicola Perry	Senior Democracy Officer
Sheila Parker	Deputy Head of Legal Services
Ian Saunders	Head of Tourism, Leisure, Culture and Youth

APOLOGIES:

County Councillors G. Howard, D. Jones, S. Jones, J.Becker, L.Brown and A.Davies

2. Declarations of interest

County Councillor V. Smith declared a non-prejudicial interest as a member of Monmouthshire Housing Association.

3. Chairman's announcement and receipt of petitions

County Councillor R. Greenland read a statement regarding the Council's street furniture policy and explained that for some time disability groups have been lobbying the Council for some time, and over the last couple of years we had received 57 complaints about obstructions in the highway. He confirmed that charges had been introduced to cover the administration of the policy but it was accepted that at this difficult time and had therefore asked officers to not collect the charges. Permits would continue to be granted to allow control of obstructions in the highway. Cabinet will meet in autumn to formally withdraw the charges in the policy.

County Councillor D. Blakebrough presented a petition of over 1400 signatures asking that the Council reconsider their decision to axe the 65 bus service.

County Council R. Roden presented a petition on behalf of local residents regarding traffic flow and pedestrian safety on Hereford Road, Monmouth.

4. Public open forum

None.

5. To confirm the minutes of the meetings of County Council:

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5.1. 21st June 2018

The minutes of the meeting of Council held on 21st June 2018 were approved and signed by the Chairman.

5.2. 6th July 2018

The minutes of the meeting of Council held on 6th July 2018 were approved and signed by the Chairman.

6. To note the minutes of the Democratic Services Committee meetings:

6.1. 23rd April 2018

Noted.

6.2. 4th June 2018

Noted.

7. To note the minutes of the Audit Committee 24th May 2018

Noted.

8. REPORTS OF CHIEF OFFICER, ENTERPRISE

8.1. PRESENTATION TO COUNCIL: STOCK TRANSFER - THE FIRST 10 YEARS

The Chairman welcomed Mr. J. Keegan of Monmouthshire Housing Association who was in attendance to provide a 10 year update to Council.

During discussion the following points were noted:

- All developments have a range of properties within them, based on demand in the area.
- There are MHA officers dedicated to social isolation, who would bring in other agencies to ensure interaction with the local community.
- With regards to specific ward issues, the Chairman suggested a separate meeting be arranged to discuss.
- Following a restructure, Mr. Keegan will ensure that housing officers will write to respective Members as a way of introduction.
- In response to concerns regarding the lack of development in the north of the County, it was confirmed that lack of availability was a general issue.
- Parking at older developments remains an issue, and communal parking is a necessity due to increase in car ownership.
- With regards to income from solar panels it was suggested that a percentage return should be provided to residents. An MHA business plan states it will take 20 years to pay for the panels.
- Mr. Keegan sits on many health groups and provides housing advice through ABUHB. He welcomed further information on such groups.
- Members reflected on house prices, and the earnings to price ration of 8:1.

The Chairman thanked Mr. Keegan for his presentation and attendance.

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8.2. GOVERNANCE ARRANGEMENTS FOR PROPOSED ALTERNATIVE DELIVERY MODEL FOR TOURISM, CULTURE, LEISURE AND YOUTH

The Cabinet member presented a report of the draft documentation for the proposed Governance arrangements and Framework, for the MonLife group companies that form the proposed Alternative Delivery Model (ADM) for Tourism, Culture, Leisure and Youth Services.

The Cabinet Member wished to add a recommendation:

That one Member from the controlling group and one Member from the opposition be appointed to the board of the Charity and Trading Company, and a small panel be established consisting of the Chief Executive, Leader of the Council and Leader of the Opposition to make those appointments.

The following concerns were raised:

There was unease around the governance structure of the teckal company, given the critical nature and it being tax payers' money on the line it was considered unacceptable.

Further clarity was sought around articles of association.

It was clarified that the governance arrangements referred to the associated board make up and processes. Legal documentation would be brought forward for scrutiny and final approval in October 2018.

The Leader of the Opposition confirmed that until opposition had a role in the teckal company they would not support it.

Chief Officer for Resources agreed that detail of scrutiny of the governance arrangements be included in future correspondence.

The Chair of Economy and Development Select confirmed that a scrutiny meeting would take place in September 2018. This was expected to be an all-day session, open to all Members.

The Lead Officer for the ADM confirmed that services are not sustainable in their current fashion, and there is a large section in the business case of how it is intended to carry out services in a different way. Benefits should be seen early on in the new model. There were frustrations that this was not set out clearly in the report.

Fees and charges would be clearly outlined in the final document.

Upon being put to the vote, Council resolved to agree the recommendation:

For: 28

Against: 9

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To approve the proposed Governance arrangements for the Mon Life group of companies, in order to initiate the shadow recruitment process of Company Directors. These actions are prior to final Council consideration in October 2018 to endorse the transfer documentation and agreement and subsequently to enact company operation in December 2018.

That one Member from the controlling group and one Member from the opposition be appointed to the board of the Charity and Trading Company, and a small panel be established consisting of the Chief Executive, Leader of the Council and Leader of the Opposition to make those appointments.

9. REPORT OF CHIEF OFFICER, RESOURCES

9.1. AUDIT COMMITTEE ANNUAL REPORT

Council received the Audit Committee Annual Report.

The Chairman thanked Mr. P. White for his continued with Audit Committee.

Council resolved to accept the report.

10. REPORTS OF THE CHIEF OFFICER SOCIAL CARE, SAFEGUARDING AND HEALTH

10.1. SAFEGUARDING EVALUATIVE REPORT APRIL - OCTOBER 2017

Council were presented with a report, the purpose being:

- To evaluate the progress of Monmouthshire County Council's key safeguarding priorities during 2017/18, using identified measures to highlight progress, identify risks and set out clear improvement actions and priorities for further development.
- To inform Members about the effectiveness of safeguarding in Monmouthshire and the work that is in progress to support the Council's aims in protecting children and adults at risk from harm and abuse.
- To inform Members about the progress made towards meeting the standards in the Council's Corporate Safeguarding Policy approved by Council in July 2017

During discussion the following points were noted:

Further information was requested around the increasing trend that children are feeling unsafe. The Head of Children's services explained that it was not a question posed to the population as a whole but focused on a specific group of children. There are lots of measures that tell a contrasting story, and it is hoped that these responses would come out in conversations with their individual social workers.

Frustrations were expressed that the report was not complete, and there were significant areas for improvement.

Upon being put to the vote Council resolved to agree the recommendations:

- **To receive and endorse Safeguarding Evaluation Report**

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- **To note the key safeguarding risks and approve the priority improvement actions identified within the Whole Authority Safeguarding Action Plan.**

10.2. DIRECTOR OF SOCIAL SERVICES ANNUAL REPORT 2017/18

Council received the Annual Report of the Statutory Director of Social Services for 2017/2018.

The Chief Executive agreed to take any questions and refer to the previous Chief Officer. The current Chief Officer for Social Services is satisfied with the report.

It was recognised that there is further work to be done around the recruitment of foster carers.

Reassurance was sought around the data in the report, particularly children's responses, and being in the bottom quartile. The Chief Executive accepted the challenge as appropriate and expected to see improvement in the next reporting period.

The Chair of Children and Young People Select highlighted the importance of complete reports coming before scrutiny committees, rather than draft, incomplete reports.

We resolved to approve the recommendations:

- That Council consider and endorse the analysis of performance and impact of adult and children's well-being, social care and health services over the last financial year.
- That Council consider and endorse the 2018/19 priorities for improvement in social care and health.

11. NOTICES OF MOTION:

11.1. From County Councillor A. Easson

Motion withdrawn.

12. From County Councillor D. Batrouni

This Council notes that:

- *The UK government's Social Mobility report highlighted affluent areas are failing poorer children;*
- *There are areas of severe deprivation in the county and that this Council is determined to ensure that people who live in these areas are not left behind;*
- *One of the biggest factors on influencing the future of children is the level of income by household;*
- *Monmouthshire has one of the lowest incomes for residents who live and work in Monmouthshire.*

Therefore, this Council will write to the Welsh Government asking whether they are considering a pilot study of Universal Basic Income policy like the Scottish government, and, if so, that we make a strong case for Monmouthshire to be one of the test pilot areas.

County Councillor Harris seconded the motion.

During debate:

Councillor John recognised there are pockets of deprivation in Monmouthshire which represent significant challenge but highlighted issues with the motion. He added that dealing with poverty starts with education, and is not about handing out free money.

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It was stressed that the motion is asking for us to give consent to write to Welsh Government, and should be supported.

There was disappointment around the lack of support from the Cabinet Member, and lack of recognition that this motion is not just about education.

There were concerns that this could deprive the poor of much needed targeted support.

Upon being put to the vote the following votes were recorded:

For:	15
Against	22

The motion was defeated.

The meeting ended at 5.35 pm