

# MONMOUTHSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

## Minutes of the meeting of County Council held at Council Chamber - Council Chamber on Thursday, 16th May, 2019 at 2.00 pm

**PRESENT:** County Councillor S. Woodhouse (Chairman)  
County Councillor S.B. Jones (Vice Chairman)

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

### OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE:

Matthew Phillips	Head of Law/ Monitoring Officer
Paul Matthews	Chief Executive
Peter Davies	Chief Officer, Resources
Will McLean	Chief Officer for Children and Young People
Nicola Perry	Senior Democracy Officer
Frances O'Brien	Chief Officer, Enterprise
Julie Boothroyd	Chief Officer Social Care, Safeguarding and Health

### APOLOGIES:

County Councillors R. Harris, L.Jones and M.Lane

#### **2. Declarations of interest**

None.

#### **3. Public Questions**

None.

#### **4. Receipt of petitions**

#### **5. To elect the Leader of the Council and to receive notification of Leader delegations (appointments to Cabinet)**

County Councillor P. Murphy moved that County Councillor P. Fox be elected as Leader of the Council. This was duly seconded by County Councillor P. Jordan.

County Councillor M. Groucutt moved that County Councillor D. Batrouni be elected as Leader of the Council. This was duly seconded by County Councillor T. Thomas.

Upon being put to the vote it was resolved that County Councillor P. Fox be elected as Leader of the Council.

Councillor Fox expressed thanks to Council for his re-election, and took the opportunity to thank former Cabinet Member, County Councillor B. Jones, and wished him well in his role as Vice Chairman.

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Changes to Cabinet portfolios are to be distributed following the meeting, but Council were advised that County Councillor J. Pratt would be the new Cabinet Member for Infrastructure and Neighbourhood Services.

#### **6. Representations of Political Groups - Review**

The Leader presented the report as Council is required to review at, or as soon as practicable after, the Council's annual meeting, the representation of different political groups on the bodies to which the Council makes appointments.

**Upon being put to the vote Council resolved to accept the recommendation:**

**To accept the report (and appendices) as a review under Section 15 of the Local Government and Housing Act 1989 and to appoint the ordinary committees with the numbers and adjustments as indicated below:**

<b>Committee</b>	<b>Cons</b>	<b>Lab</b>	<b>Lib Dem</b>	<b>Ind</b>
Select (x 5) (9)	26	10	3	6
Licensing & Regulatory (12)	7	3	1	1
Planning (16)	9	4	1	2
Democratic Services (12)	7	3	1	1
Audit (11 excluding 1 lay)	7	2	1	1
Aggregate Entitlement (85)	56	22	7	11

#### **7. Appointments to Committees**

The Leader presented a report in order to appoint committees, together with their membership and terms of reference in accordance with the Council's Constitution.

Council resolved to accept the committees as recommended in the report, noting the change to name of Bryn Y Cwm Area Committee to North Monmouthshire Area Committee.

We noted that the membership of Democratic Services Committee is 12 Members.

To elect a Chair of Democratic Services Committee County Councillor J. Becker nominated County Councillor J. Watkins, seconded by County Councillor F. Taylor.

County Councillor D. Batrouni nominated County Councillor M. Groucutt, seconded by County Councillor T. Thomas.

Council held a secret ballot and votes saw County Councillor J. Watkins elected as Chair of Democratic Services Committee.

Councillor G. Howard expressed frustration and disappointment that North Monmouthshire Area Committee have changed the start time of meetings to 10am, without taking into consideration the views of working members of the committee.

#### **8. Appointments to Outside Bodies**

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Council received the report to appoint representatives to serve on outside bodies.

Amendments were made as follows:

County Councillor A. Davies removed from Drainage Board.

County Councillor Pratt be added as responsible Cabinet Member to Regional Transport Authority.

County Councillor D. Blakebrough replace County Councillor J. Pratt on ABUHC.

### **9. Motions to Council:**

#### **9.1. From County Councillor J. Watkins**

County Councillor F. Taylor seconded the motion.

Members expressed support for the motion.

- Suggestion was made that we need to move to much greener vehicles and plant used throughout the County.
- When refuse vehicles are renewed we must move to electric or hybrid vehicles to reduce emissions.
- Move to encourage employees to greener vehicles in terms of travelling for work.
- Work with all our buildings, and MHA, to increase the efficiency of heating systems.

County Councillor Smith asked that Council recognise the drive and initiative of residents who had brought forward the Climate Seminar.

County Councillor Taylor expressed frustration around measures such as the removal of the M4 tolls, fuelling our housing crisis. She added that to speak of reducing carbon emissions and mitigating climate change, and to support the building of a new M4, was a contradiction in terms.

The Leader thanked Councillor Watkins for the motions, and proposed the following amendment to the motion:

*That this council will strive to reduce its own carbon emissions to net zero in line with the Welsh Government target of 2030.*

*That this council will develop a strategy and associated action plans to aim to deliver these targets as soon as practicable.*

*That this council will continue to review the Corporate Plan, Well-being plan, Local development plans and other relevant plans and policies to support the above.*

*Publicise this declaration of a climate emergency to residents and businesses in the county and encourage and support them to take their own actions to reduce their carbon emissions in line with a 2030 target.*

*Work with partners across the county and other councils and organisations to help develop and implement best practice methods in limiting global warming.*

County Councillor P. Murphy seconded the amendment.

Debate ensued.

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The Leader of the Opposition opposed the amended motion stating that it diminished the emergency nature of the motion. The Labour Group expressed support to the campaigners in attendance.

Members were keen to keep the final part of the original motion: *Work with partners across the county and other councils and organisations to help develop and implement best practice methods in limiting global warming to less than 1.5 degrees c.*

Upon being put to a recorded vote the amendment was carried.

However, the Leader was content to review the amendment, and to include the last proposal as: *Work with partners across the county and other councils and organisations to help develop and implement best practice methods in limiting global warming to less than 1.5 degrees C.*

Upon being put to a second recorded vote, the amended motion was carried.

### **10. Members Questions:**

#### **10.1. From County Councillor L. Dymock to the Cabinet Member for Children and Young People**

County Councillor R. John responded that Caldicot School is a 1500 place school and from 1<sup>st</sup> September 2019 it is anticipated there will be 184 surplus places. When we have proposed developments in an area where there is significant pressure on school places we are able to request Section 106 funding from developers to create additional provision. This year 253 pupils will join year 7 at Caldicot School meaning the year group will be full, however 43 applications were from out of catchment including many from out of County. In line with the new admissions criteria, based on live birth data and proposed developments we are confident that Caldicot School will continue to accommodate all application from within its catchment area.

#### **10.2. From County Councillor V. Smith to the Leader of the Council**

The Leader responded that Section E of the Constitution provides a clear explanation of what is expected and officers should endeavour to respond to requests for information properly, and should, in any event, inform the Member if there is likely to be a delay in dealing with an inquiry. He added that pressures are recognised and was sure every officer in this Council does their best to respond in a timely manner.

### **11. Report of the Chief Executive**

#### **11.1. Call-In and Urgency Report**

Council received the report following the decision by Cabinet to deal with an urgent matter on 6<sup>th</sup> Mar 2019, thus waiving the option of call in, and triggering the constitutional requirement to submit a report to Council thereafter.

Concerns were raised that the matter should have undergone public scrutiny, prior to the purchase.

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The Chief Executive explained that the Investment Committee acted in accordance with a strategy agreed by Council, and the Investment Committee is made up of cross-party membership, and in due course the Audit Committee has the power to review all investment decisions.

Council noted the report.

### **12. Chief Officer for Children and Young People Annual Report**

The Chief Officer for Children and Young People presented his Annual Report and in doing so took the opportunity to reflect on the past year for education and the services we offer to our children and young people. He thanked colleagues, and all teachers, head teachers, teaching assistants and everyone else who work with our children in our schools.

Following presentation, discussion ensued.

Reference was made to the ongoing focus on vulnerable learners, and how this continues to be an issue. The Chief Officer was asked what plans are in place to help these children improve with fewer resources available. In response the Officer acknowledged the concerns and explained that we are working very closely with our secondary schools, and beginning to use a far more rigorous approach to interrogating the schools' plan. Involving using the Sutton Trust Toolkit, ensuring that the money being spent on those interventions is the most effective.

In response to a concern it was explained that Social Justice is reflected throughout the report, and the importance of education with regards to social justice and social mobility in the future.

*County Councillor P. Pavia left at 16:45pm*

The Cap 9 is based on the Fisher Family Trust Aspire Model. FFT is a hugely well-developed resource for teachers. It compares children to children who are very similar. The example used was most challenging comparison we could have.

There was disappointment in the increase in fixed term exclusions, and schools are challenged regarding the levels of FTE. The Chief Officer reflected that it is wrong to conflate those with additional learning needs, and being supported by teaching assistants, with those with disruptive behaviour. He added that we need to understand the patterns of those being excluded on a fixed term basis, the number of children and how long those instances are. More work is being undertaken and a report will be taken to Select Committee in the coming months.

From September 2019 we are investing in an additional teacher and teaching assistant in every Secondary School and additional HLTA to ensure we have a countywide response to challenging behaviour.

It was agreed that the performance level at Key Stage 4 is not where we would like but it is hoped that we will see an increase at the end of this academic year.

Concerns were raised from a financial perspective with regards to predicted deficits across half of the County's schools. The Chief Officer recognised the challenge and explained that we have to make sure our schools understand the flexibility of the resources that we provide and that they understand how to make best use of that.

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In response to a concern regarding racism in schools, officers work closely with schools to ensure they receive the training needed to make sure schools are fair, equitable and open, and that children behave responsibly and appropriately.

*County Councillor D. Jones left at 16:55pm*

*County Councillor D. Blakebrough left at 17:00pm*

Caldicot was recognised as a key pinch area in terms of capacity, and work is being undertaken to develop a clear strategy around how Section 106 money is spent.

There is an equity strategy in place, a key component of which More Able and Talented children, to ensure these children are encouraged to continue to move forward.

*County Councillor D. Evans left at 17:15pm.*

The Cabinet Member for Children and Young People thanked the Chief Officer for the evidence based report, and recognised the number of challenges, but also highlighted the importance of recognising the excellence.

The Chair thanked the Chief Officer for his report.

#### **13. Report of the Chief Officer for Enterprise:**

##### **13.1. Proposed Off-Road Cycling Centre, Llanfoist**

Council received a report in order to agree the inclusion of capital funding of £100,000 in the 2019/20 Capital Budget.

A Member expressed this should be a County-wide scheme, and we should be looking for grants for other areas in the County encompassing the same aspirations.

Comments were received around the impact on the landscape. The Ward Member commented that Llanfoist has received a disproportionate level of development and, in terms of planning, a key consideration must be that the scheme will not disadvantage existing residents by way of traffic generation and parking, noise to neighbours and light overspill.

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

**That a budget of £100,000 is created in 2019/20 to fund the development of a project for an off-road cycling centre in Llanfoist and that this is funded by a £100,000 grant allocated by Sport Wales to be spent in the current financial year.**

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**14. To confirm the minutes of the meeting of County Council held on 11th April 2019**

The minutes of the meeting of County Council held on 11<sup>th</sup> April were confirmed and signed by the Chair. In doing so it was noted that Councillor J. Higginson had been in attendance.

**The meeting ended at 5.35 pm**