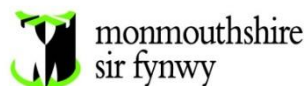


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Wednesday, 2 September 2015

Notice of meeting / Hysbysiad o gyfarfod:

Strong Communities Select Committee

**Thursday, 10th September, 2015 at 10.00 am,
Council Chamber, County Hall, The Rhadyr, Usk, NP15 1GA**

AGENDA

Item No	Item	Pages
1.	Apologies for absence	
2.	Declarations of Interest	
3.	Open Public Forum	
4.	To confirm minutes of the previous meetings	
4.1.	Joint meeting of Adult Select Committee & Strong Communities Select Committee 8th July 2015	1 - 10
4.2.	Strong Communities Select Committee 16th July 2015	11 - 22
5.	Scrutiny of a Progress report on Public Conveniences	23 - 42
6.	Pre-decision Scrutiny of the Adoption of Highways in New Developments	43 - 46
7.	Scrutiny of the Annual Complaints Report for the Regeneration Directorate	47 - 64
8.	Changes to the team structure including job evaluation and regarding of posts within Policy and Engagement	To Follow
9.	Work Programming	
9.1.	Strong Communities Select (copy attached)	65 - 66
9.2.	Cabinet & Council forward planner (copy attached)	67 - 74
10.	To confirm the date and time of next meetings as:	

- | | |
|---|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Special Meeting - Monday 14th September 2015 at 2:00pm• Special Meeting - Monday 12th October 2015 at 10:00am• Special Meeting - Thursday 22nd October at 10:00am• Ordinary Meeting - Thursday 5th November at 10:00am | |
|---|--|

Paul Matthews

Chief Executive / Prif Weithredwr

MONMOUTHSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL
CYNGOR SIR FYNWY

THE CONSTITUTION OF THE COMMITTEE IS AS FOLLOWS:

County Councillors:

S. Howarth
V. Smith
D. Dovey
A. Easson
S. Jones
P. Jordan
A. Webb
S. White
K. Williams

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Welsh Language

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Aims and Values of Monmouthshire County Council

Sustainable and Resilient Communities

Outcomes we are working towards

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

Our priorities

- Schools
- Protection of vulnerable people
- Supporting Business and Job Creation
- Maintaining locally accessible services

Our Values

- **Openness:** we aspire to be open and honest to develop trusting relationships.
- **Fairness:** we aspire to provide fair choice, opportunities and experiences and become an organisation built on mutual respect.
- **Flexibility:** we aspire to be flexible in our thinking and action to become an effective and efficient organisation.
- **Teamwork:** we aspire to work together to share our successes and failures by building on our strengths and supporting one another to achieve our goals.

Nodau a Gwerthoedd Cyngor Sir Fynwy

Cymunedau Cynaliadwy a Chryf

Canlyniadau y gweithiwn i'w cyflawni

Neb yn cael ei adael ar ôl

- Gall pobl hŷn fyw bywyd da
- Pobl â mynediad i dai addas a fforddiadwy
- Pobl â mynediad a symudedd da

Pobl yn hyderus, galluog ac yn cymryd rhan

- Camddefnyddio alcohol a chyffuriau ddim yn effeithio ar fywydau pobl
- Teuluoedd yn cael eu cefnogi
- Pobl yn teimlo'n ddiogel

Ein sir yn ffynnu

- Busnes a menter
- Pobl â mynediad i ddysgu ymarferol a hyblyg
- Pobl yn diogelu ac yn cyfoethogi'r amgylchedd

Ein blaenoriaethau

- Ysgolion
- Diogelu pobl agored i niwed
- Cefnogi busnes a chreu swyddi
- Cynnal gwasanaethau sy'n hygyrch yn lleol

Ein gwerthoedd

- **Bod yn agored:** anelwn fod yn agored ac onest i ddatblygu perthnasoedd ymddiriedus
- **Tegwch:** anelwn ddarparu dewis teg, cyfleoedd a phrofiadau a dod yn sefydliad a adeiladwyd ar barch un at y llall.
- **Hyblygrwydd:** anelwn fod yn hyblyg yn ein syniadau a'n gweithredoedd i ddod yn sefydliad effeithlon ac effeithiol.
- **Gwaith tîm:** anelwn gydweithio i rannu ein llwyddiannau a'n methiannau drwy adeiladu ar ein cryfderau a chefnogi ein gilydd i gyflawni ein nodau.

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MONMOUTHSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

Minutes of the Joint Meeting of the Adults and Strong Communities Select Committees held at County Hall, Usk on Wednesday 8th July 2015 at 10.00 a.m.

PRESENT: County Councillor P.S. Farley (Chairman)

County Councillors: R. Chapman, D. Dovey, A. Easson, R. Harris, M. Hickman, S.G.M. Howarth, P. Jones, V.E. Smith, A. Webb, S. White, K. Williams and A.M. Wintle.

ALSO IN ATTENDANCE:

County Councillor G. Burrows

CO OPTED MEMBERS

D. Hudson
D. Hill

OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE:

H. Ilett	-	Scrutiny Manager
I. Bakewell	-	Housing and Regeneration Manager
K. Beirne	-	Chief Officer, Enterprise
D. Hill-Howells	-	Head of Community Led Delivery
R. Davies	-	Head of Revenues and Benefits
K. Durrant	-	Private Sector Housing Manager
N. Perry	-	Democratic Services Officer

ALSO IN ATTENDANCE:

Michele Morgan	-	Assistant Director, Monmouthshire Housing Association
David Morris	-	Director of Housing and Communities, Monmouthshire Housing Association
Kathryn Edwards	-	Corporate Director, Charter Housing
Justin Wigmore	-	Director, Melin Housing
Tom Broadhead	-	Community Development Lead, Melin
Sherril Thomas	-	Housing Solutions Manager

1. ELECTION OF CHAIR

We elected County Councillor P.S. Farley as Chairman.

2. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from County Councillors R. Edwards and S. Jones.

**Minutes of the Meeting of the Adults and Strong Communities Select
Committees dated 8th July 2015 - continued**

3. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

The following declarations of interest were received:

- County Councillor S. White declared a personal, non-prejudicial interest as a Board Member of Monmouthshire Housing Association.
- County Councillor V.E. Smith declared a personal, non-prejudicial interest.
- County Councillor A. Wintle declared a personal, non-prejudicial interest as a Director of Monmouthshire Housing Association.
- County Councillor A. Webb declared a personal, non-prejudicial interest.

4. JOINT HOUSING SOLUTIONS SERVICE

Context:

We received, for scrutiny, a report to update Members on the delivery of the joint Housing Solutions Service with Torfaen County Borough Council. The proposal was in support of the implementation of the Housing and Communities Medium Term Financial Plan project mandate.

Key Issues:

The agreed model had been implemented on a pilot basis for one year, from 2nd March 2015.

The focus of delivery of the proposal had been the creation of a Housing Solutions Team and a Private Sector Housing Team.

Changes necessary to deliver the new service were being implemented alongside changes necessary to ensure requirements of the Housing (Wales) Act 2014 relating to homelessness prevention were met.

Member Scrutiny:

Members were advised that the Prisoner Release Funding from Welsh Government was for the joint partnership not Monmouthshire County Council alone.

Members questioned where private landlords were working with local letting agents, who would be responsible for clients should there be problems. In response we heard the letting agents would be responsible but they could be referred to the Housing Solutions Team. Support would be provided to clients for as long as necessary.

A Member queried if the Authority would establish its own letting agency. The Housing and Regeneration Manager explained that this was an option and key

Minutes of the Meeting of the Adults and Strong Communities Select Committees dated 8th July 2015 - continued

discussions would be necessary with Torfaen County Borough Council. As the team was still in a set up stage it was not an appropriate time.

A Member raised concerns with regards to accommodation and increasing requirements, and questioned if work had been undertaken to identify potential empty properties. We were advised that officers had contacted the owners of a number of empty properties in the County, but usually received negative responses. Often properties were waiting to be sold or part of estates. It was suggested that the loan facility available was not attractive to empty property owners.

A Member suggested looking at empty factory units as opportunities for development. The Housing and Regeneration Manager welcomed all suggestions and informed the Committee that there were ongoing discussions to identify new buildings. Officers were wary that big buildings may result in many young people in one building.

In response to a question regarding Bed and Breakfast facilities, were heard that generally chains, such as Premier Inn, were not used, unless absolutely necessary.

With regards to the disposal of assets, we were informed by the Head of Community Led Delivery that alternative uses would be considered. Departments were given the opportunity to bid on assets before being put to the open market.

In response to a query regarding the sustainability of the scheme, we were informed that as resources stood the service would be able to continue and there was scope to bring in further income.

We were informed that as of October 2015 a Landlord Registration Scheme would be in place where private landlords could apply, for a fee, to have their property included on a housing register.

The Chief Officer for Enterprise addressed the Committee to explain that with regards to sustainable efficiencies the budget gap for next year stood at £6,000,000. A challenge for housing, moving forward, was how to move to become self-sufficient. Areas to be considered as ways to create extra income could be shared lodgings, private lettings, Careline and our own property development.

Recommendations:

Members were recommended to note and comment on the content of the report.

**Minutes of the Meeting of the Adults and Strong Communities Select
Committees dated 8th July 2015 - continued**

Committee's Conclusion:

Chair's Summary:

The Chairman advised that Economy and Development Select Committee would look at the assets portfolio in further detail.

Members would welcome further reports on the progress and development of the service at a future meeting.

Congratulations were expressed to all officers concerned, and it was recognised that the service undertook a continuous process of change.

The Chairman agreed to address agenda item 4iii and would defer agenda item 4ii to the end of the agenda.

5. MONMOUTHSHIRE HOMESearch HOUSING REGISTER: POLICY CHANGE AND DELIVERY UPDATE

Context:

We received a report from the Housing and Communities Manager in order to propose minor amendments to the Housing Allocation Policy to meet the requirements of the Housing (Wales) Act 2014 and to provide a delivery update.

Key Issues:

Since the establishment of the current policy there had been a number of enhancements introduced to improve delivery, including:

- Introduction of a welcome pack.
- The option of telephone interviews for applications and bidding.
- Engaging with non-bidding applicants.
- Enhanced information for clients.
- Streamlined business processes.

Earlier this year the Council undertook an independent health-check of the register and its administration. The health-check identified recommendations for further improvement, which would be considered in a full review later in the year. Proposals would be presented to Adults Select Committee at a future meeting.

Members Scrutiny:

A Member raised concerns regarding the banding process for tenants of private landlords. It was queried if the Authority would ease the process for people moving.

Minutes of the Meeting of the Adults and Strong Communities Select Committees dated 8th July 2015 - continued

In response we were informed that the changes being proposed did not cover the banding processes. The issue of the private sector would be discussed under a wide ranging review between MCC, Melin, Charter Housing and MHA. It was noted that the Options Team received many queries regarding the disadvantages of the private sector.

Concerns were raised regarding the targets set on delivering affordable homes. We heard that the issue was an ongoing process and officers were working with Estates to identify opportunities.

It was noted that there would be an extended session on the issue at Strong Communities Select on 16th July 2015.

Recommendations:

The report recommended that Members:

- Recommend to Cabinet that the policy amendments be approved.
- Note the contents of the report and receive a presentation providing an overview of the housing register.

Committee's Conclusion:

Chair's Summary:

The Chairman noted that the amendments had been described as small, but in a highly complex area. The Committees noted the contents of the report.

The Committees resolved to recommend the policy amendments to Cabinet, but wished to note that:

- Further discussions should be conducted with planning regarding affordable housing.
- Further development of the policy with regards to the ability to move between bands.

6. DISCUSSION ON WELFARE REFORM AND ANTI-POVERTY

We welcomed visitors from Monmouthshire Housing Association, Charter Housing and Melin

We received a presentation from the Head of Revenues and Benefits outlining the preparations being undertaken by Monmouthshire County Council for the introduction of the Universal Credit benefit.

Minutes of the Meeting of the Adults and Strong Communities Select Committees dated 8th July 2015 - continued

Universal Credit had been introduced in April 2015 in Torfaen, and would be introduced for single claimants in Monmouthshire from 21st September 2015. Universal Credit aims to simplify the benefit system and to make work pay, increasing work incentives for those unemployed or working part-time.

From 21st September 2015 single jobseekers in Monmouthshire would have their housing costs met through Universal Credit. It was estimated that 15 claimants in Monmouthshire, per month, would be affected by the introduction of Universal Credit.

Following the presentation, guests were invited to comment, during which time the following points were noted:

Monmouthshire Housing Association

MHA considered Universal Credit to have potential to impact negatively on them as a business and housing provider. We were informed that 53% of tenants were in debt, 63% were worried about bills and 11% could not pay bills. It was a concern that Universal Credit would need to cover the whole benefit and tenants may struggle to manage the benefit efficiently.

With regards to the bedroom tax there had been a reduction of tenants affected, but tenants were still struggling to manage.

In MHA 56% of tenants were of working age, of which around 1000 were in employment, which left 470 who were classed as unemployed. MHA provided a Way Into Work Scheme, working with tenants providing a 6 week training package to help people become work ready. Through the scheme MHA had helped 20 tenants to get back into work, 7 of whom were affected by the welfare reform. However, this could present a different set of challenges, such as further arrears.

MHA were hoping to build the Work and Skills Wise Programme into people's claimant commitments.

MHA described a good relationship with Monmouthshire County Council, and informed the Committee there had been significant numbers of attendance at recent job fair events. Also, 29 people had found employment through the MCC Way into Work Scheme.

A Moneywise scheme provided advice to those affected by the welfare reform, which made a significant difference to families. Gaps needed to be identified to develop the resources.

There were concerns surrounding delays in people receiving Universal Credit payments due to communication issues. Discretionary Housing Payments were also a concern for future discussion.

Charter Housing

Charter Housing described a similar picture to Monmouthshire Housing Association.

Minutes of the Meeting of the Adults and Strong Communities Select Committees dated 8th July 2015 - continued

Charter Housing had been part of a demonstration project for direct payments of Housing Benefit in Torfaen, involving around 100 tenants. There had been issues surrounding rent arrears, showing a 300% increase at one point.

Preparations were being undertaken in order to help tenants manage the new system. It was expected that 120 tenants would be in receipt of direct payments by August 2015. It was proving to be a labour intensive exercise, but was beneficial for a smooth transition.

We heard that it was considered that some tenants should not receive direct payments as it was inappropriate. It was hoped that the payments would be paid direct to the landlord.

There were concerns surrounding the business costs, and the ability to produce more homes.

Melin

We heard that Melin had started the journey in June 2010 when the reform was introduced, and there were ongoing concerns regarding the effect the reform would have on the business. Initially there had been a team of 4 people collecting rent, which had now increased to 9 people, including 3 full time people providing financial advice to tenants. Last year, within Monmouthshire, the team had worked with 282 residents and managed to retrieve over £190,000 in unclaimed benefits on behalf of tenants.

The main areas of covered were the Bedroom Tax and the benefits cap. 34 people within Monmouthshire were affected by the Bedroom Tax. There were concerns surrounding the benefits cap as Melin operated the private sector leasing for homeless people.

There had also been a rise in the use of food banks. Melin had distributed 71 food parcels within Monmouthshire last year.

Of the resident base, 487 people were expected to be affected by Universal Credit. There were concerns of how best to inform people without causing alarm.

Members were invited to comment, during which time the following points were noted:

- It was questioned what the effect would be in six months. It was expected that there would be Universal Credit claims in Monmouthshire. Budget proposals were expected to affect the benefits cap, and may take effect prior to April. There were concerns surrounding the removal of benefits from young people aged 18-21. There were concerns that families with more than 3 children would suffer under the benefits cap.

Minutes of the Meeting of the Adults and Strong Communities Select Committees dated 8th July 2015 - continued

- Regarding the application for Universal Credit and the length of time waiting for applications to be agreed, arrears of payments was a concern. It was noted that the DWP electronic links in place were failing due to a lack of administrative support.
- Members requested further information on the number of food banks across the County.
- Concerns were raised regarding the waiting time of payments being issued and how it would affect the private sector. There were concerns where people would turn if they were negatively affected, eg. doorstep lenders, pay day loans. It was questioned how Registered Social Landlords intended to cope with the increasing demands in the future. We heard that with intensive work up front many people would adjust and cope. There were, however, people who would need constant help. Charter Housing had increased the amount of wider support. Effort needed to be focused on more vulnerable people.
- We heard that RSLs were committed to providing homes for vulnerable people.
- There were concerns surrounding the housing market and what it held for young people.
- It was questioned if the direct payments would have staff or cost implications to RSLs. It was confirmed that there was no administrative cost saving as there was still a need to provide support for Universal Credit. There was a criticism that clients did not get the choice on how they could receive the payments.
- With regards to the private sector, it was questioned if the Authority had plans were in place for people released from prison. In response, we were informed that there was a need to expand opportunities, as RSLs did not have the capacity to meet increasing demand. The reinvestment in the structure of the Housing Options Team meant that there would be more staff available to develop opportunities in the private sector. Part of homeless prevention was to facilitate access into the private rental sector.
- A Member wished to acknowledge how fortunate the County is to have the Housing Associations, who go far beyond their remit.
- It was noted that direct payments had been introduced in April 2008 as part of the Local Allowance arrangements.
- It was suggested that Job Centre Plus should attend One Stop Shops in order for people to access information.
- It was questioned if there was a potential of competition for the same territory, and if more could be done for the services to unite on a broader front. It was

Minutes of the Meeting of the Adults and Strong Communities Select Committees dated 8th July 2015 - continued

confirmed that there were partnerships within Monmouthshire, also the Gwent Reform Welfare Partnership, including the 5 Authorities and 9 RSLs.

Committee's Conclusion:

Chair's Summary:

The Chairman expressed thanks to the guests at the meeting.

The Committee acknowledged that the Authority were fortunate to have forward thinking, pro-active RSLs and were impressed with the engagement between themselves and the Council.

It was noted that encouragement should be made to engage with the Job Centre system.

It was noted that the Authority should have a pro-active representative

Concerns would be raised at a meeting of the Gwent group regarding the Welfare Reform.

7. HOMELESS PREVENTION IMPROVEMENTS AND HOUSING (WALES) ACT 2014 PRIORITIES

Context:

Members received a presentation and report in order to advise the Committee about the homeless prevention requirements of the Housing (Wales) Act 2014 and the steps being taken to meet the requirements of the legislation which came into effect on 27th April 2015. The report updated Members on prevention related activity, performance, and baseline information including feedback from clients about the former Monmouthshire Housing Options service.

Key Issues:

The improvement of homeless prevention had been a priority of the Council for a number of years. The scrutiny of related activity had been a feature of the Committee's workplan, and was particularly relevant since prevention became a statutory duty on 27th April 2015.

Preparing to implement the new legislation had been a focus for the Council and had resulted in establishing the joint Housing Solutions Service with Torfaen County Borough Council.

Minutes of the Meeting of the Adults and Strong Communities Select Committees dated 8th July 2015 - continued

The implementation of the new duties presented an ongoing challenge to the Council, particularly in context of ongoing demand and the permanent and temporary accommodation supply issues, which had resulted in bed and breakfast use.

Members Scrutiny:

Members questioned if we could expect to see a rise in homelessness as a result of the welfare reforms. In response we were informed that the restructure and the merging of the Housing Team would maximise the number of options available in order to provide support. Also developing relationships in the private sector would be beneficial.

It was queried if we would stand to lose collateral through the system. It was explained that private landlords would want to minimise risk and maximise rent. We work closely with private landlords to minimise risks. There was a fund available to provide flexible payments private landlords.

It was queried if there was a specific area of people who presented as homeless. It was confirmed that there was not a particular area of people, but there were difficulties for young, single people. Going forward, aspirations were to identify people willing to take in lodgers.

Recommendations:

Members were recommended to:

- Receive the presentation providing an overview of the homeless prevention statutory duties and updating on homeless prevention related performance.
- Use the report and the associated indicators to scrutinise whether services were being delivered in line with expectations and were contributing to agreed outcomes.

Committee's Conclusion:

Chair's Summary:

The Committee resolved to accept the report.

The Committee agreed to accept that services were being delivered in line with expectations, and noted there were ongoing areas needing attention.

The Chairman expressed thanks to Members of both Committees for their attendance.

The meeting terminated at 13.15pm.

Agenda Item 4b

**Minutes of the Strong Communities Select Committee meeting
held in the Council Chamber, County Hall, Usk on
Thursday 16th July 2015 at 10.00 a.m.**

PRESENT: County Councillor S.G.M. Howarth (Chairman)

County Councillors: D.L.S. Dovey, A. Easson, S. Jones, V.E. Smith,
S. White and K. Williams

County Councillor R.G. Harris attended the meeting by invitation of
the Chairman

OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE:

Ms. K. Beirne	- Chief Officer, Enterprise
Mr R. Hoggins	- Head of Operations
Mr M. Howcroft	- Assistant Head of Finance
Mr. I. Bakewell	- Housing and Regeneration Manager
Mr. M. Davies	- Development Plans Manager
Mrs. S. Wiggam	- Senior Strategy & Policy Officer
Miss H. Ilett	- Scrutiny Manager
Mr. R. Williams	- Democratic Services Officer

1. SCRUTINY OF CRIME AND DISORDER MATTER

There were no crime and disorder matters to be discussed.

2. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Mr. M. Hand, Head of Planning.

3. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

County Councillor V.E. Smith declared a personal, non-prejudicial interest, pursuant to the Members' Code of Conduct, in relation to any matters relating to affordable housing.

County Councillor S. White declared a personal, non-prejudicial interest, pursuant to the Members' Code of Conduct, in relation to any matters relating to affordable housing, as she is a Board Member of Monmouthshire Housing Association.

4. PUBLIC OPEN FORUM

Dr. John Holmes, a resident of Coed Morgan, made a request that the County Council reviews its hedge cutting policy. It was noted that Dr. Holmes had previously raised this issue with the Cabinet Member and officers some time ago and that some improvements had been made. However, he considered that Monmouthshire County Council's hedge cutting policy differed to other Councils across Wales. He requested that consideration be given to delaying the hedge cutting to later in the season in order to allow time for the hedges to fruit and for

**Minutes of the Strong Communities Select Committee meeting
held in the Council Chamber, County Hall, Usk on
Thursday 16th July 2015 at 10.00 a.m.**

birds to nest. It was considered by Dr. Holmes that the County Council was contravening the Wildlife and Countryside Act with regard to hedge trimming.

The Head of Operations confirmed that he had had a conversation, some time ago, with Dr. Holmes. He had made enquiries as to whether the Authority was contravening the Wildlife and Countryside Act and this was not the case. The Authority makes a judgement to cut twice a year on narrow roads.

Currently, the Authority cuts A and B roads once a year and cuts unclassified roads twice a year. Telephone calls have been received from residents asking for the hedge cutting to commence earlier to alleviate potential safety issues.

The Authority has established a policy to protect wildflowers. Areas designated with a white post are created in which these areas are not cut or are cut later in the year to protect rare wildflower species but could be expanded to protect known nesting habitats for certain birds.

Farmers / landowners cut their hedges after September to comply with European legislation and also to manage growth whereas the local Authority cuts verges / hedges on health and safety grounds.

In response to a Select Committee Member's question regarding financial savings achieved, it was noted that some savings have been achieved in the previous year and benefits to pollination have also been achieved.

We resolved that the Pollinator Policy be emailed to Dr. Holmes.

5. CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES

The minutes of the Strong Communities Select Committee meeting held on 11th June 2015 were confirmed as an accurate record and signed by the Chairman.

6. AFFORDABLE HOUSING TASK AND FINISH GROUP – CABINET RESPONSE

Context:

To inform the Select on the Cabinet response to the Affordable Housing Task and Finish Group Report 'A Place to Call Home'.

Key Issues:

The Strong Communities Select Committee commissioned an investigation into affordable housing because of the increasing demand for affordable housing in Monmouthshire. A Task & Finish Group was established to undertake this work.

On behalf of the Committee, the Task & Finish Group had subsequently published their findings in the report 'A Place to Call Home.'

**Minutes of the Strong Communities Select Committee meeting
held in the Council Chamber, County Hall, Usk on
Thursday 16th July 2015 at 10.00 a.m.**

The terms of reference of the Task & Finish Group were to critically appraise previous and current attempts to solve the problem of a lack of affordable housing and to evaluate options for addressing the lack of affordable housing in Monmouthshire by making recommendations to Council and other partners.

Key evidence appraised included:

- Evidence of housing need.
- Need for intermediate housing.
- Average earnings.
- Equalities.
- The Allocations Policy.
- Suitability and availability of land.
- Implications of increasing planning gain.
- Opposition to affordable housing delivery.
- Revitalising rural communities.
- Older person's housing – new directions.
- Build your own affordable home.

The findings and recommendations of the Task & Finish investigation have been considered by Cabinet. Cabinet welcomes the importance and recognition that the Committee is placing on affordable housing and more specifically welcomes the recommendations proposed by the Committee for further increasing and strengthening the provision of affordable housing in Monmouthshire. The report provides specific responses and feedback to the Committee with regard to the 'A Place to Call Home' report.

Member Scrutiny:

The following information was noted in respect of the recommendations of the Task and Finish Group and the cabinet responses:

- Recommendation 1 – Options can be explored with the private sector regarding finance.
- Recommendation 2 – In response to a Select Committee Member's question, it was noted that scattered housing developments in the countryside were not being encouraged.
- Recommendation 4 – 60 / 40 split in favour of affordable homes.
- Recommendation 6 – A meeting was being proposed between the Chief Executives of Monmouthshire County Council and the Brecon Beacons National Park to discuss partnership working.
- Recommendation 8 – Working with Monmouthshire Housing Association with a view to the housing association taking on empty homes.

**Minutes of the Strong Communities Select Committee meeting
held in the Council Chamber, County Hall, Usk on
Thursday 16th July 2015 at 10.00 a.m.**

In response to a Select Committee Member's question regarding the combined housing register and whether it was combined with smaller housing associations, it was noted that not all small housing associations were on the register but many of them did advertise their properties with us.

- Recommendation 10 – Success around homelessness with work being undertaken around financial inclusion. Housing associations were active in Monmouthshire schools. Also, Monmouthshire Leisure Teams were engaging with young people regarding this matter.
- Recommendation 17 – The public have been encouraged to have their say via the planning process, excellent progress has been made via the task and finish group, work has been undertaken providing help in the Afgan re-housing, the shared lodging scheme has been a success, the re-purposing of Careline has also been a success, Officers are skilled in debt counselling, a good working partnership exists with Torfaen County Borough Council and Monmouthshire Housing Association helps provide ways in to work with the Youth Service. The Directorate was keen to re-visit health and social care benefits.
- There was a need for young people to remain in rural communities.
- There has been a positive change in in the Council's attitude with regard to the delivery of affordable homes.

Committee's Conclusion:

Chair's Summary:

On behalf of the Select Committee, the Chairman thanked the enabler, Mr. James, and the Team for pursuing the recommendations and that we are providing affordable homes in Monmouthshire.

The Committee agreed:

- A) To encourage the smaller RSL's that are not a part of the Genus to join and work with us.
- B) Investigate private sector schemes, possibly in England, to assess what they stand for and whether something similar would be feasible in Wales.
- C) The churches in Wales (Faith in Housing) want to help with affordable housing. They have landholdings that could potentially be used. Meetings have been held and potential sites have been identified. A report on this matter would be presented to a future meeting of the Select Committee.

**Minutes of the Strong Communities Select Committee meeting
held in the Council Chamber, County Hall, Usk on
Thursday 16th July 2015 at 10.00 a.m.**

**7. MONMOUTHSHIRE LOCAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN AFFORDABLE HOUSING
SUPPLEMENTARY PLANNING GUIDANCE**

Context:

To advise Select Committee Members of the results of the recent consultation on Draft Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG) on Affordable Housing to support the policies of the Monmouthshire Local Development Plan (LDP).

Key Issues:

The consultation took place for a period of six weeks from Thursday 19th February 2015 to Thursday 2nd April 2015. A notice was placed in the Monmouthshire Free Press on 18 February 2015 and 388 individual notifications were despatched to:

- Specific (including Town and Community Councils), General and Other consultees, as identified in the LDP Community Involvement Scheme.
- Residents who were on the LDP consultation data base and had specifically requested to be notified of the SPGs.
- Agents / developers who work in the Council area.

11 replies had been received. These have been split into 41 representations that were summarised, together with the suggested Council response, in the Report of Consultation.

Member Scrutiny:

- There are some large strategic sites within the LDP which would not be covered by the Rural Allocations Policy set out in Appendix 3 of the Supplementary Planning Guidance.
- A review of the policy was required as it was currently tied down with considerable regulation and legislation.
- There was a need for the Housing Register to work better for the Authority with regard to the prevention of homelessness. Currently, the Authority did not have enough social housing which meant that private renting was currently being used. This was a challenge for the Authority.
- The Housing and Regeneration Manager stated that he could present a report to a future meeting of the Select Committee regarding the Rural Allocation Policy and what this has delivered.

**Minutes of the Strong Communities Select Committee meeting
held in the Council Chamber, County Hall, Usk on
Thursday 16th July 2015 at 10.00 a.m.**

Committee's Conclusion:

Chair's Summary:

The Select Committee had reservations regarding the Rural Allocations Policy with regard to the recommendation of the report but welcomed a report by the Housing and Regeneration Manager to a future meeting of the Select Committee regarding this Policy and what was being delivered.

Report Recommendation:

Members agreed:

- (i) to note the contents of the report and the recommended revisions to the draft Affordable Housing SPG;
- (ii) that the Housing and Regeneration Manager presents a report to a future meeting of the Select Committee regarding the Rural Allocation Policy and what this has delivered and that the Adults Select Committee be invited to attend the meeting in respect of this item.

8. SOCIAL HOUSING GRANT PROGRAMME

Context:

To brief the Cabinet Member on the completion of the Social Housing Grant (SHG) programme for 2014/2015 and seek approval for the new SHG Programme for 2015-2018.

Key Issues:

- It is recognised in Monmouthshire that house prices have risen to a level beyond that which is affordable to many local people. The average house price is currently £243,600 (Wales comparison £167,700) and the lower quartile affordability ratio is 9:1. Therefore, the provision of affordable housing is one of the Council's more pressing concerns, both in urban and rural areas.
- The number of applicants on the Common Housing Register is currently 2890.
- During 2014/2015 there were 249 homeless applications determined with a duty being accepted to 112. The Council's Housing Options Team dealt with 758 housing enquiries.

**Minutes of the Strong Communities Select Committee meeting
held in the Council Chamber, County Hall, Usk on
Thursday 16th July 2015 at 10.00 a.m.**

Member Scrutiny:

- In response to a Select Committee Member's question regarding SHG funding, it was noted that the Welsh Government does not allow local authorities to utilise other local authorities' unspent SHG funding. The Welsh Government does not hold a SHG reserve fund. However, the Welsh Government knows that Monmouthshire County Council does deliver on its funding allocation and in the past, additional funding has been granted to the Authority.
- It was noted that the schemes on the Programme Delivery Plan were not all ready to come forward. However, it was anticipated that they will be ready to come forward in the future. The schemes will be delivered but will likely take time as funding was not currently available.

Committee's Conclusion:

Chair's Summary:

Inform Cabinet that having scrutinised the document, The Authority needs to urge Welsh Government to enter into more consultation with the Authority so that we may be able to deliver more affordable homes within Monmouthshire. The evidence to deliver this is outlined in the Programme Delivery Plan: Reserve Schemes.

Report Recommendation:

Members agreed:

- (i) that Cabinet approves the contents of the Programme;
- (ii) that Cabinet urges Welsh Government to enter into more consultation with the Authority so that we may be able to deliver more affordable homes within Monmouthshire. The evidence to deliver this is outlined in the Programme Delivery Plan: Reserve Schemes.

9. LOCAL HOUSING MARKET ASSESSMENT

Context:

To brief the Select Committee on the completion of the Local Housing Market Assessment, April 2015 (LHMA) for Monmouthshire.

Key Issues:

Undertaking this assessment has identified the need for 474 additional affordable housing units per year over the next 5 years. These figures are not an annual

**Minutes of the Strong Communities Select Committee meeting
held in the Council Chamber, County Hall, Usk on
Thursday 16th July 2015 at 10.00 a.m.**

delivery target as new build homes are not the total solution to the supply of affordable homes in the County. The Council's target remains as 960 affordable homes over the period of the Local Development Plan (LDP) 2011-2021.

Delivery figures for the previous 5 years are:

- 2010-2011 63 units
- 2011-2012 75 units
- 2012-2013 63 units
- 2013-2014 48 units
- 2014-2015 15 units

Housing and Community Services has established a new Private Sector Housing Team and are working with private sector landlords to increase the availability of units for private rent whilst also trying to bring empty properties back into use.

Headline figures from the report for the three affordable housing tenures are:

- Social rent 271/year
- Low Cost Home Ownership 157/year
- Intermediate Rent 46/year

Member Scrutiny:

- A report will be presented to the Select Committee in January 2016 regarding the findings of the survey in respect of the Gypsy and Traveller report.
- Backlog of Affordable Housing Need / Annum – Data is taken from the housing register and divided by five in order to bring forward an annual figure. It was noted that there was a high figure of need required in all of the main towns within Monmouthshire.
- When the LDP was set, the Welsh Government stated that the Authority had to increase its affordable housing targets because the target in the previous UDP had not been delivered. The Welsh Government asked the Authority to include more housing as it was considered that the Authority was not delivering enough affordable homes. The Authority has the need and the sites but not necessarily the funding. Therefore, in years to come if the Authority has not delivered, concern was expressed that the Welsh Government might expect the Authority to add even more homes to the LDP as targets would not have been met. It was noted that as an authority, we do not put grants into our S106 sites as Welsh Government does not approve. It is down to the viability of the sites and whether the Authority can obtain the required 35%. The 960 affordable housing unit figure from the whole of the LDP period is the Authority's target. However, that figure might be difficult to meet as the larger sites were coming through and it might be

**Minutes of the Strong Communities Select Committee meeting
held in the Council Chamber, County Hall, Usk on
Thursday 16th July 2015 at 10.00 a.m.**

necessary to negotiate down from the 35% on some of these sites due to viability issues.

- In response to a Select Committee Member's question regarding 'right to buy', it was noted that as housing is devolved in Wales Welsh Government has not indicated that it will be doing this. Welsh Government is currently in the process of suspending the right to buy in Wales.

Committee's Conclusion:

Chair's Summary:

The committee welcomed the report.

Report Recommendation:

Members agreed the recommendations as follows:

That Cabinet adopts the Local Housing Market Assessment, April 2015.

10. REVENUE AND CAPITAL MONITORING 2015/16 PERIOD 1 OUTTURN FORECAST STATEMENT

Context:

To provide Members with information on the forecast revenue outturn position of the Authority at the end of period 1 which represents month 2 financial information for the 2015/16 financial year. Revenue and Capital forecasting is being brought forward by a month against the usual timescale to provide Members with relevant financial information before summer recess.

Member Scrutiny:

- In response to a Select Committee Member's question regarding the level of reserves currently being held by the Authority, it was noted that in the current economic climate, local authorities were being encouraged not to hold their reserves at too high a level.
- The new layout and structure of the report was welcomed providing details that might be built upon over the financial year.
- Capital Outturn Forecast – In response to a Select Committee Member's question regarding IT schemes – Infrastructure / Hardware, it was noted that the information contained within the report referred to eight or nine schemes which were legacy updates to systems that the Council has.

**Minutes of the Strong Communities Select Committee meeting
held in the Council Chamber, County Hall, Usk on
Thursday 16th July 2015 at 10.00 a.m.**

- Members used to receive an up to date capital programme of highways related works prior to the start of the financial year. The Assistant Head of Finance stated that he could provide such information in future.
- In response to a Select Committee Member's question regarding the overspend at Monnow Vale, it was noted that this was a partnership arrangement between the Health Board and Monmouthshire County Council. There was an historic Service Level Agreement between the two and that any shortfall would be borne by the Authority. It was likely that this Service Level Agreement would be re-negotiated in future. The Chairman stated that he would contact the Chairman of Adults Select Committee with a view to asking that that Select Committee investigates this matter.

Committee's Conclusion:

Chair's Summary:

The committee welcomed the report.

Report Recommendation:

Members agreed the recommendations to be presented to Cabinet, as follows:

- (i) that Members consider the position concerning the first period of revenue monitoring in 2015/16 (£252,000 deficit) and seek assurance of the action Chief Officers are taking to address the over spends in their service areas;
- (ii) a caveated use of reserves is sought in relation to redundancy costs incurred by services this year totalling £13,000, whilst services will continue to find compensatory savings additional to the mandates to mitigate the net cost pressure by end of financial year;
- (iii) Members consider the position concerning period 1 capital monitoring with a revised budget of £58.406 million for the 2015/16 financial year.

11. WORK PROGRAMME

Members discussed the Work Programme for the Strong Communities Select Committee. In doing so, the following points were noted:

10th September 2015 – Agenda Items

- Anaerobic Digestion.
- Public Toilets – progress on transfer of assets (including Raglan toilet).

**Minutes of the Strong Communities Select Committee meeting
held in the Council Chamber, County Hall, Usk on
Thursday 16th July 2015 at 10.00 a.m.**

- Annual Complaints.

Special Meeting – 14th September 2015 at 2.00pm – Agenda Items

- Flood Risk Management.
- Scrutiny of the finances of the Passenger Transport Unit.
- Public protection.

Special Meeting – 12th October 2015 at 10.00am – Agenda Items

- Crime and Disorder Training.
- Whole Place.
- Safer Monmouthshire Plan.

Special Meeting – 22nd October 2015 at 10.00am – Agenda Items

- Budget Scrutiny.

The Chairman would email the Head of Operations to establish whether the Highways Working Group would be re-established.

12. CABINET FORWARD WORK PLANNER

We resolved to receive the Cabinet Forward Work Planner and noted its content.

The meeting ended at 2.50pm.

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SUBJECT: Future provision of Public Conveniences

MEETING: Strong Communities Select Committee

DATE: 10th September 2015

DIVISION/WARDS AFFECTED: All

1. PURPOSE:

To update members on the provision of public conveniences at various sites within the County and seek feedback from members on options for the future provision of public conveniences.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS:

That members review the information provided, consider the options for the future provision of the service (paragraph 4.1 below) and offer commentary for submission to Cabinet.

3. KEY ISSUES:

- 3.1 In 2010 the Strong Communities Select Committee undertook a detailed review of the provision of public conveniences. This informed a strategy for the future provision of public conveniences and as a result new arrangements were implemented including some closures but also transfer of responsibility to other providers (community and town councils).
- 3.2 Since then some further adjustments to service provision have been arrived at through greater collaboration with town councils and mandated in the MCC budgets for 14/15 and 15/16.

3.3 This has resulted in the majority of public conveniences remaining open to the public but the method of management and provision varying between towns and villages.

3.4 Appendix 1 lists those toilets where MCC retains an 'interest' and approved proposals for their future provision, including details of current revenue and capital costs associated with possible transfer as well as a commentary on capital receipts opportunities.

3.5 Those toilets that remain the responsibility and cost to MCC after the proposals already approved are:

1. Abergavenny: Whitehorse Lane
Castle Street
Brewery Yard
Bus station
2. Monmouth: Blestium Street (Cattle market)
3. Usk: Maryport Street car park
Usk Island
4. Tintern: Beaufort Cottage

4. REASONS:

4.1 Following their meeting held on 12th March, 2015, members of the Strong Communities Select committee have asked for a further update on developments surrounding public conveniences. Furthermore, as part of the exercise to identify potential savings within Operations, consideration has been given to the future provision of public conveniences by the Council

4.2 As previously noted, guidance from Welsh Government indicates that whilst there is no statutory requirement on the part of the Authority to provide this service, members will be mindful of the likely impact of removing these facilities from our local towns, both in terms of the needs of local communities and also with regard to tourist activity, which plays such a significant role in the local economy

- 4.3 Recent discussions with colleagues in Town Councils have highlighted an interest in the possible transfer of these services to facilitate more localised delivery arrangements, on the premise that they are able to meet the cost of the provision of that facility
- 4.4 The revenue costs associated with the provision of these services within the separate town areas, are incorporated within appendix 1. This is based on the presumption that that in each case, the respective town council is prepared to meet the full cost of providing the facility. This information has recently been provided to each town council as appropriate. (Appendix 1 also provides a status/options comment that summarises comments in paragraph 4.10 below).
- 4.5 In terms of the available funding to undertake the refurbishment exercise it is possible that most of these sites could be accommodated, however, having regard for the existing provision within Abergavenny, it is unlikely that additional funding could be identified to refurbish the facility at White Horse Lane (Abergavenny Town Council acknowledge that the major refurbishment of the toilets is unlikely in the foreseeable future).
- 4.6 Welsh Government recognises that each authority will need to address the continued provision of such facilities in the context of the limited resources available and to consider a range of approaches that will facilitate appropriate provision within its local communities. To this effect, consideration may be given to extending the use of existing facilities in leisure centres, libraries and other public buildings as part of a wider strategy to this meet this requirement
- 4.7 To date, arrangements have been made for the transfer of facilities at Jubilee Way and Bank Street to Caldicot and Chepstow Town Councils respectively, also Chepstow TC have taken on the cost of managing and cleaning the toilets at the TIC. At this point, however, there are still no other clear expressions of interest in the transfer of facilities
- 4.8 Following discussions with CADW, it has been established that facilities at Tintern Abby will not be made available to the public. In addition, following recent discussions with Tintern Community Council, it has been noted that the council is not currently inclined toward the transfer of the facilities at Beaufort Cottage
- 4.9 Members have requested an update on current arrangements which is provided within the report. However officers are taking this opportunity to promote discussion around options available for the future provision of public conveniences. In offering suggestions officers are prompting further discussion but are also conscious of the financial pressure upon local authorities combined with the success achieved so far in keeping public conveniences open but provided by community and town councils.

- 4.10 Within this context officers would suggest that members commission officers to consult with town and community councils on the option of complete withdrawal from direct provision and management of public conveniences as from April 2016. In conjunction with this decision the authority would enter into discussions with the relevant town and community councils about the potential transfer of the public conveniences to their responsibility.
- 4.11 MCC supports community and town councils that provide public conveniences (previously provided by MCC) by an annual grant of £1200. To support any further transfers officers would suggest that the grant continue to be paid for a further three years after the current approval expires but at that time is withdrawn completely.
- 4.12 The grant provided by Welsh Government to private businesses that make their facilities available to the general public has been withdrawn (subsumed into the revenue support grant). Should members be minded to completely withdraw from the direct provision of public conveniences then they may wish to mitigate the impact by supporting shops and businesses that make their facilities available, similar to the Welsh Government scheme, albeit within a limited budget.
- 4.13 Further mitigation may also be offered by advertising the availability of conveniences in Council buildings that might reasonably be made available to the public.

5. RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS:

As detailed in appendices 1

6. SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT AND EQUALITY IMPLICATIONS: Appendix 2

7. CONSULTEES:

Senior Leadership Team
All Cabinet Members
Head of Legal Services
Head of Finance
Head of Employee Services

8. **BACKGROUND PAPERS: Nil**
9. **AUTHOR: Robert O'Dwyer, Robert Nancarrow**
10. **CONTACT DETAILS: Tel: 01633 644644**
E-mail: roberto'dwyer@monmouthshire.gov.uk

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The “Equality Initial Challenge”

Name: Rob O’Dwyer		Please give a brief description of what you are aiming to do.	
Service area: Property Services & Facilities Management		Future provision of public conveniences in Monmouthshire	
Date completed: 31/08/15			
Protected characteristic	Potential Negative impact Please give details	Potential Neutral impact Please give details	Potential Positive Impact Please give details
Age		X	
Disability		X	
Marriage + Civil Partnership		X	
Pregnancy and maternity		X	
Race		X	
Religion or Belief		X	
Sex (was Gender)		X	
Sexual Orientation		X	
Transgender		X	
Welsh Language		X	

Please give details about any potential negative Impacts .	How do you propose to MITIGATE these negative impacts
➤ <i>Closure of facilities could limit the availability of fit for purpose public conveniences for all residents and visitors in Monmouthshire</i>	➤ <i>Ensure that all possible options are fully considered in collaboration with all community groups</i>
➤ <i>Na</i>	➤ <i>NA</i>
➤ <i>NA</i>	➤ <i>NA</i>
➤ <i>NA</i>	➤ <i>NA</i>

Signed – *R M O'Dwyer* Designation **Head of Property Services & Facilities Management**
Dated – **31/08/2015**

EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT FORM

What are you impact assessing	Service area
Future provision of public conveniences in Monmouthshire	Property Services and Facilities Management
Policy author / service lead	Name of assessor and date
Head of Property Services and Facilities Management	Rob O'Dwyer – 31/08/2015

1. What are you proposing to do?

We are proposing to: -

- To discuss options for potential retention, transfer or closure of public conveniences currently managed and funded by Monmouthshire County Council.

2. Are your proposals going to affect any people or groups of people with protected characteristics in a **negative** way? If **YES** please tick appropriate boxes below.

Age		Race	
Disability		Religion or Belief	
Gender reassignment		Sex	
Marriage or civil partnership		Sexual Orientation	
Pregnancy and maternity		Welsh Language	

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Please give details of the negative impact

NA

4. Did you take any actions to mitigate your proposal? Please give details below including any consultation or engagement.

NA

5. Please list the data that has been used to develop this proposal? eg Household survey data, Welsh Govt data, ONS data, MCC service user data, Staff personnel data etc..

NA

Signed *R M O'Dwyer* Designation – Head of Property Services and Facilities Management...Dated – 31/08/2015

Appendix A

The “Sustainability Challenge”

Name of the Officer completing “the Sustainability challenge” Rob O’Dwyer		Please give a brief description of the aims proposed policy or service reconfiguration To ensure that Monmouthshire residents and visitors have use of fit for purpose public conveniences whilst ensuring that this service is delivered within the constraints of the authorities Medium Term Financial Plan	
Name of the Division or service area Property Services & Facilities Management		Date “Challenge” form completed 31/08/2015	
Aspect of sustainability affected	Negative impact Please give details	Neutral impact Please give details	Positive Impact Please give details
PEOPLE		X	
Ensure that more people have access to healthy food		X	
Improve housing quality and provision		X	
Reduce ill health and improve healthcare		X	

provision			
Promote independence		X	
Encourage community participation/action and voluntary work		X	
Targets socially excluded		X	
Help reduce crime and fear of crime		X	
Improve access to education and training		X	
Have a positive impact on people and places in other countries		X	
PLANET		X	
Reduce, reuse and recycle waste and water		X	
Reduce carbon dioxide emissions		X	
Prevent or reduce pollution of the air, land and water		X	
Protect or enhance wildlife habitats (e.g. trees, hedgerows, open spaces)		X	
Protect or enhance visual		X	

appearance of environment			
PROFIT			
Protect local shops and services		X	
Link local production with local consumption		X	
Improve environmental awareness of local businesses		X	
Increase employment for local people		X	
Preserve and enhance local identity and culture		X	
Consider ethical purchasing issues, such as Fairtrade, sustainable timber (FSC logo) etc		X	
Increase and improve access to leisure, recreation or cultural facilities		X	

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What are the potential negative impacts	Ideas as to how we can look to MITIGATE the negative impacts (include any reasonable adjustments)
---	---

➤ Closure of MCC managed facilities could reduce public access to appropriate public conveniences	➤ Ensure that appropriate discussions are initiated with all community groups to find suitable alternative provision
➤ NA	➤
➤ NA	➤
➤ NA	➤

The next steps

- If you have assessed the proposal/s as having a **positive impact please give full details** below

NA

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- If you have assessed the proposal/s as having a **Negative Impact** could you please provide us with details of what you propose to do to mitigate the negative impact:

NA

Signed R M O'Dwyer

Dated 19/05/2015

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MONMOUTHSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL
SUMMARY ANALYSIS OF PUBLIC CONVENIENCES IN MONMOUTHSHIRE

Appendix 1

Aug-15

Ref	Sites	Total Revenue Saving Potential	Capital Improvement Cost for Transfer	Capital Cost for Demolition	Capital Receipt Comment	Action	Timeframe	Status/options
1	ABERGAVENNY							
a	White Horse Lane	17,776	110,000	25,000	Retail Opportunity, redevelopment required.	Close		Joint funded by MCC and ATC. Refurbishment between MCC and ATC considered unviable (£110k). Remains not fit for purpose – close?
b	Castle Street	8,255	5,040		Additional 2 disabled and 4 standard car parking spaces. Possible kiosk style retail.	Close/Transfer		MCC responsible - transfer to ATC
c	Bus Station	12,059	11,840		A3/A1 potential adjoining former TIC	Close/Transfer		MCC responsible – transfer to ATC
d	Brewery Yard	12,100	No survey		Joined to a retail asset, could be integrated into the market set up for retail if conversion is possible.	Close/Transfer		MCC responsible – transfer to ATC?. Members keen to close. TC have refused to engage any discussions until the wider strategy is agreed/ Therefore need to push ahead with closure.
e	Town Hall - Abergavenny Market					No Action Rqd		Managed by Enterprise - No action
2	MONMOUTH							

a	Agincourt street	10,707	9,500		Retail or office potential	Done - Transferred	14/15	Funded by MTC – transfer of asset being arranged. MCC paid for cleaning. MCC pick up cost of maintenance
b	Blestium Street (Cattle Market)	10,235	10,696		Strategic retail or Café value will be part of Regeneration project which is currently unfunded.	Transfer		MCC responsible – transfer to MTC
3	USK							
a	Maryport Street	4,454	4,264		Additional car parking spaces possible kiosk style retail.	Transfer		MCC responsible – transfer to Usk TC?
b	Usk Island	3,071	2,052		Usk Island is within floodplain so limited options other than existing, extension to leisure facilities.	Transfer		MCC responsible – transfer to Usk TC?
4	CALDICOT		20,756					
a	Jubilee Way	11,418	30,000		Additional car parking and strategic retail value.	Done - Transferred	15/16 - 1st Sept	Transfer to Caldicot TC in progress and due for completion 1st Sept 2015.
	Caldicot Castle	-	20,756			No Action Rqd		Managed by Ian in Enterprise - No action planned
5	CHEPSTOW							
a	Welsh st / Bank st	18,504	10,000		Retail potential other small retail units present on access points feeding through from car park	Done - Transferred	15/16 - 1st April	Transfer to Chepstow TC complete on the 1st of April 2015

b	TIC Chepstow	2,259	10,000		Property not owned freehold disposal not possible. Potential conversion for offices / retail.	Done - Transferred	15/16 - 1st April	Transfer of mgt and cleaning to Chepstow TC in progress – but no transfer of asset. Transferred as of 1 st April
C	Tintern - Car Park	12,866	8,852		Retail or potential special purchaser for residential extension to adjoining owner (assumed residential)	Retain		Retain as MCC responsible – Tintern Community Council has said no in the first instance about Beaufort cottage. Possible use abbey facilities operated by CADW - CADW are not interested at this stage
Total		123,704	253,756					

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SUBJECT:	Petition to adopt highway at Crawshay Bailey Close Gilwern and also consideration of future agreement for new development
MEETING:	Select Committee
DATE:	TBA
DIVISION/WARDS AFFECTED:	All

NON-PUBLICATION

(Insert appropriate non-publication paragraph if necessary)

1. PURPOSE:

To update members of on the current position with regard to adoption of highway infrastructure for new developments and consider the implications of where a legal agreement for the road to become formally adopted by the council is not agreed.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS:

To note the petition **but not to adopt** the highway and associated infrastructure at Crawshay Bailey Close Gilwern.

That the authority should not adopt any private development unless a section 38 or other form of legal agreement has been put in place as part of the planning process however request the developer as part of the planning process to provide assurances as to the future management arrangements of the highway and associated infrastructure.

To encourage the developer to enter in to a legal agreement for the adoption of the highways upon completion of the site (section 38 of the highways act 1980). However where this arrangement is not feasible, for the authority to secure a bond to cover the cost of making up the highway and other infrastructure to an adoptable standard.

3. KEY ISSUES:

A petition has been received requesting that the county council adopts the roads and associated infrastructure at Crawshay Bailey Close, Gilwern. This development was approved by the Brecon Beacons National Park (BBNP) without consideration to MCC Highways comments and therefore the site was built as a private estate without carrying out improvements to the existing access road to provide an adoptable width of carriageway, providing sustainable transport links and also residents agreeing as part of the purchase process to contribute towards the costs for a private management company to take on the future maintenance of the infrastructure.

Roads and associated infrastructure on new developments have historically been adopted as public highway under a legal agreement (section 38 of the Highways Act 1980). This is not a statutory requirement, it is a mutual arrangement between the Highway Authority and the Developer (landowner) that requires the developer to pay a bond (a cash deposit or

bond surety that reflects the costs for constructing the adoptable estate roads) and construct the roads etc. to the required specification with the highway authority undertaking inspections of the works and formally adopting the site usually once the development has been completed. The council charges the developer for the inspection of the works and may also require commuted sums in order to cover works that will incur additional future maintenance for items such as high specialist materials, specific highway furniture, highway structures, drainage etc. The planning conditions may also require similar charges for the provision of play areas, open spaces and other infrastructure improvements including the upgrade of local schools and sustainable transport facilities.

These conditions and outlays can be significant for some sites and result in the developer deciding to keep the site as private and set up their own maintenance arrangements, and in some cases also look to recover these costs from the residents through the payment of a management fee.

The decision for the developer to keep the site private is likely to be based upon the financial viability of the site following consideration of the Section 106 Agreement which may include requirements for the provision of affordable housing and other infrastructure improvements outlined above. The option not to offer the site up for adoption may present the developer with an opportunity to make savings especially in relation to those which would attract a high commuted sum. Furthermore, an additional motivator for the developer is to recover such costs through the residents by setting up a management company and annual management fee.

Recent experience shows that new residents to those sites that remain private are not happy with having to pay the annual management fee and would wish to see the council adopt the highway etc. However, although the infrastructure may have been built to an adoptable standard, without the payment of commuted sums, the authority would incur higher than expected costs and above that allocated by the Welsh government for the maintenance of highways, the authority may also be liable for high costs and potential insurance claims associated with inheriting a sub-standard highway .

The planning process involves negotiations between the planning authority and developer and the viability of the site, especially during the economic downturn, is an opportunity for the authority to agree with the developer on appropriate improvements for the wider community and local infrastructure. The Planning authority and Highways as a statutory consultee are not able to stipulate that the site should be adopted once completed, however, an opportunity exists during the pre-planning stage to encourage the developer to enter in to a section 38 agreement. This arrangement will serve to best to ensure that the highway is built to the appropriate specification and offer residents with the benefits of living on an adopted highway without an annual management maintenance fee. This facility is not so straightforward where the Council are not the Planning Authority.

4. REASONS:

The adoption of the highway and associated infrastructure is believed to best secure the interests of the highway authority by ensuring that the development is built to the appropriate specification and also offer residents with the benefits of living on an adopted highway without an annual management maintenance fee.

5. RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS:

The costs associated with future maintenance of new adopted highways are covered as part of the Formula Spending Assessment (FSA) set by the Welsh Government and where applicable commuted sums payed by the developer as part of the legal agreement. The cost of maintaining such sites may only be partially covered should the authority wish to adopt the site outside the section 38 process and where a development remains private. There are no additional costs to the authority where the development remains private however there may be pressures to adopt such site after completion which may lead to additional costs for defective repairs especially where a higher specification has been used and other features such as drainage systems have not benefited from the payment of commuted sums.

6. SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT AND EQUALITY IMPLICATIONS:

Regardless of whether the site is adopted or not, the highway layout should be compliant with the requirements of the current guidance and meet the needs of the DDA and the planning authority will seek contributions to provide and improve accessibility and a wider sustainable community.

7. CONSULTEES:

Cabinet Member for County Operations
Senior Leaders Team

8. BACKGROUND PAPERS:

None

9. AUTHOR:

Paul Keeble

10. CONTACT DETAILS:

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E-mail: paulkeeble@monmouthshire.gov.uk

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SUBJECT:	WHOLE AUTHORITY CUSTOMER FEEDBACK AND FREEDOM OF INFORMATION ACT
MEETING:	Strong Communities Select
DATE:	10 September 2015
DIVISION/WARDS AFFECTED:	All Wards

1. PURPOSE:

To provide Strong Communities Select committee with information on the number and types of complaints, comments and compliments received and dealt with from 1 April 2014 until 31 March 2015.

The report also summarises the number of Freedom of Information Act (FOI) requests received by the Council during this period.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS:

To note the contents of the report.

3. KEY ISSUES:

3.1 Our Whole Authority Complaints and Compliments policy and procedure follows the Model that the Public Services Ombudsman for Wales asked each local authority to adopt in 2011.

3.2 The procedure has two stages; the informal stage and the formal stage.

The informal stage aims to resolve the complaint locally wherever possible by means of discussion and problem solving. If it is not possible to resolve the concern, the matter is escalated to the formal investigation stage.

3.3 Where initial discussions have not achieved a resolution, complainants have the right to make a formal complaint. Investigations are undertaken and the complainant receives a full response detailing findings, conclusions and any recommendations made. This is the end of the internal process.

3.4 Complainants can contact the Public Services Ombudsman if they still remain dissatisfied.

The Ombudsman provides an external independent service to consider complaints about all local authority services. The Ombudsman is concerned with maladministration causing

injustice and will normally require complainants to have used their local council's procedures before accepting a complaint for investigation.

4. REASONS:

To ensure that Members are aware of the types of complaints, comments and compliments received and dealt with. Also, to note the FOI statistics and the continuing growth in FOI requests.

5. RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS:

Officer time in carrying out formal investigations.

6. SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT AND EQUALITY IMPLICATIONS:

No implications have been identified in respect of this proposal.

7. CONSULTEES:

Senior Leadership team

8. AUTHOR:

Annette Evans, Customer Relations Manager

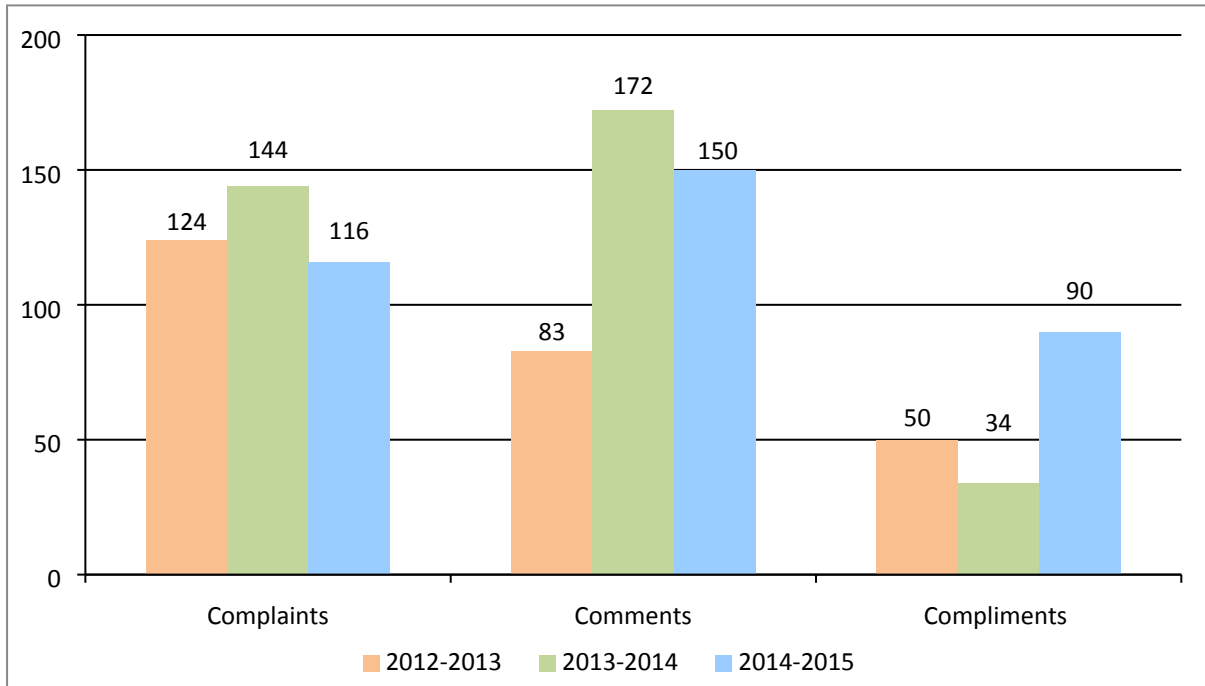
Tel: 01633 644647

Email: annetteevans@monmouthshire.gov.uk



Whole Authority Customer Feedback and FOIA Statistics

April 2014 – March 2015



Complaints

- 116 Complaints

Stage 1 - Informal Resolution

- 100 Complaints

Stage 2 – Formal Investigation

- 25 Complaints started
 - 4 complaints escalated from Stage 1 (2013-2014)
 - 1 complaint proceeded straight to stage 2 (2013-2014)
 - 4 escalated to stage 2
 - 16 proceeded straight to Stage 2

Public Services Ombudsman for Wales

Of the 25 formal complaints, 6 complainants went directly to the PSOW. He referred them to us for subsequent investigation.

4 complainants progressed their complaints to the PSOW after formal investigation (they are not related to the ones mentioned above). After initial enquiries the PSOW decided not to carry out any further investigation.

Most common aspects of services complained about:

- Highways
- Environment and contact
- Passenger transport

Note: Social Services complaints are dealt with separately under the Social Services complaints procedure. **43** complaints were received, **82** comments and **116** compliments were made about the service.

Received

	Total	Access to Service	Communication Issue	Data Protection	Decision Delay	Discrimination	Member Conduct	Quality of Service	Quality of Works	Reduction in Service	Result of Process	Service Delayed	Service not provided	Service Removed	Staff Conduct	Timescales
Children & Young People	4							1			1			1	1	
Support Services																
Access unit	1							1								
Finance service																
Adult Education service																
Pupil Referral and Inclusion service																
Additional Learning Needs and Special Learning Needs service	2										1				1	
Early Years Education service	1													1		
Monmouthshire Youth Service																
Flying Start service																
Acorn Integrated Children's service																
21st Century Schools Team																
Children & Young People not allocated Specific Team																
Enterprise	17		2					9			1				5	
Development Plans																
Housing	3							2							1	
Estates & Sustainability	1							1								
Libraries	1		1													
Museums																
Countryside	2							2								
Leisure	8		1					4			1				2	

Enterprise															
Employee Services															
Enterprise not allocated specific team	2													2	
Chief Executive	95	2	10		1		1	57	4		6		6	8	
Partnerships, Policy and Performance and Communication & Engagement															
Local Democracy	1						1								
Customer Relations															
Emergency Planning															
Legal Services	2							2							
Public Protection	4							1	1		2				
Development Control	11				1			8			1			1	
Building Control	1							1							
Democracy and Regulatory not allocated specific team															
Business Support and corporate accountancy															
Internal Audit															
Revenues, systems and exchequer	6		2					3					1		
Finance not allocated specific team															
Property Services	2	1						1							
Environment & Contact	18		1					13			1		2	1	
Highways	22		2					14	2		1		1	2	
Transport	1													1	
Passenger Transport	21	1	3					14					1	2	
Operations not allocated specific team	6		2						1		1		1	1	
External															
Total	116	2	12		1		1	67	4		8		6	1	14

Comments

- 150 Comments

Total	150
Chief Executive	108
Development Control	6
Environment & Contact	55
Highways	26
Local Democracy	2
Passenger Transport	7
Public Protection	7
Revenue, Systems & Exchequer	5
Enterprise	41
Countryside	1
Estates & Sustainability	2
Housing	1
Leisure	21
Libraries	4
Enterprise not allocated specific team	12
External	1

A selection of comments received concerned:

- Loud music at an event held at Caldicot Castle
- Unhappy with deterioration of building
- Having no policy with regard to new fast food outlets being opened up in close proximity to schools.
- Sale of council owned land and planning application
- Concerns over the payments of council tax arrears and the way they are being handled
- Dog waste bags are no longer available
- A suggestion that provision possibly be made at the new Usk HQ to allow residents in the central area of the county to have access to basic one stop shop facilities.
- Website difficult to navigate; looking for opening times of the recycling centres in Monmouth and Chepstow and request replacement bags
- Waste not collected
- Online procedure did not work for permits for garden waste bags
- No collection points in Gilwern for the recycling bags
- Disappointed with the quality of bags
- Grass cuttings left on the grass/disgusted with the manner in which grass cutting was undertaken
- Suggestion to dig up all the paved roundabouts (Abergavenny) and plant the wildflowers
- Concerns over the driving of a recycling lorry

- Price increase this year for garden waste.
- Council number appears 'withheld' on the telephone.
- Condition of football stand
- An overdue letter was received for an audiobook that was returned.
- Feels there is a bad environment at the library caused by teenagers using it
- Issues with wifi at the library
- Asked to reconsider the recent price increase for the squash courts.
Suggestion that they introduce peak and off peak charges for squash courts or introduce a membership package.
- Issues around Monmouth swimming pool being demolished; the new pool should be open before the old one is closed, potential loss of the pool
- Swimming charges for OAPs in the school holidays
- Comments made by an instructor
- Increase of price of sports facilities in Abergavenny Leisure Centre
- Website has everything but postal addresses
- New version of the website has either eaten or hidden the link to library services. Wishes to download e-books and it just is not possible with this site.
- Comment received via email to put the link for postal code details on the same page as the calendar regarding grey waste collection.
- Garden waste payment page is not easy to find on the website, neither is it easy to reply to a comment left on the garden waste page.

Compliments

- 90 Compliments

Total	90
Chief Executive	68
Customer Relations	2
Development Control	4
Emergency Planning	1
Environment and Contact	23
Highways	34
Infrastructure & Projects	1
Passenger Transport	1
Revenues, Systems and Exchequer	2
Enterprise	6
General	1
Housing	3
Libraries	1
Enterprise not allocated specific team	1
Children & Young People	15
Access Unit	3
Additional Learning Needs and	3

Special Learning Needs service	
Early Years Education service	5
Finance	3
Support Services	1
Covers all of MCC	1

A selection of compliments received:

A range of compliments about the whole of the Council was received – staff thanked for their professionalism, their quick responses, their efficiency and helpful service.

Some examples:

- FOI response clearly presented in an open, friendly manner.
- Emergency Planning exercise Crash-a-tank - thoroughly enjoyed it and picked up loads of really useful things.
- Thanks in relation to a decision notice. 'I wish all local authorities were as quick and as professional as yours. Please pass on my thanks to all concerned.'
- Impressed with the diligent and carefully balanced way the matter was handled.
- Inspector's visit was most professional and very friendly.
- Rang the Chepstow One Stop Shop; the call automatically transferred to the Monmouth OSS who took the details of the problem and suggested that the person called into the OSS in Chepstow. By the time the person walked down to the Chepstow OSS (10 minutes at the most), they had received a call from Monmouth, sorted a solution and so when the person walked in he didn't have to do any explaining, just picked up the solution. Feel this was customer service of the highest order – really excellent and impressive.
- Lots of compliments about the fabulous wild flower displays on roundabouts and grass area. Also for the beautiful meadow planting of a number of grass verges and roundabout areas and how wonderful for our wildlife.
- Thanks for quick receipt of new grey caddy's / bags. Impressed with the efficiency of the service.
- Very good attention whilst visiting Monmouth's One Stop Shop. Always greeted with courtesy and friendliness if ever need their assistance.
- Thanks for the repairs (newly-repaired road and resurfaced sections) carried out.
- Thanks for the support received, have a place to call home after a long and turbulent life on the streets - loves the new accommodation.
- Thanks to the team for the concert at Caldicot Castle in November, it was great.
- Compliments about the SEN / ALN service expressing appreciation and thanks for all the ALN team had done to ensure appropriate placements.
- Thanks for the superb work recently undertaken in Mardy.
- Delighted at the result of work, making the Square not only safer but much more attractive for residents and visitors alike.
- Holes in the road have been filled in - would like to thank all the highways department. It was getting impossible and now much improved.

- Thanks to all staff who worked on the operational stages of the NATO summit to ensure that there were no transport related issues which contributed to the success of the event.
- Thanks for getting the street light and tree sorted. The men have just finished trimming the tree from around the bus shelter and it looks a lot better - everyone who uses it will be grateful for their help.
- Very helpful after alert to MCC about a road hazard caused by a roadside grit bin and its contents dumped in the road by hedge/bank cutting. They were impressed when within 48 hours the hazard had been cleared up and a replacement bin installed.
- Thanks for getting Leasebrook Lane swept
- Thanks for repairing the drainage problems outside the rectory. Life is so much safer now for the inhabitants of and visitors to the rectory, we are very grateful.
- Thanks for arranging for the gritting lorry to service the top road in Coed-y-Paen. Now they have the comfort and security of knowing they can travel more safely in future winters.
- The bus turned up exactly as promised and the driver was another excellent ambassador for MCC and the Passenger Transport Unit
- Thanks received for being able to access the Countryside's interactive map and reporting a fault on a footpath. Felt it is well designed and very easy to use.

Response Timescales

Our policy for responding to complaints at stage 1 is 10 working days and for stage 2 formal investigation is 20 working days plus a further 10 working days for Heads of Service to respond.

Whole Authority Timescales	2013/14		2014/2015	
	Stage 1	Stage 2	Stage 1	Stage 2
Up to 10 working days	98	2	68	1
11 – 25 working days	18	3	23	7
25+ working days	18	11	9	17
Total	134	16	100	25

Requests for service

These are recorded and acted upon.

Total	25
Chief Executive	23
Environment and Contact	13
Local Democracy	1
Highways	6
Public protection	2
Revenue and Benefits	1

Enterprise	1
Estates & Sustainability	1
External	1

Analysis of Complaints / Comments

Year	Stage 1 complaints	Stage 2 complaints	Comments	Compliments
2014-15	100	25	150	90
2013-14	134	16	172	34
2012-13	106	18	83	50
2011-12	82	25	45	37
2010-11	72	12	11	21

Service improvements

Complaints are generally resolved on an individual basis. Most formal investigation reports make recommendations for improvements to processes. These are followed up to ensure the recommendations are addressed.

Here are some examples where recommendations have been made for changes to practices / processes / procedures, as a result of people making complaints.

Communications Issues

- Apologies given where appropriate

Appeals Panels

- Develop literature for parents to explain the process and timeline for transition planning. Parents of children with Special Educational Needs should be consulted about the literature.
- Applications for concessionary travel arrangements for children and young people with learning disabilities to be amended.
- Application forms for school transport to be viewed earlier in order to give replies to parents in a more timely manner.
- That the appeals panel has some understanding of the limitations of the young person under scrutiny when making decisions.
- The standard letter which accompanies proposed statements is amended to clarify who within the Special Needs department should be contacted if a parent disagrees with the Statement.

Highways:

- Undertake the planned resurfacing and improvements to the footways and drainage systems in St Johns Street and Glendower Street, Monmouth as early as possible in the 2015/16 resurfacing programme
- Address weaknesses highlighted in the Highway's Mayrise customer enquiry system
- Ensure that an official notice under the Highways Act 1980 is served on the owner of the land for any future works which require entry onto the land. This requirement should be entered into the Authority's Bridge Record.

Undertake repair of fence and reinstate hedge between the edge of the parapet wall and the stile. Remove the damaged material present in the stream.

- Wye Bridge - Underwater Inspections: The procurement of the underwater survey contract should be more formally programmed to ensure that the works are undertaken at the most appropriate time of year when river levels should be lower.

Contractors tasked with undertaking a formal inspection of a structure are to be instructed that any matters identified as presenting an immediate safety risk to the public are to be immediately referred to the Infrastructure and Projects Team for action.

The Infrastructure and Projects team to produce a schedule of defects recommended for attention within an inspection report (this can be a requirement of the contract). The purpose of the schedule is to provide a vehicle for the Infrastructure and Projects Team to be able to record that the recommendation has been considered and what action is to be taken in relation to that recommendation.

Officers receiving reports of defects to Authority assets are to advise the team responsible for the asset as soon as practically possible.

Appropriate officer to meet with Natural Resources Wales in order to agree a maintenance protocol. This will remove any ambiguity in respect of this task and allow action to be taken promptly.

- Licensing Section and Highways collaborate to set up a structured consultation process, including establishing one point of contact for Highways to avoid consultations being sent to different sections of the Highway Authority, and to ensure that Highways responses on licensing applications can be co-ordinated, recorded and more consistent.
- A database be considered within the relevant Highways Section to record the consultation and responses to improve the process. This can help to pick up

all relevant areas for response, such as traffic orders, vehicle weight, dropped kerb and more general public safety issues.

- The Highways Development Team review how the Section 220 process could be improved and how bonds/security could be secured when developers / owners do not meet their legal obligations.
- The Highways Development Team consider producing a Guidance Note for purchasers of properties covering the Section 220 process and Section 38 procedure, as it seems that purchasers may not be getting proper advice from their Solicitors / Legal Advisers when purchasing properties.

Development Control

- The Development Control team document all records of meetings including notes, on the Planning Portal and ensure that these are made available within a timely manner and no later than 7 days of receiving the documentation.
- That the Planning Committee Speaking protocol is amended to explicitly make reference to the treatment of anonymous objections.
- Where distances are provided by applicants some evidence of how this has been determined should be provided and if it is not then simple desktop checks should be undertaken by the case officer, particularly where distance and proximity form part of the Local Planning Authority (LPA's) deliberations.
- Records of all meetings and advice given be kept. This should now be evidenced by the pre planning advice service.
- A check on previous planning applications relating to a site should be made before progressing any new application.
- The Local Planning Authority should consider using their enforcement powers (breach of condition notice) in a more timely manner, as to ensure non-compliance issues are dealt with swiftly and not allowed to be drawn out. The LPA give more detailed consideration to the timescales specified in conjunction with the use of conditions particularly where there is likely to be several consultees involved and if there is a likely case for a statutory nuisance complaint and neighbourly dispute

- The LPA should make every effort to allocate a single point of contact for communications and correspondence with the customer and that this is made clear from the beginning. Any changes to the contact should be swiftly made and communicated to all parties involved for clarity purposes

Safety

- The layout of stalls in the outer part of Abergavenny market is reviewed by the market managers.

Recycling & Waste

- Apologies given for delays in non-collections and inconvenience caused

Commentary

The number of complaints and comments dealt with under the whole authority complaints procedure have gone down this year; complaints decreased by 20% and 13% for comments. However, a quarter of complainants were either not satisfied with the response at stage 1 or felt that they wanted a formal investigation undertaken without trying to find an informal resolution to their problems. Complainants appear to be becoming more intolerant, demanding and sometimes belligerent.

On a positive note, compliments shot up as a result of people complimenting the beautiful wild flowers on the verges / roundabouts throughout the County.

We still receive a fair number of enquiries about issues across the Authority and hopefully earlier intervention and staff engaging directly with customers solves problems straight away, reducing the level of complaints received.

Enquires are contacts made by potential complainants asking about the service provided. Where appropriate we try to resolve the problem at an enquiry stage without taking the matter forward as a formal complaint.

However, more complaints have progressed to the formal investigation stage this year. They concerned overgrown hedges, damage to land, process regarding planning decisions / breaches of planning control notice / inconsistent planning decisions, street trading, transport – non bus service, concessionary travel arrangements, adoption of road, transition process for young people, charges for council tax, staff attitude, maintenance of Wye Bridge.

Annette Evans, Customer Relations Manager

July 2015

Freedom of Information and Environmental Information Regulations

Activity Report 1st April 2014 to 31st March 2015

	2014-15	(2013-14)	
Requests received:	1002	(918)	Increase over 2013-14 = 9%
Requests closed:	1023	(906)	
Requests closed on time:	95%	(93%)	

Requests under FoI and EIR are not segregated, and figures include both.

Main focus of request	Received	% Closed in 20 Working Days
Chief Executive	688	96%
Enterprise	145	95%
Social Care & Health	103	94%
Children & Young People	66	98%
Total MCC	1002	95%

Note: Division by Department is not precise due to the cross-functional nature of many requests.

Most common sources (stated or interpreted)

Commercial	41%
Press - National	19%
Local Resident	13%
Pressure Group	7%
Political researchers	6%
Press - Local	3%
All others	11%

Most common subjects (broad categorisation)

Social Care	122
CT/NNDR	119
Processes	72
HR & Staffing	69
Highways	65
Planning	57
Procurement/Contracts	54
Educational matters	52
IT & Software	51
Intestate deaths & PH funerals	48
Public Health	39
Financial information	33
Housing	27
Trading Standards/Animal Health	27
Asset Management	21
Structures/Contacts	17
Licensing	14
Parking	14
Waste & Recycling	11
Members & Electoral matters	10
Compensation	10

Target for percentage closed in 20 Working Days

A target of 90% has been retained.

Trends over time

The number of requests received has grown every year since Fol came into force on 1st January 2005, and the trend continues. This is common to the public sector in general and is not Monmouthshire-specific. We completed our 5,000th request in the course of 2014-15.

The number of requests received by Monmouthshire in each financial year is as follows:

2004-05 (3 months only)	31	
2005-06	135	
2006-07	118	(believed that some records are missing)
2007-08	172	
2008-09	305	
2009-10	421	
2010-11	609	
2011-12	662	
2012-13	780	
2013-14	918	
2014-15	1002	

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Monmouthshire's Scrutiny Forward Work Programme 2015

Strong Communities Select Committee				
Meeting Date	Subject	Purpose of Scrutiny	Responsibility	Type of Scrutiny
10 th Sep 2015	Public Toilets	Progress report on transfer of assets, including sale of Raglan toilets.	Roger Hoggins	Performance Monitoring
	Adoption of Highways in new Developments	To consult on an options report.	Paul Keeble Roger Hoggins	Policy Development
	Annual Complaints Report	Discussion on the annual complaints report in respect of regeneration and culture directorate.	Annette Evans	Statutory Reporting
Special Meeting 14 th September 2015 at 2pm	Local Flood Risk Management Strategy	Strategic Environmental Assessment and Habitats Risk Assessment to return to the committee.	Dave Harris Tim England (NRW)	Performance Monitoring
	Public Protection Performance	6-monthly performance report with a specific focus on Licensing and Trading Standards services.	Dave Jones	Performance Monitoring
	Passenger Transport Unit	Scrutiny of the finances of the service.	Richard Cope	Budget Monitoring
Special Meeting 12 th October 2015 at 10am	Crime and Disorder Training	A brief outline of the committees responsibilities around crime and disorder.	Hazel Ilett	Training
	Crime and Disorder	Safer Monmouthshire plan	Sharran Lloyd	Policy Development / Performance Monitoring
	Whole Place	Feedback on the "Lessons learnt exercise" with communities (required by WAO). Report to follow the Outcome of the Community Governance Review and the Corporate Assessment Report (Whole Place being one of the tracer objectives).	Deb Hill Howells	Performance Monitoring

Monmouthshire's Scrutiny Forward Work Programme 2015

Strong Communities Select Committee				
Meeting Date	Subject	Purpose of Scrutiny	Responsibility	Type of Scrutiny
Special Meeting 22 nd October 2015 at 10am	Budget Scrutiny	Scrutiny of the merging budget proposals outlined in the budget mandates.	Joy Robson	Budget Scrutiny
5 th Nov 2015	Grant Funded Partnerships	Discussion on progress of partnerships such as GAVO in line with Service Level Agreements.	Nicola Bowen	Performance Monitoring
	Month 6 Budget Monitoring	To review the financial situation for the directorate, identifying trends, risks and issues on the horizon with overspends/underspends).	Mark Howcroft	Budget Monitoring
10 th Dec 2015	Waste Strategy	Consideration of the future direction for waste	Carl Touhig	Policy Development
	Anaerobic Digestion	Pre-decision scrutiny of Business Case.	Carl Touhig	Pre-decision Scrutiny
28 th Jan 2016	TBC			
10 th March 2016	Month 9 Budget Monitoring			
28 th April 2016	TBC			

Council and Cabinet Business – Forward Plan

Monmouthshire County Council is required to publish a Forward Plan of all key decisions to be taken in the following four months in advance and to update quarterly. The Council has decided to extend the plan to twelve months in advance, and to update it on a monthly basis.

Council and Cabinet agendas will only consider decisions that have been placed on the planner by the beginning of the preceding month, unless the item can be demonstrated to be urgent business

Subject	Purpose	Consultees	Author
26th AUGUST 2015 – INDIVIDUAL CABINET MEMBER DECISIONS			
Prohibition of sky lantern and mass balloon release on council owned land			Laurence Dawkins
Allocations policy			Ian Bakewell
20 mph and 30 mph limit-various roads, Penpelleni Goytre			Paul Keeble
2nd SEPTEMBER 2015 – CABINET			
Review of allocation policy		Cabinet Members Leadership Team Appropriate Officers	Ian Bakewell
Options appraisal future service delivery			Kellie Beirne
Partnership Agreement with DWP (universal credit)			Ian Bakewell
Caldicot Town Team			Colin Phillips

Subject	Purpose	Consultees	Author
Funding			
9th SEPTEMBER 2015 – INDIVIDUAL CABINET MEMBER DECISIONS			
Expansion of Ysgol Gymraeg Y Fenni to include a nursery class			Susan Hall
Property Services Admin resource restructure			Mark Jones
23rd SEPTEMBER 2015 – INDIVIDUAL CABINET MEMBER DECISIONS			
Remodelling of Mental Health			Julie Boothroyd
Agree to the tenancy renewal of Welsh Church Trust Land at Llanmartin			Gareth King
The sale of land adjacent to 4 Merthyr Road for use as car parking for the adjoining residential properties			Gareth King
Access land to The Hill, Abergavenny			Cerys Halford
Policy and communications team structure			Will McLean
Permanent change to staff structure in planning			Mark Hand
Authorise spend on bat survey			Mark Hand
Release of restrictive covenant at Long Barn			Nicholas Keyse
24th SEPTEMBER 2015 – COUNCIL			
MCC Audited Accounts 2015/16 (formal approval)	To present the audited Statement of Accounts for 2014/15 for approval by Council		Joy Robson
ISA 260 report – MCC Accounts	To provide external audits report on the Statement of Accounts 2015/16		WAO
Community Governance Review			Kellie Beirne
Corporate Parenting			Gill Cox

Subject	Purpose	Consultees	Author
7th OCTOBER 2015 – CABINET			
Business Case for Funding for Team Abergavenny	To agree to release S106 funding against Team Abergavenny Business Plan		Deb Hill Howells
Capital Budget Proposals	To outline the proposed capital budget for 2016/17 and indicative capital budgets for the 3 years 2017/18 to 2019/20		Joy Robson
Education Strategic Review			Cath Sheen
NEETs Strategy			Tracey Thomas
Deri View			Steph Hawkins
Mardy Park			Colin Richings
Future of Llanfair Kilgeddin School			Cath Sheen
Capability policy for school based employees			Sally Thomas
ALN facility	Consultation to establish a 55 place ALN facility at Monmouth Comprehensive School whilst amending the capacity of the mainstream school to 1600.		Debbie Morgan
19th OCTOBER 2015 – INDIVIDUAL CABINET MEMBER DECISIONS			
Local Development Plan – Annual monitoring report.	To seek approval to submit the first AMR on the LDP to the Welsh Government.	SLT & Planning	Jane Coppock.
28th OCTOBER 2015 – INDIVIDUAL CABINET MEMBER DECISIONS			
4TH NOVEMBER 2015 – CABINET			
Budget Monitoring Report – Month 6	The purpose of this report is to provide Members with information on the forecast outturn position of the Authority at end of month reporting for 2015/16 financial year.		Joy Robson/ Mark Howcroft
Welsh Church Fund Working Group	The purpose of this report is to make recommendations to Cabinet on the Schedule of Applications 2015/16, meeting 3 held on 24 th September 2015		Dave Jarrett

Subject	Purpose	Consultees	Author
Effectiveness of Council Services: quarterly update			Matt Gatehouse
Safeguarding			Jane Rodgers
Wye Valley Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty Management plan 2015-20	To seek approval of the review of the Wye Valley AONB Management plan	SLT Cabinet	Matthew Lewis
11th NOVEMBER 2015 – INDIVIDUAL CABINET MEMBER DECISIONS			
Expansion of Ysgol Gymraeg Y Fenni to include a nursery class			Susan Hall
25th NOVEMBER 2015 – INDIVIDUAL CABINET MEMBER DECISIONS			
29th NOVEMBER 2015 – COUNCIL			
Gambling Policy			Linda O’Gorman
Casinos report			Linda O’Gorman
Safeguarding			Jane Rodgers
2nd DECEMBER 2015 – CABINET			
Council Tax Base 2016/17 and associated matters	To agree the Council Tax Base figure for submission to the Welsh Government, together with the collection rate to be applied for 2016/17 and to make other necessary related statutory decisions.		Sue Deacy/ Ruth Donovan
Reviews of Fees and Charges	To review all fees and charges made for services across the Council and identify proposals for increasing them in 2016/17		Joy Robson
Community Infrastructure Levy			Mark Hand
Revenue & Capital Budget final proposals after public consultation	To present revenue and capital budget proposals following receipt of final settlement		Joy Robson
Quarter 2 Education			Sharon Randall

Subject	Purpose	Consultees	Author
Framework			Smith
Deri View			Steph Hawkins
Affordable Housing SPG			Mark Hand
ALN Deri View			Steph Hawkins
Play Opportunities review	To consider future delivery models for play and inform members of progress in the review of the play sufficiency assessment		Matthew Lewis
23RD DECEMBER 2015 – INDIVIDUAL CABINET MEMBER DECISIONS			
Local Government (Wales) Act 1994 The Local Authorities (Precepts)(Wales) Regulations 1995	To seek approval of the proposals for consultation purposes regarding payments to precepting Authorities during 2016/17 financial year as required by statute.		Joy Robson
DECEMBER 2015 – COUNCIL			
Community infrastructure levy			Mark Hand
Affordable Housing SPG			Mark Hand
6TH JANUARY 2016 – CABINET			
Welsh Church Fund Working Group	The purpose of this report is to make recommendations to Cabinet on the Schedule of Applications 2015/16, meeting 4 held on 19 th November 2015.		Dave Jarrett
21ST JANUARY 2016 – COUNCIL			
Final Budget Proposals			Joy Robson
27TH JANUARY 2016 – INDIVIDUAL CABINET MEMBER DECISIONS			
Local Government (Wales) Act 1994 The Local Authorities (Precepts)(Wales) Regulations 1995	To seek Members approval of the results of the consultation process regarding payments to precepting Authorities for 2016/17 as required by statute		Joy Robson

Subject	Purpose	Consultees	Author
3RD FEBRUARY 2016 - CABINET			
Budget Monitoring report – month 9	The purpose of this report is to provide Members with information on the forecast outturn position of the Authority at end of month reporting for 2015/16 financial year.		Joy Robson/Mark Howcroft
Welsh Church Funding Working Group	The purpose of this report is to make recommendations to Cabinet on the Schedule of Applications 2015/16, meeting 5 held on the 17 th December 2015.		Dave Jarrett
The Future Food Waste Treatment Strategy: Outline Business Case & Inter Authority Agreement	for the Council to consider the inclusion of MCC in the Heads of the Valleys Anaerobic Digestion Procurement. To agree the Outline Business Case and the Inter Authority Agreement which commits the Council to the procurement and partnership and a 15-20 year contract.	SLT Cabinet	Rachel Jowitt
Waste Strategy			Carl Touhig/ Roger Hoggins
25TH FEBRUARY 2016 – COUNCIL			
Final Composite Council Tax Resolution	To set budget and council tax for 2016/17		Joy Robson
Treasury Management Strategy 2016/17	To accept the annual treasury management strategy		Joy Robson
The Future Food Waste Treatment Strategy: Outline Business Case & Inter Authority Agreement	for the Council to consider the inclusion of MCC in the Heads of the Valleys Anaerobic Digestion Procurement. To agree the Outline Business Case and the Inter Authority Agreement which commits the Council to the procurement and partnership and a 15-20 year contract.	SLT Cabinet	Rachel Jowitt
Waste Strategy			Carl Touhig/Roger Hoggins
2ND MARCH 2016 – CABINET			

Subject	Purpose	Consultees	Author
Welsh Church Fund Working Group	The purpose of this report is to make recommendations to Cabinet on the Schedule of Applications 2015/16 meeting 6 held on the 21 st January 2016		Dave Jarrett
2015/16 Education & Welsh Church Trust Funds Investment & Fund Strategy	The purpose of this report is to present to Cabinet for approval the 2016/17 Investment and Fund strategy for Trust Funds for which the Authority acts as sole or custodian trustee for adoption and to approve the 2015/16 grant allocation to Local Authority beneficiaries of the Welsh Church Fund.		Dave Jarrett
13TH APRIL 2016 - CABINET			
<div style="display: inline-block; vertical-align: middle; transform: rotate(-90deg); transform-origin: left top;">Page 73</div> Welsh Church Fund Working Group	The purpose of this report is to make recommendations to Cabinet on the Schedule of Applications 2015/16, meeting 7 held on the 25 th February 2016		Dave Jarrett
4TH MAY 2016 - CABINET			
Welsh Church Fund Working Group	The purpose of this report is to make recommendations to Cabinet on the Schedule of Applications 2015/16, meeting 8 held on the 24 th March 2016		Dave Jarrett

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