

MONMOUTHSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

**Minutes of the meeting of County Council held
at County Hall, Usk - Remote Attendance on Thursday, 22nd July, 2021 at 2.00 pm**

PRESENT: County Councillor M.Feakins and S. Woodhouse (Chairman)
County Councillor A. Webb (Vice Chairman)

County Councillors: D. Batrouni, D. Blakebrough, L.Brown, A.Davies, L.Dymock, C. Edwards, R. Edwards, P.A. Fox, R.J.W. Greenland, M.Groucutt, L. Guppy, R. Harris, J. Higginson, G. Howard, S. Howarth, R.John, D. Jones, L.Jones, P. Jones, P. Jordan, M.Lane, P. Murphy, P.Pavia, M. Powell, J.Pratt, R.Roden, V. Smith, B. Strong, T.Thomas, J.Treharne, J.Watkins, A. Watts

OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE:

Matt Phillips	Chief Officer People and Governance and Monitoring Officer
Paul Matthews	Chief Executive
Peter Davies	Deputy Chief Executive and Chief Officer, Resources
John Pearson	Local Democracy Manager
Nicola Perry	Senior Democracy Officer
Frances O'Brien	Chief Officer, Enterprise
Julie Boothroyd	Chief Officer Social Care, Safeguarding and Health
Matthew Gatehouse	Head of Policy and Governance
Ian Saunders	Chief Operating Officer, MonLife
Marie Bartlett	Finance Lead for MonLife
Nick John	Business Manager
Richard Simpkins	Business and Commercial Manager - MonLife

APOLOGIES:

County Councillors P. Clarke, J.Becker, A. Easson, D. Evans, S. Jones, S.B. Jones, F. Taylor and K. Williams

1. Declarations of interest

County Councillor Maureen Powell declared a non-prejudicial interest in relation to item 6b as L.A. Governor at King Henry viii School.

County Councillor Tudor Thomas declared a non-prejudicial interest in relation to item 6b as L.A. Governor at Ysgol Gymraeg Y Fenni.

County Councillor Linda Guppy declared a non-prejudicial interest in relation to item 6b as a Flying Start Health Visitor.

County Councillor Martyn Groucutt declared a non-prejudicial interest in relation to item 6b as L.A. Governor at King Henry viii School.

2. Public Questions

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None.

3. Chairman's announcement and receipt of petitions

Council paid respect to the recent passing of Mrs Thelma Breeze, Chairman's Lady from 2006 – 2007.

County Councillor Groucutt presented on behalf of local residents, a petition regarding the continuation of the maintained nursery provision when the all-through school is in place.

4. Reports for Council:

4.1. LEISURE CENTRE UPGRADES TO FACILITIES

The Cabinet Member for Community Wellbeing and Social Justice presented the report for Council to agree to the proposed investments at Abergavenny and Chepstow Leisure Centres to ensure that they remain fit for purpose for future generations and attractive to existing customers. The report also sought to update Members on the latest Caldicot Leisure Centre position.

Officers were asked to do their best to ensure disruption is kept to minimum.

The Cabinet Member confirmed that the Caldicot bid is in the region of £20m which would see £8.4m go towards Caldicot Leisure Centre. It was hoped that there would be future investments in Chepstow, but it was recognised that there had been previous investments.

Members welcomed the report and resolved to accept the recommendations:

Council to release the sum of £2.2m from capital receipts to fund the following investments to improve customer experience:

- **Chepstow Leisure Centre – £0.5m to upgrade fitness equipment and minor centre refurbishments**
- **Abergavenny Leisure Centre – £1.7m to re-design the first floor to provide a new enhanced gym area and dedicated spin studio and exercise studio. 2.2**

To pause any significant developments at Caldicot Leisure Centre pending the results of the Levelling up Grant Bid but to invest in some necessary upgrades to portable equipment and fitness class resources.

5. Notices of Motion:

5.1. Submitted by County Councillor Kevin Williams

Withdrawn. Moved to 23rd September 2021.

5.2. Submitted by County Councillor Martyn Groucutt

This council has supported the building of a new all-through school provision in Abergavenny, supported by 21st Century Schools funding made available by Public Document Pack the Welsh Government. It also supports the new Welsh national curriculum, covering 3-16 years education and the Children and Young People Directorate's core values that children will:

- *Be ready for school*
- *Be in school*
- *Be well behaved*
- *Be well taught.*

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It endorses the view of the Labour Group that this provision throughout the school is best provided by the school's senior leadership team, teachers, care staff and other professionals employed directly by the school. It therefore rejects the view that the year of children's Nursery education on this new school site should be provided by private provision that will not be under the control of the school's leadership team. Further, this should have formed part of the public consultation, rather than this being based on the provision of Maintained education from 4-19 Years.

Seconded by County Councillor Tudor Thomas. In doing so he made a strong plea on behalf of residents for MCC to provide maintained care for 3–4-year-olds in the new provision.

The Cabinet Member highlighted that a nine week consultation process on the governance arrangements for the new school had recently concluded, which would have provided opportunity to express any concerns. Officers are examining the consultation responses, and these will be available for pre-decision scrutiny in September 2021.

County Councillor Linda Guppy declared a personal, non-prejudicial interest as she works as a Flying Start Health Visitor.

Upon being put to the vote the motion was defeated.

6. Members Questions:

6.1. From County Councillor Christopher Edwards to County Councillor Paul Pavia, Cabinet Member for Education

Could the Cabinet Member for Education inform council of progress with the 21st Century Schools programme, and what steps are being taken to ensure that Chepstow School will be placed in the next phase?

The Cabinet Member thanked County Councillor Edwards for his question and went on to explain that in October 2017 Cabinet committed to replacing Chepstow School as part of the Band B funding for the 21st Century Schools Programme and assured the Member that the new Cabinet is dedicated to that commitment.

While the initial focus is on the development of Abergavenny School important preparation work will be undertaken with Chepstow Comprehensive School to ensure we are ready to bid for Band C investment when the window opens.

From September the 21st Century Schools Team will be strengthened with the appointment of a full-time experienced educationalist, Tim Bird, a former Head at Monmouth Comprehensive School. Mr. Bird will work with Chepstow School and the cluster Primary Schools to develop the education brief for the Band C development project through stakeholder engagements and workshops. The Cabinet Member will ensure that local Members are engaged when this work begins.

County Councillor Edwards looked forward to a fuller discussion and as a supplementary asked what investment has been made in relation to Chepstow School over the last three years and where that money has been invested.

The Cabinet Member responded that the Council has spent more than £1m to enhance the current facilities at Chepstow School. This has included re-cladding and re-modelling works, improvements to lighting to make it more energy efficient, as well as spending over £200,000 on

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IT facilities and IT infrastructure. During the summer holiday re-surfacing works will be undertaken to the access roads and throughout the site, as well as decoration in classrooms and shared spaces. The school has already reported that they are seeing the benefits of the energy efficiency work that has been undertaken.

6.2. From County Councillor Christopher Edwards to County Councillor Jane Pratt, Cabinet Member for Infrastructure and Neighbourhood Services

Could the Cabinet Member for Infrastructure and Neighbourhood Services inform council what steps are being taken to ensure that road safety remains a priority for this council, particularly for school children and the vulnerable travelling along Welsh Street and St Lawrence Road in my ward of St Kingsmark, Chepstow?

The Cabinet Member for Infrastructure and Neighbourhood Services thanked County Councillor Edwards for his question and responded by assuring all Members that road safety is a top priority and made reference to a recent seminar which demonstrated ambitious plans to roll out 20mph zones within our towns and villages well in advance of Welsh Government proposed statutory change expected in April 2023. WG funding has been secured for two of Wales' eight 20mph pilots covering Abergavenny and Severnside. Settlement-wide 20mph zones are to be implemented in Devauden, Mathern, Monmouth and Shirenewton, as well as Mounton Road and the Town Centre in Chepstow. Further schemes are already scheduled for 2022-23 for Chepstow, Dingestow, Gilwern, Mitchel Troy, Usk and the Wye Valley villages. The Council provides a comprehensive programme of road safety training in schools to ensure our young people are able to walk, cycle or scoot to school safely.

Officers are submitting a funding bid to extend cycle training to adults and secondary schools. We are seeking to work with our schools to develop school travel plans.

With regards to Welsh Street and St. Lawrence Road officers propose to submit a bid for Safe Routes in Communities Funding in the new financial year, to consider improvements to the speed humps on Welsh Street, pavement widths and the request for a pedestrian crossing on St. Lawrence Road for delivery in 2022-23. In addition, a town-wide 20mph is proposed for Chepstow in 2022-23 which is likely to include the part of the A466 within the town boundary and where there are property frontages.

The Cabinet Member highlighted that proposals to address the resource challenges within the Highways Service have been approved, with staff consultation followed by a recruitment campaign commencing immediately.

As a supplementary County Councillor Edwards invited the Cabinet member to join him on a ward walk as a continuation of the review, which was gladly accepted.

7. To confirm the minutes of the meeting held on 24th June 2021

The minutes of the meeting held on 24th June 2021 were confirmed as an accurate record.

In doing so it was noted that County Councillor Chris Edwards had been in attendance.

The meeting ended at 3.40 pm