

MONMOUTHSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

Minutes of the meeting of County Council held at Council Chamber - Council Chamber on Thursday, 26th October, 2023 at 2.00 pm

PRESENT: County Councillor Meirion Howells (Chairman)
County Councillor Su McConnel (Vice Chairman)

County Councillors: Rachel Buckler, Laura Wright, Tony Kear, Catrin Maby, Jan Butler, Ian Chandler, Sara Burch, Alistair Neill, Mary Ann Brocklesby, Fay Bromfield, Jane Lucas, Emma Bryn, Peter Strong, Paul Griffiths, Jackie Strong, Rachel Garrick, Maria Stevens, Steven Garratt, Angela Sandles, Ben Callard, John Crook, Tomos Davies, Dale Rooke, Catherine Fookes, Sue Riley, Jayne McKenna, Jill Bond, Louise Brown, Lisa Dymock, Tony Easson, Christopher Edwards, Martyn Groucutt, Simon Howarth, Richard John, David Jones, Penny Jones, Malcolm Lane, Phil Murphy, Paul Pavia, Maureen Powell, Frances Taylor, Tudor Thomas, Armand Watts and Ann Webb

OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE:

Paul Matthews	Chief Executive
Peter Davies	Deputy Chief Executive and Chief Officer, Resources
Jane Rodgers	Chief Officer for Social Care, Safeguarding and Health
Will McLean	Chief Officer for Children and Young People
Amy Gullick	Local Democracy Officer
Frances O'Brien	Chief Officer, Communities and Place
Matthew Gatehouse	Chief Officer People, Performance and Partnerships.
Mark Hand	Head of Place-making, Housing, Highways and Flood
Ian Saunders	Chief Officer Customer, Culture and Wellbeing.
Joanne Chase	Deputy Monitoring Officer and Solicitor
Craig O'Connor	Head of Planning

ALSO IN ATTENDANCE:

Phil Diamond	Head of Regional Partnership Team - Torfaen County Borough Council
Natasha Harris	Service Manager, Partnerships and Development - Torfaen County Borough Council

1. Presentation - Monmouth Comprehensive Year 7 Students Presentation on Deforestation

The Chair welcomed and introduced pupils from Monmouth Comprehensive School who had been invited to the meeting by the Leader, to provide Members with their presentation on Deforestation.

<https://www.youtube.com/live/WXW4tpnPFZ0?feature=shared&t=88>

Following the presentation, a minute's silence was observed to remember the innocent victims of the conflict in Israel and Palestine.

2. Apologies for Absence

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None.

3. Declarations of Interest

County Councillor Tony Kear declared a personal non-prejudicial interest as the Chair of Usk Civic Society in relation to agenda item 8 (RLDP).

4. Chair's Announcement

The Chair's announcement was noted.

The Chair explained that the order of the agenda would be amended so that agenda item 12, Call-In of Gypsy, Roma and Traveller Pitch Needs – Land Identification, would be heard prior to the Motions to Council.

5. To confirm the minutes of the meeting held on 21st September 2023

The minutes of the previous meeting held on the 21st September 2023 were confirmed as an accurate record.

In doing so, it was agreed that all Members would receive a response to questions submitted to Full Council in writing.

6. GWENT REGIONAL PARTNERSHIP BOARD (RPB) AREA PLAN AND RPB ANNUAL REPORT 22/23

The Cabinet Member for Social Care, Safeguarding and Accessible Health Services introduced the Head of Gwent Regional Partnership Team, who presented a report on the Gwent Regional Partnership Board (RPB) Area Plan and RPB Annual Report for 2022/2023.

Members received an update on the work of the RPB in fulfilling local authority statutory duties required under the Social Services and Wellbeing (Wales) Act 2014 and were presented with the Regional Area Plan 2023-2027 and the RPB Annual Report 2022/23.

<https://www.youtube.com/live/WXW4tpnPFZ0?feature=shared&t=3014>

Upon being put to a vote Council resolved to accept the recommendations:

- Council to consider the joint commitments within the Area Plan.
- Ensure that Members have the opportunity to review the RPB Annual Report and progress made against the objectives; and provide any feedback/comments.
- To note the joint priorities in the Area Plan and Monmouthshire's Integrated Service Partnership Board plan

7. SELF-ASSESSMENT 2022-23

The Leader presented the Self-Assessment report 2022/23 which provides an assessment of the Authority's performance during the year ending 31 March 2023, in line with requirements outlined in the Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021. The self-assessment report

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ensures that Members have a clear and transparent assessment on how well the Authority is doing, which is a vital part of the Authority's performance management arrangements.

<https://www.youtube.com/live/WXW4tpnPFZ0?feature=shared&t=3574>

Upon being put to a vote Council resolved to accept the recommendations:

- That the self-assessment for 2022/23 be approved.

County Councillor Alistair Neill joined the meeting at 15:15pm.

8. REPLACEMENT LOCAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN (RLDP) PREFERRED STRATEGY

The Vice Chair read out the following question from Mr David Cummings, which had been received under public questions, in relation to the agenda item. The Chair explained that the Cabinet Member for Planning and Economic Development would respond within his presentation to Council.

In reviewing the RLDP documents presented today and heard at recent scrutiny committee meetings many questions remain as to the achievability and the detail of the contents of the report.

For example, the document states that 6,240 jobs are planned to be created but provide no indication of how these will be created and where within the county they will be.

The report fails to address the lack of infrastructure, particularly in Monmouth's case where there is no spare capacity at schools, GP surgeries or to treat sewage and poor public transport to other settlements.

Additionally, 50% of the proposed development within the plan be social housing. There are 3,953 open applications for housing in the county. If you create social housing where there is no infrastructure and no public transport, you will create a pool of people disillusioned with life who wish they lived somewhere else.

So with these headline statements in mind, is the September 2023 version of the Revised Local Development Plan fit for purpose?

The Cabinet Member for Planning and Economic Development presented the Replacement Local Development Plan (RLDP) Preferred Strategy. Post-consultation updates to the Preferred Strategy were summarised in paragraph 3.9 in the report, as the basis for the ongoing preparation of the Deposit Plan.

<https://www.youtube.com/live/WXW4tpnPFZ0?feature=shared&t=7730>

Upon being put to a recorded vote, Council resolved to accept the recommendations:

- That Council endorses the updates to the Replacement Local Development Plan Preferred Strategy summarised in paragraph 3.9 as the basis for the ongoing preparation of the Deposit Plan

Votes For: 23

Votes Against: 22

Abstentions: 1

Recorded Vote: Replacement Local Development Plan (RLDP) Preferred Strategy

NAME	For	Against	Abstain
Councillor J BOND	X		

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Councillor M A BROCKLESBY	X		
Councillor F BROMFIELD		X	
Councillor L BROWN		X	
Councillor E BRYN		X	
Councillor R BUCKLER		X	
Councillor S BURCH	X		
Councillor J BUTLER		X	
Councillor B CALLARD	X		
Councillor I CHANDLER	X		
Councillor J CROOK	X		
Councillor T DAVIES		X	
Councillor L DYMOCK		X	
Councillor A EASSON	X		
Councillor C EDWARDS		X	
Councillor C FOOKES	X		
Councillor S GARRATT	X		
Councillor R GARRICK	X		
Councillor P GRIFFITHS	X		
Councillor M GROUCUTT	X		
Councillor S.G.M. HOWARTH		X	
Councillor M HOWELLS			X
Councillor R JOHN		X	
Councillor D. W. H. JONES		X	
Councillor P. JONES		X	
Councillor T KEAR		X	
Councillor M LANE		X	
Councillor J LUCAS		X	
Councillor C MABY	X		
Councillor S MCCONNEL	X		
Councillor J MCKENNA		X	
Councillor P MURPHY		X	
Councillor A NEILL		X	
Councillor P PAVIA		X	
Councillor M POWELL		X	
Councillor S RILEY	X		
Councillor D ROOKE	X		
Councillor A SANDLES	X		
Councillor M STEVENS	X		
Councillor J STRONG	X		
Councillor P STRONG	X		
Councillor F TAYLOR		X	
Councillor T THOMAS	X		
Councillor A WATTS	X		
Councillor A WEBB		X	
Councillor L WRIGHT	X		
TOTAL	23	22	1

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County Councillor Emma Bryn left the meeting at 18:30pm
County Councillor Angela Sandles left the meeting at 18:30pm

9. IN CASE OF NEED ARISING - CALL-IN OF GYPSY, ROMA AND TRAVELLER PITCH NEEDS - LAND IDENTIFICATION

The Chair of the Place Scrutiny Committee presented a report of the Committee on the Call-In of Meeting Gypsy, Roma and Traveller Pitch Needs – Land Identification.

Full Council were provided with the opportunity to consider the decision taken by Cabinet on the 4th October 2023, concerning meeting Gypsy, Roma and Traveller Pitch Needs – Land Identification. This follows the call-in of the decision and the subsequent recommendation of the Place Scrutiny Committee to refer the matter to full Council.

The Vice Chair read out the following questions from Mrs Aileen Wallen and Mrs Sandy Lloyd received under public questions, in relation to the agenda item.

It is understood that the place scrutiny committee meeting of 23rd October 2023 referred the decision call-in to council on the basis that the financial implications of including sites which have so many constraints is unknown.

The below questions refer to the information imparted by the cabinet member (Cllr Griffiths) and estates officer at the place scrutiny meeting and clarifications are sought.

Question 1

The Cabinet Member stated that high level assessments will be conducted on the Langley Close site with regards to noise, air pollution and land contamination during the public consultation period:

- For the Langley Close site, will the Cabinet Member please define what is meant by high level assessments, i.e. what specific tests will be undertaken and will these be newly commissioned studies involving physical receptors to collect current air and noise pollution levels and boreholes for land contamination or will existing historic and irrelevant reports that are based on out of date data be used. E.g. From the Rockfield Farm and Vinegar Hill developments which are from a different location with different geographic attributes and issues?*

Question 2

The estates officer stated that quotes had been secured for air, noise and land surveys which equates to around £14k per site for these high level assessments but that that cost is not consistent across all sites and depends on the findings. Some sites will require further surveys so this is not the final cost. The residents at the scrutiny committee meeting provided evidence that on the Langley Close site, noise and air pollution exceed safe levels and there is potential land contamination and so those further surveys will have to be conducted.

- For the Langley Close site, will the Cabinet Member please state the breakdown of costs for each initial assessment and costs for the further more detailed assessments?*

The Chair asked that the Cabinet Member for Planning and Economic Development address the questions in his response.

<https://www.youtube.com/live/WXW4tpnPFZ0?feature=shared&t=16564>

Upon being put to a recorded vote, Council resolved to accept the Cabinet decision:

Votes to accept the Cabinet decision: 22

Votes to refer the decision to Cabinet for reconsideration (with reasons): 21

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**Recorded Vote: Report of the Place Scrutiny Committee: Call-in of meeting
Gypsy, Roma and Traveller pitch needs – land identification**

NAME	ACCEPT	REFER	Abstain
Councillor J BOND	X		
Councillor M A BROCKLESBY	X		
Councillor F BROMFIELD		X	
Councillor L BROWN		X	
Councillor E BRYN	-	-	-
Councillor R BUCKLER		X	
Councillor S BURCH	X		
Councillor J BUTLER		X	
Councillor B CALLARD	X		
Councillor I CHANDLER	X		
Councillor J CROOK		X	
Councillor T DAVIES	-	-	-
Councillor L DYMOCK		X	
Councillor A EASSON	X		
Councillor C EDWARDS		X	
Councillor C FOOKES	X		
Councillor S GARRATT	X		
Councillor R GARRICK	X		
Councillor P GRIFFITHS	X		
Councillor M GROUCUTT	X		
Councillor S.G.M. HOWARTH		X	
Councillor M HOWELLS	X		
Councillor R JOHN		X	
Councillor D. W. H. JONES		X	
Councillor P. JONES		X	
Councillor T KEAR		X	
Councillor M LANE		X	
Councillor J LUCAS		X	
Councillor C MABY	X		
Councillor S MCCONNEL	X		
Councillor J MCKENNA		X	
Councillor P MURPHY		X	
Councillor A NEILL		X	
Councillor P PAVIA		X	
Councillor M POWELL		X	
Councillor S RILEY	X		
Councillor D ROOKE	X		
Councillor A SANDLES	-	-	-
Councillor M STEVENS	X		
Councillor J STRONG	X		
Councillor P STRONG	X		
Councillor F TAYLOR		X	
Councillor T THOMAS	X		

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Councillor A WATTS	X		
Councillor A WEBB		X	
Councillor L WRIGHT	X		
TOTAL	22	21	0

County Councillor Tomos Davies left the meeting at 19:15pm

10. Motions to Council

11. Submitted by County Councillor Richard John

This Council:

Opposes plans set out by Aneurin Bevan University Health Board to end overnight cover at the Minor Injuries Unit at Nevill Hall Hospital in Abergavenny and calls on the administration to work constructively with ABUHB and neighbouring local authorities to ensure that outcome.

<https://www.youtube.com/live/WXW4tpnPFZ0?feature=shared&t=19746>

Upon being put to a vote Council resolved to accept the motion

County Councillor Angela Sandles rejoined the meeting at 19:30pm

County Councillor Sue Riley left the meeting at 19:35pm

County Councillor Tony Easson left the meeting at 19:35pm

12. Submitted by County Councillor Catherine Fookes

Council notes with concern

- The increased use of vaping products by children in the UK with the associated risk of addiction to nicotine based products and the increased burden on local authorities taking enforcement action against the illegal sale of vaping products to children, as well as the environmental impact of single-use vapes which end up littering our public spaces.*

Council calls on the Leader to write to the UK government to express Council's demand for the greater regulation of vaping products including:

- Vaping products to be in plain packaging and kept out of sight behind the counter*
- Mandatory age-of-sale signage on vaping products (as this is currently voluntary)*
- A ban on free samples of vaping products being given out to people of any age*
- A ban on single use vape*

<https://www.youtube.com/live/WXW4tpnPFZ0?feature=shared&t=22395>

Upon being put to a vote Council resolved to accept the motion

County Councillor Tudor Thomas left the meeting at 20:21pm

13. Submitted by County Councillor Rachel Buckler

This Council: Notes the approval of The Local Elections (Principal Areas) (Single Transferable Vote) (Wales) Rules 2023 by the Senedd, giving individual local authorities the power to change their electoral system to the Single Transferable Vote. Values the mandate of individually elected councillors who are directly accountable to their residents. Opposes any change to the Single Transferable Vote and instructs the administration not to waste any further time or resources on this issue.

<https://www.youtube.com/live/WXW4tpnPFZ0?feature=shared&t=23401>

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Upon being put to a recorded vote, Council resolved to reject the motion

Votes for the motion: 20

Votes against the motion: 21

Recorded Vote: Single Transferable Vote

NAME	For	Against	Abstain
Councillor J BOND		X	
Councillor M A BROCKLESBY		X	
Councillor F BROMFIELD	X		
Councillor L BROWN	X		
Councillor E BRYN	-	-	-
Councillor R BUCKLER	X		
Councillor S BURCH		X	
Councillor J BUTLER	X		
Councillor B CALLARD		X	
Councillor I CHANDLER		X	
Councillor J CROOK		X	
Councillor T DAVIES	-	-	-
Councillor L DYMOCK	X		
Councillor A EASSON	-	-	-
Councillor C EDWARDS	X		
Councillor C FOOKES		X	
Councillor S GARRATT		X	
Councillor R GARRICK		X	
Councillor P GRIFFITHS		X	
Councillor M GROUCUTT		X	
Councillor S.G.M. HOWARTH	X		
Councillor M HOWELLS		X	
Councillor R JOHN	X		
Councillor D. W. H. JONES	X		
Councillor P. JONES	X		
Councillor T KEAR	X		
Councillor M LANE	X		
Councillor J LUCAS	X		
Councillor C MABY		X	
Councillor S MCCONNEL		X	
Councillor J MCKENNA	X		
Councillor P MURPHY	X		
Councillor A NEILL	X		
Councillor P PAVIA	X		
Councillor M POWELL	X		
Councillor S RILEY	-	-	-
Councillor D ROOKE		X	
Councillor A SANDLES		X	

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Councillor M STEVENS		X	
Councillor J STRONG		X	
Councillor P STRONG		X	
Councillor F TAYLOR	X		
Councillor T THOMAS	-	-	-
Councillor A WATTS		X	
Councillor A WEBB	X		
Councillor L WRIGHT		X	
TOTAL	20	21	0

County Councillor Ian Chandler left the meeting at 20:57pm

14. Members Questions

15. From County Councillor Jan Butler to County Councillor Rachel Garrick, Cabinet Member for Resources

Would the Cabinet Member update me on the review of the Community Asset Transfer policy to Communities and whether the review includes consideration of how parity might be achieved in the existing leasehold agreements between Community Groups and MCC for Community Centres and other such properties wishing to continue with existing leasehold agreements. I ask in specific relation to Goytre Community Centre.

<https://www.youtube.com/live/WXW4tpnPFZ0?feature=shared&t=24594>

County Councillor Dale Rooke left the meeting at 20:59pm
County Councillor Maria Stevens left the meeting at 20:59pm

16. From County Councillor Penny Jones to County Councillor Catrin Maby, Cabinet Member for Climate Change and the Environment

Please would the Cabinet Member provide an update on the Welsh Government's proposal to carry out a Safety Survey on the A40 Raglan By-Pass?

<https://www.youtube.com/live/WXW4tpnPFZ0?feature=shared&t=24715>

County Councillor Peter Strong left the meeting at 21:00pm
County Councillor Jackie Strong left the meeting at 21:01pm

17. From County Councillor Jane Lucas to County Councillor Paul Griffiths, Cabinet Member for Planning and Economic Development

Would the Cabinet Member make a statement on parking provision in Monmouth.

<https://www.youtube.com/live/WXW4tpnPFZ0?feature=shared&t=24865>

18. From County Councillor Frances Taylor to County Councillor Catrin Maby, Cabinet Member for Climate Change and Environment

The cabinet member will recall that in July I laid a motion which received unanimous cross party/group support. Magor with Undy Walkway Station is a unique concept and (has always enjoyed) cross group support from Monmouthshire Council, Welsh Government and UK Government. My request to call on this council to write to TfW and Network Rail to further lobby for Magor with Undy Walkway station to be the first of the 6 new stations in respect of its

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deliverability and cost was unanimously agreed. Please could the cabinet member provide an update.

<https://www.youtube.com/live/WXW4tpnPFZ0?feature=shared&t=25125>

19. Emergency Question From County Councillor Paul Pavia to County Councillor Martyn Groucutt, Cabinet Member for Education

Will the Cabinet Member for Education provide an update on developments in Caldicot School?

<https://www.youtube.com/live/WXW4tpnPFZ0?feature=shared&t=25335>

20. Date of Next Meeting - 7th December 2023

The meeting ended at 9.15 pm