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MONMOUTHSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

Minutes of the meeting of Bryn y Cwm Area Committee held
at Llanfair Kilgeddin Village Hall, Abergavenny, Monmouthshire NP7 9BD on
Wednesday, 13th September, 2017 at 2.00 pm

PRESENT: County Councillors: M. Lane (Chair)

County Councillors: M. Groucutt, R. Harris, S. Jones, P. Jordan,
M. Powell, J. Pratt and T. Thomas

Abergavenny Town Council: Councillor P. Simcock
Llanover Community Council: Councillor G. Thomas

County Councillor M. Feakins – Observing.

OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE:

Debbie McCarty	Whole Place Manager
Rachel Rawlings	Whole Place Officer
Owen Wilce	Programme Lead - A County That Serves
Richard Williams	Democratic Services Officer

ALSO IN ATTENDANCE:

Mr. P. Johns	-	Team Abergavenny
Mr. H. Candler	-	Clerk to Llanover Community Council
Mr. A. Edwards	-	Clerk to Llanelly Community Council
Mrs. J. Barnes	-	CAIR
Ms. S. Griffiths		

APOLOGIES:

County Councillors G. Howard, D. Jones, K. Williams, S. Woodhouse

Claire Marchant - Chief Officer, Social Care and Health

Councillor M. Butler - Llanfoist Community Council

Councillor G. Nelmes – Llanelly Community Council

1. Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest made by Members.

2. Public Open Forum

The Chairman invited members of the public present to put questions to the Area Committee, or to raise issues of concern:

Access for all – Abergavenny Railway Station

A representative from Abergavenny Town Council informed the Committee that access between platforms at Abergavenny Railway Station is difficult for disabled people and

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people with mobility issues. This issue has been ongoing for a number of years. Currently, users of the station are required to access the platforms via a steep footbridge.

There is a public opinion campaign underway in which consideration is being given to writing to the Welsh Minister and to Network Rail / Arriva Trains requesting that appropriate measures be taken to address the access issues.

The Area Committee expressed its support for the campaign to provide access for all at the station. It was noted that the Welsh Assembly has a Petitions Committee and that campaigners could present a petition to this committee.

No. 45 bus service – Abergavenny

The Area Committee was informed that the no 45. Bus service to Abergavenny will be withdrawn by Stagecoach on 28th October 2017. Concern was expressed that this was a vital service for local people as car ownership along this route was low. It was noted that this route was not subsidised by the local authority so had no say in the future of this bus route. Local people will be disadvantaged when this service is removed.

Taxis – New legislation

Jenny Barnes, representing CAIR, informed the Area Committee that new legislation has been agreed pertaining to the transportation of disabled people in wheelchairs via taxis, in which the disabled person remains in their wheelchair for the duration of the journey. This service is being provided in Abergavenny which has been licenced by Monmouthshire County Council. However, the service is not currently running in Monmouth. CAIR is undertaking an investigation to ensure that this service is being run correctly.

Security Barrier – County Hall, Usk

Jenny Barnes, representing CAIR, expressed concern regarding the new security barrier at County Hall, Usk in that it was not user friendly for both able bodied and disabled people as drivers found it difficult to reach the box that operates the swipe card / token. The Committee also expressed concern regarding the lay out of the security barrier, in particular, its location being on the right hand side of the road. It was also noted that the disabled parking bays are not located close enough to the entrance to the building.

We resolved that the Cabinet Member with responsibility for the security barrier be made aware of the concerns raised and that consideration be given to undertaking a review of the barrier with a view to identifying any improvements that could be made.

3. Confirmation of Minutes

The minutes of the Bryn y Cwm Area Committee dated 12th July 2017 were confirmed and signed by the Chair.

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In doing so, reference was made to minute 8. Community Governance in Monmouthshire – Bryn y Cwm Pilot, in which the Area Committee had agreed to extend an invitation to include a single representative from each of the Town and Community Councils in the proposed pilot area and that each representative will have voting rights during the pilot.

However, it was noted that there was a need to establish whether the Area Committee was able to agree the voting rights for the town and community councils. Investigations were being made to establish whether this matter needed to be agreed by Full Council, or whether the working group for the governance review had established the governance arrangements. If the working group had proposed this, then it would have the authority to adopt the governance arrangements from the Council decision on the 20th March 2017, which approved the working group's proposals. If not, then the County Council's Constitution remains the overriding governance arrangement and any decision to allow town and community councils to vote at future Bryn y Cwm Area Committee meetings, during the pilot, would need to be agreed by Full Council.

4. Workshop to discuss the implementation of the Bryn y Cwm Pilot Scheme in relation to Community Governance

Full Council had approved the new Community Governance arrangements in March 2017 and subsequently, agreement for the pilot had been given by the Bryn y Cwm Area Committee in July 2017.

Therefore, a workshop had been arranged to discuss the implementation of the Bryn y Cwm Pilot. Responses to the following questions are identified below:

How can the Area Committee ensure that they provide a forum for local councillors to engage with residents about local issues?

The Area Committee said:

- Ensure flexibility of timings to accommodate all.
- Publish attendance figures to hold councillors to account.
- List action points / outcomes against councillors who have said they will take up the issue.
- Support attendance of public and let people know written statements can be read out.
- Report activities / discussions in the local press and minutes put on Town and Community Council websites.
- Make elected Members accountable.

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- Publish availability of open forums via social media / press etc.
- Help make representation to the clerk.

How can the area committee ensure that it enables Members to have influence over decisions that are specific to their local area?

The Area Committee said:

- Decisions to be reported back to Cabinet.
- Voting rights.
- Hold Councillors to account.
- Scrutiny to look at area committee issues.
- Open forum debate.
- Cabinet Members in attendance.

How can an area committee ensure that it develops and oversees the delivery of localised plans?

The Area Committee said:

- Reporting of plans to Monmouthshire County Council.
- Accountable and outward looking.
- Representation on bodies.
- Regular reporting back.

How can an area committee ensure that it harnesses and channels community energy to deliver improved outcomes for the local area and its community?

The Area Committee said:

- Must be proactive and reactive, issues dealt with and response given.
- Identify local champions (not elected members) who can support community plans and engage locally.
- Linking with issues raised via social media.

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- When there are clear outcomes, regular feedback and dialogue.
- Public Meetings – invite public to themed meetings.
- Enthuse elected representatives to take more interest.
- Ask what each person would be able and interested in doing.
- Keeping them in the communication loop.

How can area committees ensure that it brings together partner agencies to focus on locally specific issues?

The Area Committee said:

- Lobby agencies.
- Keep a mailing list.
- Who is out there?
- Making them accountable for their actions.
- Notice of local issues are relevant.

How can the area committee ensure that it engages with representatives of Town and Community Councils?

The Area Committee said:

- Discussions that are relevant to local issues.
- Regular feedback / Q&As.
- Representatives of County, Town and Community Councils at meetings.

How can the Area Committee ensure that it gives local communities a stronger and more direct voice in decision making in their local area?

The Area Committee said:

- Voting Rights.
- Hold meetings in all areas.

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- Encourage public to have a say.
- Committee members to have a brief.
- Road show at Community Hubs.
- Residents at Meetings.

5. Next Meeting

The next meeting will be held on Wednesday 15th November 2017 at 2.00pm.

The meeting ended at 4.00 pm.