

# Public Document Pack

## MONMOUTHSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

**Minutes of the meeting of County Council held  
at the Council Chamber, County Hall, Usk on Thursday, 9th November, 2017 at 2.00 pm**

**PRESENT:** County Councillor M. Powell (Chairman)  
County Councillor P. Clarke (Vice Chairman)

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

### **OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE:**

Paul Matthews	Chief Executive
Peter Davies	Chief Officer, Resources
Roger Hoggins	Head of Operations
Will McLean	Chief Officer for Children and Young People
Robert Tranter	Head of Legal Services & Monitoring Officer
Nicola Perry	Senior Democracy Officer

### **APOLOGIES:**

County Councillors P.A. Fox, S.B. Jones, L.Brown, A.Davies and M.Feakins

#### **2. Public open forum**

There were no matters for the public open forum.

#### **3. Chairman's announcement and receipt of petitions**

The Chairman expressed the condolences of Council for Welsh Labour Minister Carl Sargeant. Also we heard of the sad loss of Monmouthshire County Council colleague, Mr. Gary Price. A minute silence was held for both.

County Councillor R. Greenland presented a petition on behalf of residents of Devauden relating to the extension of a 30mph speed limit. We recognised the number of petitions Council receive regarding speeding issues, and agreed this must be addressed across the County.

#### **4. Declarations of interest**

County Councillor L. Guppy declared a personal, non-prejudicial interest in relation to Item 8.2, 8.3, 8.4 as an employee of ABUHB.

County Councillor M. Powell declared a personal, non-prejudicial interest in relation to Item 8.4 as a Governor of King Henry VIII School.

#### **5. To confirm the minutes of the meeting of County Council held on 21st September 2017**

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The minutes of the meeting of Council held on 21<sup>st</sup> September were approved and signed by the Chair,

In doing so Councillor Clarke noted that his time as a representative on Monmouthshire Housing Association had lapsed. It was agreed Councillor Batrouni would take this position temporarily.

### **6. To receive the minutes of Audit Committee**

#### **6.1. 6th July 2017**

The minutes of the meeting of Audit Committee held on 6<sup>th</sup> July 2017 were approved.

#### **6.2. 19th September 2017**

The minutes of the meeting of Audit Committee held on 19<sup>th</sup> September 2017 were approved.

### **7. To receive the minutes of Democratic Services Committee**

#### **7.1. 5th June 2017**

The minutes of the meeting of Democratic Services Committee held on 5<sup>th</sup> June 2017 were approved.

#### **7.2. 11th September 2017**

The minutes of the meeting of Democratic Services Committee held on 11<sup>th</sup> September 2017 were approved.

Councillor Howarth requested clarification regarding the issue of the new IT equipment to Members. Chief Executive to respond in writing.

### **8. Notices of Motion**

#### **8.1. Motion from County Councillor M. Groucutt**

*Monmouthshire County Council congratulates and supports the current efforts of local people in the Abergavenny area who are campaigning for full access to the platforms of Abergavenny railway station. It believes that it is a disgrace that in 2017 people with a physical disability, the elderly, parents with young children in pushchairs, or passengers with heavy luggage do not yet have this. This Council calls upon Network Rail and Arriva Trains Wales to expedite such full access as a matter of urgency. It calls on those responsible to ensure that sufficient funding is set aside to create facilities that will enable all passengers to freely access all parts of the station during opening hours as a matter of the highest priority.*

Following debate the motion was carried.

#### **8.2. Motion from County Councillor A. Eason and County Councillor P. Pavia**

The Chairman agreed to take Motion 8.2 and 8.3 together for debate:

#### **Motion from County Councillor Eason:**

*The Aneurin Bevan University Health Board has started consultations regarding the future of Adult Services across Gwent. The suggestion is to centralise dementia care to hospitals in Blaenau Gwent, Caerphilly, Newport and a unit in Torfaen; after the Grange Hospital is commissioned in 2021*

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*This would suggest the closure of St Pierre Ward at Chepstow Hospital which is currently employed for dementia care. Support for dementia care in the north of Monmouthshire would be at Ysbyty Tri Cwm Hospital in Ebbw Vale and from the south at St Woolos in Newport. I move that this Council works in conjunction with ABUHB and the ABCHC to find positive and futuristic ways of removing this threat to Chepstow Hospital which has 10 years of the PFI initiative to complete the contract, and that the use of this facility should be enhanced not reduced.”*

#### **Motion from County Councillor Pavia:**

*Monmouthshire County Council understands the demographic challenges the county faces over the coming decades. It recognises that the increase in older people will inevitably place more demands on our health and social care system, as an ageing population is more likely to have at least one and often multiple chronic conditions like dementia. Therefore, it is concerned by Aneurin Bevan University Health Board's proposals to redesign older adult mental health services, which could potentially mean the closure of the St. Pierre dementia ward in Chepstow Hospital and the transfer of patients to Ysbyty Tri Chwm in Ebbw Vale and to St. Woolas in Newport.*

*It calls upon Aneurin Bevan University Health Board to:*

- 1. Enter into 'robust' and 'meaningful' engagement with patients, stakeholders and local communities in Monmouthshire, regarding its redesign proposals and listen to appropriate concerns that any transfer of care outside of the county will naturally generate;*
- 2. Regularly meet with the Cabinet Member responsible for Social Care, Safeguarding and Health and senior officers, to explore new, coproduced and sustainable models of care for older adults with mental ill health, as part of the Council's overarching strategic plan to deliver quality integrated social care right across the county.*

The motion was duly seconded.

The Cabinet Member for Social Care, Safeguarding and Health responded that the Council are consultees on the three month consultation, and will engage fully and determinedly to make the case for the best possible services for the people of Monmouthshire.

Following response debate ensued.

In terms of process we were informed that the report has been through Select Committee, as well as Council. There is a Member Seminar on 16<sup>th</sup> November with ABUHB to discuss proposals. Members were urged to attend.

The Cabinet Member for Enterprise suggested that minutes from PSB meetings be added to future Council agendas to ensure Members are fully aware of the work of the Public Service Board.

It was recognised that the previous Chair of Adult Select had interacted greatly with ABUHB, and it was agreed that ABUHB should be invited to a future Adults Select meeting.

Upon being put to the vote the motion was carried.

#### **8.4. Motion from County Councillor D. Batrouni**

*That this Council is concerned that the real terms cuts placed upon schools in Monmouthshire for the past four years is unsustainable; that these cuts could result in staff reductions and hinder the performance of those schools; and therefore makes a commitment to halt these*

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*ongoing cuts and to instead increase the overall education budget for 2018/19 by at least £1m to help ease ongoing financial pressures. The Labour group will work with all elected members to bring this proposal to fruition.*

The motion was duly seconded.

The Cabinet Member for Children and Young People responded that the financial challenges facing this authority are considerable and highlighted that Monmouthshire is the worse funded authority in the Country. There was disappointment that the rural issues were still not recognised in terms of funding.

During discussion:

Councillor Blakebrough expressed that we should go back to Welsh Government with regards to funding, but should also consider what we can do as a Local Authority, such as investing money to carry the schools through this challenging time. Can we raise the Council Tax for this year to cover the schools extra funding.

Councillor Groucutt was pleased to second the motion and commended the teachers and staff on the excellent results achieved. Looking at the statistical returns of the advisory service, it was clear that standards are rising across the whole of South East Wales.

*Councillor Becker left the meeting at 15:35*

County Councillor Taylor proposed an amendment to the Motion:

*That this Council is concerned that the real terms cuts placed upon schools in Monmouthshire for the past four years is unsustainable. **That this Council fully calibrates and assess any risks to the educational experience of our children. In particular matters of access, standards and outcomes for all learners and that this Council takes appropriate action as necessary including, if necessary, budget recalibration.***

Following debate of the amended motion, and being put to the vote, the motion was defeated.

Members continued to debate the substantive motion. Upon being put to the vote the motion was defeated.

#### **8.5. Motion from County Councillor D. Batrouni**

*That this Council disapproves of the process whereby a decision on the future of two Monmouthshire secondary schools was submitted to Welsh Government without any consultation with full council, Cabinet or the CYP select committee; believes it sets a worrying precedence where local members, particularly Chepstow members in this instance, are not informed of big decisions affecting their residents; worries about the consequences for Chepstow School; and believes not all options have been explored as a result.*

The motion was duly seconded.

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The Chief Officer clarified that the mutual investment model (MIM) would require a significant upscaling of investment and it was decided not to proceed with the MIM due to a number of constraints.

It was noted that there had been opportunities to call in the decision, but this had not occurred. In response to a question why this had not come to Council for full debate, the Monitoring Officer advised that this was a decision taken under the Cabinet function.

Upon being put to vote the motion was defeated.

*Councillor Blakebrough and Councillor Watts left the meeting at 17:10*

### **9. Reports of the Chief Officer, Enterprise**

#### **9.1. Remote attendance at Council meetings**

Council were presented with a report in order to consider changes to the constitution that would allow Members to take part in meetings remotely.

Members discussed the positive aspects such as providing Members with other commitments the ability to attend; MCC being a pioneering Council; remote attendance would likely only apply to few Members, and attendance in person would continue to be the trend.

Negative points including technical issues; quorum of meetings were noted and would be resolved.

Upon being put to the vote, Members resolved to agree the recommendations in the report:

To adopt the changes to rules 8 and 9 of Standing Orders in the council's Constitution as detailed in appendix 3 to the report so that the council will remote attendance of meetings of the council, its committees, and any other meeting of the council where the technology is available in the meeting room.

Paragraph 1.9 of the Executive Procedure Rules in the Constitution is amended to allow remote attendance at meetings of the Cabinet

#### **9.2. Timing of Council meetings**

Council were presented with a report to consider the recommendation from Democratic Services Committee, in line with the Local Government Wales Measure, to review the timing of Full Council meetings for the current term of Council.

The Cabinet Member added that 10am also be considered as an option. Upon being put to the vote Members agreed that 10am, 2pm and 5pm be considered as times for Council on rotation.

We noted the importance of establishing a time to best attract members of the public to engage, and to promote flexibility.

Upon being put to vote, Members resolved to agree the recommendation:

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That future meetings of Full Council alternate start times between 10:00, 14:00 and 17:00 for a 12 month period, following which Democratic Services Committee will review the impact of the change in times and report back to Council with further recommendations.

### 10. Report of the Head of Operations

#### 10.1. **Recycling Review - Final Business Case, approval of capital expenditure on vehicles and boxes**

Council were presented with a report detailing the final business case for the Waste and Recycling Review reported to Council on 9<sup>th</sup> March 2017, to advise Members of all revenue implications of the new service and to seek approval for the creation of a capital budget for the acquisition of vehicles in 2017/18.

During discussion points noted:

Nature of the industry and how they want the items delivered is changing, and therefore changes how we deliver the service. Contaminated glass is now wanted as a clean product.

In response to a query regarding the size of vehicles and the problems they may present, we heard that a vehicle had been purpose built for the trial and smaller vehicles would be used where necessary. 95% of roads can be accessed with a standard chassis. Routes had been established with drivers and officers are confident that the vehicles and routes are suitable for the service.

Councillor Howarth expressed thanks to the residents of Monmouthshire for reaching the recycling target. He questioned why the report had not been scrutinised by Select Committee.

In response to a comment regarding the increase of number of vehicles, the Head of Operations added that the new vehicles would be needed regardless of the outcome of the debate.

*Councillor M. Powell left the meeting at 17:50*

Upon being put to the vote Council resolved to agree the recommendations:

That members receive and approve the final business case and summary of the Waste and Recycling Review (appendix 1).

To seek approval for a capital budget of £4.27m to fund the acquisition of recycling vehicles and boxes required to implement the Recycling Review as reported to Council on 9<sup>th</sup> March 2017.

To seek approval for 'invest to save funding' for the mobilisation of the new service.

### 11. Members Questions

#### 11.1. **From County Councillor P. Pavia to County Councillor R. John**

*Will the Cabinet Member for Education provide an update regarding the activities of the External Reference Group, which was established by the Council following ESYTN's Inspection of the authority in 2015?*

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The Cabinet Member responded:

The external reference group continues to provide advice and guidance to the Authority following the intense scrutiny during the Estyn recovery. The board has an extended remit and covers all areas of Children's Services, Social Care and Education. A review of the Chief Officers report for both SCH and CYP looked at the challenges surrounding self-evaluation, offered support in how well we know our schools, and offered advice on steps to take going forward. It also discussed progress in Children's Services in terms of reforms and improvement. The group is due to meet on 29<sup>th</sup> November where it will receive comprehensive updates in social care and education covering Children's Services. They will continue to advise on self-evaluation, especially in light of the new local government education services framework, and will be reviewing new arrangements around safeguarding. I will be happy to report back to Cllr Pavia following the next meeting.

As a supplementary Councillor Pavia expressed that the group should be meeting once a year, and should be seen to meet periodically throughout the year. Can the Cabinet Member give further commitment that there will be periodical meetings throughout the year, and would like to know the process of recruiting the additional person.

#### **11.2. From County Councillor A. Easson to County Councillor P. Murphy**

*With respect to the 2017/2018 budgeted Area Committee grants of £5000. It is half way through the financial year ,yet the allocations have not been released for distribution. Local groups benefit from these small grants. Would you release them as soon as possible?*

The Cabinet Member responded:

Following a review of Community Governance in March 2017, Council agreed to pilot a review of Area Committees in Bryn y Cwm. The pilot will take place over a twelve month period from September 2017 and part of the review exercise will involve a consultation in relation to the strategic coordination of Area Committee Grant funding, to be distributed equally amongst the Areas. It is proposed that funding will be allocated on an annual basis, subject to evidence of how it addresses local needs and priorities, maximises opportunities and impact eg. Use as match funding and attributes to the county's wellbeing objectives.

Further to the approval of the pilot, in October 2017, Cabinet approved the restructuring of the Whole Place and Partnerships team to create a newly focussed Community Development and Partnerships Team. As a result, given the Area Committee review and recent structure approval, all Area Committee Grants were suspended, pending the development of new criteria in line with the associated outcomes.

However, Members are anxious that access should continue so in the interim any Area Committee Capital Grant applications should be sent to Andy Smith, our Strategic Investment and Funding Manager, who will assess the applications and seek to find alternative sources of funding, where appropriate. In the event that alternative funding cannot be found, then the Area Committee Grant funding will be used. Applications in the first instance should be via the Area Committee Chair. Then Members at Area Committees can decide whether they support the application. At that point it goes to Andy Smith.

In response to a supplementary question, it was suggested any previous applicants who had not received a response should re-submit their application.

#### **11.3. From County Councillor A. Easson to County Councillor R. Greenland**

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Since 2008:

- 1) How many houses have been built year on year in Monmouthshire?
- 2) How many year on year were affordable homes?
- 3) What were the waiting lists year on year over the same period?

The Cabinet Member provided the following information:

Year	Total Dwelling Completions	Affordable Dwelling Completions	Number of Households on Combined Housing Register
2008/09	327	91	2,528
2009/10	158	14	3,301
2010/11	267	61	2,919
2011/12	254	78	2,721
2012/13	342	49	2,831
2013/14	230	36	3,732
2014/15	205	17	2,867
2015/16	234	63	2,619
2016/17	238	47	3,253 (3182 as at 01/11/17)
Total	2255	456	

- 2015/16 Band 4 – 36%; Band 5 – 36% Total 72%
- 2016/17 Band 4 – 51%; Band 5 – 22% Total 73%

Households in Band 4 are considered to be adequately housed and most of the households in Band 5 would be Home Owners. This leaves only 28% of the figure being in actual housing need. If you apply that to today's CHR figure that would be 3,182 x 28% = 891 households in actual housing need.

In response to a supplementary question, the information would be distributed when collated.

#### 11.4. From County Councillor D. Batrouni to County Councillor R. John

*Can the Cabinet Member report if there any discrepancies between the notional and actual spend on delegated SEN expenditure in (i) 2016/17 (ii) 2015/16 and (iii) 2014/15?*

The Cabinet member responded:

We have a duty of care to meet the needs of every student and fully expect schools to spend the 5% notional element of their funding supporting children with school action or schools action plus levels of need. Where there is agreements that need is above these levels the local authority will fund to support individual students. We delegate £3.3m per year to schools for additional learning needs as a lump sum, and additional band funding. The local authority retains £300k as in-year contingency, and this is the only volatility. In the three years in question that funding has been above budgeted levels by the following amounts: 2014/15 £89,672; 2015/16 £105,404; 2016/17 £129,169. However in all years there has been an underspend of county budget which has more than offset those figures.

#### 11.5. From County Councillor D. Batrouni to County Councillor S. Jones



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*What assessment, if any, has the Council made of the prevalence of 'period poverty' in the county?*

The Cabinet Member welcomed the question and responded:

The issue of period poverty per se hasn't been raised with us through either the wellbeing assessment or the population needs assessment.

However, we know that the problem does exist. Having spoken to our partners and agencies such as those who sit on the FEDIP group (run by Ian Bakewell), they have suggested they have awareness of the issue but we don't necessarily know the full scale. If we also apply the data from the August Plan International survey then we know that this will be an issue in our communities given the report suggested one in ten girls age 14-24 are unable to afford sanitary products.

We will work with our Community and Partnership Development team, through our social justice strategy, to identify partnership solutions and support, including looking at best practice such as the Wings Project in Bridgend.

In response to a supplementary question the Cabinet Member appreciated that given the perceived taboo nature of the subject that much of the issue is likely to be under reported. We will work with schools, building on the 'growing up' project that is in 21 of our 30 primary schools, as well as through existing Welsh Government policy to explore this issue further and report back to Cllr Batrouni.

**The meeting ended at 6.50 pm**

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