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MONMOUTHSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

Minutes of the meeting of County Council held
at County Hall, The Rhadyr, Usk, NP15 1GA on Monday, 19th March, 2018 at 2.00 pm

PRESENT: County Councillor M. Powell (Chairman)
County Councillor (Vice Chairman)

County Councillors: D. Batrouni, V. Smith, P.A. Fox, R.J.W. Greenland, R. Harris, J. Higginson, G. Howard, D. Jones, P. Jones, S. Jones, S.B. Jones, P. Murphy, F. Taylor, A. Watts, A. Webb, L. Brown, A. Davies, L. Dymock, M. Feakins, M. Groucutt, R. John, L. Jones, M. Lane, P. Pavia, J. Pratt, R. Roden, T. Thomas, J. Treharne and S. Woodhouse

OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE:

Paul Matthews	Chief Executive
Kellie Beirne	Deputy Chief Executive
Robert Tranter	Head of Legal Services & Monitoring Officer
Nicola Perry	Senior Democracy Officer
Mark Hand	Head of Planning, Housing and Place-Shaping
Rachel Lewis	Planning Policy Manager

APOLOGIES:

County Councillors D. Blakebrough, P. Clarke, D. Dovey, A. Easson, R. Edwards, D. Evans, L. Guppy, S. Howarth, P. Jordan, B. Strong and K. Williams

2. Declarations of interest

County Councillor F. Taylor declared a prejudicial interest as an Independent Community Member of ABUHB and left the meeting during a statement issued by the Leader regarding Older Adult Mental Health.

The Leader took the opportunity to update Council on the proposed redesign of Older Adult Mental Health Services in Chepstow. There had been concerns raised by Members and a lengthy consultation with forceful contributions from Monmouthshire. It was understood ABUHB would meet on March 21st 2018, the papers recommending the closure of St. Pierre Ward in Chepstow Hospital. The Leader assured Members that a strong written response would be issued before the board meet, this would be circulated to all Members

Members were keen to express anger and frustration to the response issued by ABUHB, particularly as the report did not reflect the needs of Monmouthshire.

3. City Deal Business Plan

The Cabinet Member presented the report to outline the next steps for the Cardiff Capital Region City Deal further to the approval of the Cardiff Capital Region (CCR) Joint Working Agreement (JWA), the CCR City Deal Assurance Framework and Implementation Plan and the establishment of the Regional Cabinet on the [26 January 2017](#). Also, presenting the Joint Working Agreement Business Plan (JWA Business Plan) which is recommended to Council for approval by the Regional Cabinet.

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The Labour Group supported the recommendation. In doing so Councillor Batrouni raised questions around the metrics and the assessments guidance on output and outcomes. He asked how it is discerned that the City Deal has added to GVA rather than other factors such as bridge toll reduction. He also raised concerns around Monmouthshire's relationship to Bristol, and Metro Plus.

The Leader responded that the Assessment Framework has been approved, and a joint working agreement had been agreed at a previous meeting. Adding that he wants young people to have the opportunities to work Monmouthshire, and that the region would work closely with Bristol in the future.

A Member spoke of the opportunities for the region, and Monmouthshire. Whilst the City Deal is a regional scheme, there are opportunities for Monmouthshire within it, and it was questioned if we were already doing enough to get best deal for the people of Monmouthshire.

Detail around scrutiny arrangements were sought.

A Member suggested a presentation for Members regarding Metro be arranged. The Leader agreed this would be beneficial.

The Chief Executive provided assurance and further information to Members.

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

That Council approves the Joint Working Approval Business Plan as recommended by the Regional Cabinet for adoption as the formal 'JWA Business Plan'.

4. Local Development Plan

The Cabinet Member presented the report to seek Council's approval to commence work on a new planning policy framework to shape and grow the future of our County and its role in the region, in line with the Council's purpose of building sustainable and resilient communities. Specifically, Council approval is sought to commence work on a new Local Development Plan (LDP) for Monmouthshire, to endorse the draft Delivery Agreement including Community Involvement Scheme for four week targeted consultation, and to agree to be part of the South East Wales Strategic Development Plan (SDP).

Councillor Batrouni advised that the Labour Group support the full review, adding that it reflected the failure of this Council to meet the housing needs of Monmouthshire. He added that the review failed to take into consideration the removal of the Severn Bridge Tolls, and population growth.

The Cabinet Member responded that proposed strategic sites had not come forward as anticipated.

It was expressed that a wider consultation was necessary, extending to the public and to include Gloucester area.

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Officers explained that in terms of the current plan, the review self-reflects on why sites had not come forward. There are complex reasons behind this but sites are making progress to come forward. In terms of projections, the review report covered other aspects that need to be looked at, including the tolls. If the review is approved by Council, a starting point would be to look at options for growth. In terms of consultation officers were looking to engage with as many groups as possible.

Some Members suggested a short review may be a better option. It was explained that should this be the case we would still have to align with the National Development Framework and would take our current plan to 2030. The short term plan would not overcome immediate challenges.

Cabinet Member for Social Justice drew attention to the Community Involvement Strategy and the comprehensive approach we will be taking to engage with communities. It specifically mentions hard to reach groups. She urged that individual Councillors come forward with suggestions on how to facilitate the process.

A cross party steering group was recommended to address infrastructure objectives.

The Leader urged that we need to take control of our own destiny and did not agree with working collaboratively on an LDP with other authorities.

*County
Councillor A.
Webb left the
meeting at
15:00pm*

In response to a question we heard the average house price in Monmouthshire is now the highest in Wales as a whole at £307,000, which compares to a Wales average of £186,000.

*County
Councillor F.
Taylor left
the meeting
at 15:25pm.*

The Cabinet Member concluded the discussion stating this LDP is the tool to help with the demographic problem. He was pleased with the cross party engagement and wanted to take on board Member engagement across the process.

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

That Council endorses the Review Report for submission to the Welsh Government.

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That Council approves the commencement of a full revision to its Local Development Plan, which would result in a brand new LDP for Monmouthshire for the period up to 2033.

That Council endorses the draft Delivery Agreement including Community Involvement Scheme for the new LDP for a four week targeted consultation.

That Council formally resolves to be part of the South East Wales Strategic Development Plan.

The meeting ended at 4.30 pm