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MONMOUTHSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

**Minutes of the meeting of Lower Wye Area Committee held
at Chepstow Leisure Centre - Chepstow on Wednesday, 23rd January, 2019 at 10.00 am**

PRESENT: County Councillor: D. Dovey (Chair)
County Councillor: A. Webb (Vice-Chair)

County Councillors: J. Becker, L. Brown and P. Murphy

County Councillor B. Jones attended the meeting by invitation of the Chair.

OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE:

Peter Davies	Chief Officer, Resources
Roger Hoggins	Head of Operations
Mark Hand	Head of Planning, Housing and Place-Shaping
Rachel Lewis	Planning Policy Manager
Paul Keeble	Group Engineer (Highways and Flood Management)
Graham Kinsella	Traffic And Road Safety Manager
Matthew Jones	School and Student Access Manager
Richard Williams	Democratic Services Officer

ALSO IN ATTENDANCE:

Derek Stubbs	-	Resident
V. Stubbs	-	Resident
Toney Newman	-	St. Arvan's Resident
Geoffrey Sumner	-	Chepstow Society
Stephanie Dovey	-	Chepstow Resident
Suzi Squire	-	Resident
Nick Vincent	-	Resident
Kim Spencer	-	Resident
Councillor G. Down	-	Mathern Community Council
H.R. Middleditch	-	Resident
Councillor J. McKenna	-	Shirenewton Community Council

APOLOGIES:

County Councillors: R.J.W. Greenland and P. Pavia

1. Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest made by Members.

2. Confirmation of Minutes

The minutes of the Lower Wye Area Committee dated 17th October 2018 were confirmed and signed by the Chair.

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3. Public Open Forum

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

Bay Fields Residents' Group

The following issues were raised by the Bay Fields Residents' Group regarding development of this area:

- The housing developer had not undertaken adequate consultation, with deadlines for replies being too short.
- The Group expressed concern that the following issues needed to be addressed before any further development took place in the area:
 - An improvement to the existing infrastructure.
 - Environmental issues to be addressed.
 - Specific planning concerns to be addressed.
- The site is not located within the current Local Development Plan (LDP).
- The Group is active on social media, namely, Facebook and twitter.
- Concerns had been raised that the Planning Directorate was not adhering to planning policies with regard to the development.
- There was a need for the Infrastructure issues within Chepstow to be addressed before further development takes place.
- Chepstow is a funnel for pollution with Hardwick Hill being the most polluted area within Chepstow.

4. Budget Engagement

The Cabinet Member for Resources provided a presentation on the 2019/20 budget proposals.

Presentation: [Budget Consultation presentation](#)

Having received the presentation, the following points were noted:

- Monmouthshire is the lowest funded Authority in Wales. Deprivation is a key factor in determining Welsh Government funding for local authorities across Wales. Though there are areas of deprivation within Monmouthshire, the Authority's areas of deprivation are not captured by Welsh Government in the way the Authority would like. Rural authorities in Wales, such as Monmouthshire, have greater financial impacts in respect of social care

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provision. Travel costs in this area are significantly greater in rural authorities than compared with urban authorities.

- Pressure is being put onto Welsh Government to review the Local Government funding formula with a view to making it a fairer system.
- Monmouthshire County Council, like many other local authorities across Wales, is having to raise council tax, in order to maintain service delivery across the County.
- Schools budgets have flat lined. Pay increases are also having to be incorporated. Other non-educational budgets across the Authority have been cut to maintain core funding of the Education budget.
- Monmouthshire County Council is the last of the Greater Gwent Authorities to stop subsidising the Gwent Music Service, in the sum of £40,000. Discussions are ongoing with the Gwent Music Service to ease the transition.
- The Authority endeavours to fill potholes as soon as possible as a temporary measure before a permanent repair is undertaken at a later date.
- The Authority's Waste Management Service is replacing older, more costly vehicles and investing in new and efficient vehicles with a view to collecting waste / recycling in a different way. There is a need to collect waste separately as this ensures that the value of the product is increased leading to an increase in income generated. The savings generated are identified in the 2019/2020 budget.
- Monmouthshire residents have had to embrace changes to the Authority's Waste Management Service in previous years and it is hoped that the public will continue to embrace and support the changes anticipated. The changes will help the Authority to achieve the increasing recycling targets being set by Welsh Government.
- A successful trial has been undertaken regarding recycling glass bottle waste. When the service is rolled out across the County, arrangements will be put in place to help vulnerable residents through the changes. Staff contact details will also be available should any member of the public require this.
- Concern was expressed that car parking charges were set to increase by 10% in Chepstow with a flat rate car parking charge being introduced on a Sunday. It was considered that this was not equitable across the County and could have a negative impact on the high street and to local businesses. However, due to the budget deficit in the sum of £594,000, this was one of a number of measures having to be undertaken to help mitigate against the deficit.
- Residents will be encouraged to recycle more waste. Extra polypropylene bags / containers will be provided if required.

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We noted the report and presentation.

5. Local Development Plan: Draft Vision Issues and Objectives

We received a presentation and the Draft Issues, Vision and Objectives Paper in relation to the Monmouthshire Replacement Local Development Plan.

Having received the report, the following points were noted:

- It was considered that there was a need for a specific plan for improving town centres by having a vision for town centres. It was noted that this feeds into the wording of the objectives, as outlined in the report.
- The infrastructure of a town needs to be established and capable of servicing developments before they are built.
- It was noted that the Local Transport Plan was also being reviewed, as well as the LDP.
- A general feeling amongst Chepstow residents is that the town is at capacity and that the infrastructure is struggling to cope with any additional developments and the traffic issues that this can bring to the town.
- Daily commuting to and from Chepstow occurs, putting strain on the existing traffic network which is creating a negative impact on Chepstow town. Improvements to the motorway network in this area are required to help alleviate traffic congestion.
- The Authority is building a relationship with Aneurin Bevan University Health Board (ABUHB) and will be consulting with the Health Board regarding the new LDP.
- The removal of the Severn Bridge tolls has led to an increase in traffic flow into Chepstow. House prices are also being affected due to the removal of the tolls.
- Car parking charges in Chepstow are negatively effecting businesses in the Town.
- It was considered that Community Trusts, under the right circumstances, could help towards providing much needed affordable housing within the County.
- It was considered that the County has an aging population. In Chepstow, there are very few bungalows being built and care homes are few in number. There are very few hotels in the town to accommodate tourism. Employment opportunities for the area also needs to be addressed.
- Affordable housing provision is a priority.

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The Head of Planning, Housing and Place Shaping encouraged the Committee to forward any further feedback to the Planning Directorate in respect of the proposed LDP by the 13th February 2019.

6. Speed Management Strategy

We received a presentation and report regarding the Monmouthshire Speed Management Strategy.

This policy will set out the Council's approach to speed management within the County and will form part of the overall Monmouthshire Road Safety Strategy.

Having considered the report, the following points were noted:

- A Monmouthshire Select Committee had reviewed existing Speed Management Strategies formulated by other local authorities. Caerphilly County Borough Council's strategy was used as a template to formulate Monmouthshire's strategy.
- It was acknowledged that this was a long awaited strategy.
- The strategy now provided a single point of contact to raise issues of concern. Previously, residents had expressed concern regarding there being no clear contact.
- It was considered by some residents that the strategy did not take into account the rurality of Monmouthshire, as the strategy did not address the concerns regarding 60mph speed limits. Speeding Information gathered in rural areas is compromised. Hand held speed gathering devices cannot be used in 60mph speed zones, as it is regarded as being unsafe for operators of the devices.
- Remove the word 'complainant' from the strategy and replace with a more appropriate term.
- The majority of highways issues being raised stem from the rural community.
- Speed gathering instruments, such as cables across the road, tend to record the average speed of vehicles but discounts the top 15% of highest speeds recorded. Cyclists' speeds are also included in the data recorded, which is affecting the data received. It was noted that the updated Road Safety Strategy had identified this matter.
- Implementation of the strategy needs to lead to an improvement in road safety across the County to allay residents' concerns.
- The Committee and residents were informed that today's meeting was a part of the consultation process regarding the strategy.

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- When setting speed limits, the local Member and a local representative should be consulted, in order to obtain local knowledge. It was noted that local knowledge was already being utilised by partner agencies. The Speed Limit Policy identifies this need.

Officers noted the views expressed. The outcomes arising from the consultation exercise today will be fed back to the Strong Communities Select Committee in due course.

7. Chepstow Road Study

We received a verbal update by the Head of Operations regarding the Chepstow Road study. In doing so, the following points were noted:

- A meeting will be held on Monday 28th January 2019 which will comprise of representatives of Monmouthshire County Council, Gloucestershire County Council and Forest of Dean District Council to discuss the findings of the WelTAG (Welsh Transport Appraisal Guidance) stage 1 report.
- Stage 2 of WelTAG will commence when the options favoured from stage 1 are identified. It is hopeful that support will be received from the meeting on the 28th January 2019 to move forward with stage 2.
- Funding to take forward stage 2 will need to be identified, which is estimated to be in the region of £1,000,000. Support has been received from Westminster to take this matter forward.

We noted the verbal report.

8. Catchment Review

We received an update regarding the consultation document in respect of the Review of Secondary School catchment areas in Monmouthshire.

The Committee was provided with a brief overview of the catchment area review process to date.

In doing so, the following points were noted:

- In response to questions raised regarding the proposed 21st Century School for Chepstow, it was noted that the Chief Officer for Children and Young People will be providing the Area Committee with an update on this matter at the next meeting on 6th March 2019.
- Concern was expressed that the catchment area for Monmouth was increasing whilst the catchment area for Chepstow was decreasing and how this might affect pupil numbers for Chepstow Comprehensive School. The sustainability of the future of the school might be affected by this. Also, competition for pupil

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numbers from Wyedean School, as well as boundary and population changes, might become a contributing factor.

- It was noted that the County's catchment review was being addressed in stages. Chepstow has not yet been reviewed as there is some development being undertaken in the area. There is a need to assess the pupil numbers data first before undertaking a review of the catchment area for Chepstow.

We noted the report.

9. Items for the Next Meeting

There were no items raised for the next meeting.

10. Next Meetings

- Wednesday 6th March 2019.
- Wednesday 17th April 2019.

The meeting ended at 1.15 pm.

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