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MONMOUTHSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

**Minutes of the meeting of North Monmouthshire Area Committee held
at The Council Chamber, Town Hall, Abergavenny, Cross Street, Abergavenny, NP7 5HD
on Wednesday, 30th January, 2019 at 1.00 pm**

PRESENT: County Councillor M. Powell (Chair)

County Councillors: M. Groucutt, R. Harris, S. Howarth, S.B. Jones, S. Jones, P. Jordan, M. Lane, M. Powell, J. Pratt, T. Thomas, K. Williams and S. Woodhouse

County Councillor P. Murphy attended the meeting by invitation of the Chair.

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

OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE:

Peter Davies	Chief Officer, Resources
Roger Hoggins	Head of Operations
Deb Hill-Howells	Head of Commercial and Integrated Landlord Services
Richard Williams	Democratic Services Officer
Paul Keeble	Group Engineer (Highways and Flood Management)
Graham Kinsella	Traffic And Road Safety Manager
Ian Brain	Project Engineer
Rob Davies	Assistant Engineer
Rachel Lewis	Planning Policy Manager
Mark Hand	Head of Planning, Housing and Place-Shaping

ALSO IN ATTENDANCE:

Mr. A. Michie	-	Team Abergavenny
Mr. H. Candler	-	Team Abergavenny and Clerk to Llanover Community Council
Mr. N. Tatam	-	Team Abergavenny and Abergavenny Town Council
Councillor D. Simcock	-	Abergavenny Town Council
Councillor J. Peacock	-	Llanelly Community Councillor
Ms. J. Lee	-	Clerk to Abergavenny Town Council
Mr. A. Edwards	-	Clerk to Llanelly Community Council
Mr. R. Cole	-	Abergavenny Civic Society
Ms. L. Hywel	-	Y Fenni Business Community
Ms. S. Hurst	-	Public
O.R. Griffiths	-	Public
A.B. Griffiths	-	Public

APOLOGIES:

County Councillors: G. Howard and D. Jones
Councillor O. Dodd

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1. Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest made by Members.

2. Public Open Forum

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

Litter bins on trunk road laybays

At a previous meeting of the Area Committee, the Clerk to Llanelly Community Council had informed the Area Committee that there was a lack of litter bins being provided on trunk road laybays resulting in these areas becoming havens for litter.

The Clerk to Llanelly Community Council requested that the Strong Communities Select Committee invites representatives from the South Wales Trunk Road Agent (SWTRA) to discuss this matter further.

We resolved that the Cabinet Member and the Head of Operations would liaise with the Clerk to Llanelly Community Council with a view to providing him with an update in respect of this matter.

3. Budget Consultation 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:

- In response to a question raised by a member of the public regarding the proposed changes to the Council's Waste Management Service, it was noted that 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 regarding the changes to the proposed Waste Management Service and that a capital investment will be required to purchase new vehicles. It was considered that any savings generated would be reliant on the public adopting the new system. In response, it was acknowledged that the Authority 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. A pilot of the new system has been trialled in Abergavenny with no drop off in take up

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identified. The changes will help the Authority to achieve the increasing recycling targets being set by Welsh Government.

- The proposed changes to the Waste Management Service have been considered by the Strong Communities Select Committee whereby the proposed boxes and reusable polypropylene bags were shown to the Committee. The bags are very robust and will last for a number of years.
- Concern was expressed that recycling figures might drop under the proposed changes to the Waste Management Service.
- 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.
- A representative of Abergavenny Business Community expressed concern that the proposed increase in car parking charges within the town would create a detrimental effect on shoppers coming into the town. In response, it was noted that the number of vacant properties within Abergavenny was reducing. The impact of car parking charges within the town depends on the retail offer being provided there. The local Authority was working with local businesses.
- Concern was expressed that the car parking charges across the County were inconsistent. For example, the first two hours parking provision in Morrison's Supermarket is free and there is no car parking charges in Usk. In response, it was noted that the inequities in car park charging reflects the offer from each of the four towns.

We noted the report and presentation.

4. 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 residents aged over 65 were a resource that could be utilised by the Authority. These are people with a varied range of skills that could be drawn upon.
- Housing development is being undertaken within Abergavenny. However, job creation was not in keeping with the housing development being provided.
- In response to a question raised regarding the development of a new town within Monmouthshire, it was noted that this could still be an option for consideration.

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However, should approval be granted, it would take a number of years before this would come to fruition.

The Head of Planning, Housing and Place Shaping informed the Committee that any further feedback should be sent to the Planning Department by 13th February 2019, as the Local Development Plan: Draft Vision and Objectives report would be presented to the Economy and Development Select Committee on 14th February 2019 for scrutiny.

We noted the report and presentation.

5. Abergavenny Public Realm Improvements Phase 3

We received a report and presentation regarding Abergavenny Public Realm Improvements Phase 3.

The final design has been agreed following extensive consultations with the community and Team Abergavenny. The general layout has not been substantially changed with the exception of the area in the vicinity of the War Memorial.

The section between Whitehorse Lane and the Baker Street junction is now traffic free and provides a substantial open space which is being developed in a similar style to St. John's Square.

The Baker Street / Frogmore Street junction will be a transitional area between the public open space and a conventional footway / carriageway split in Upper Frogmore Street.

Upper Frogmore Street will be reconstructed with a traditional footway / carriageway arrangement with kerbed edges.

The width of the carriageway will be reduced to the minimum possible allowing the footways to be extended. The material pallet for this section is proposed as permeable block pavements for the carriageway with the footways being styled in the fashion of St John's Square with a mixture of penant slabs and `suresett` bound gravel.

It is proposed to make a `no left turn` for motor vehicles into Baker Street from Frogmore Street, allowing cyclists to continue to use this route. This will allow the provision of some disabled parking spaces to be located at the end of Baker Street to compensate for lost spaces elsewhere.

It is proposed to introduce a contraflow cycle lane along Lion Street from the shared space at the junction of Market Street to allow a safe cycle access from the A40.

The commencement date for Phase 3 is 28th January 2019.

Having received the report, the following points were noted:

- Abergavenny needs to be a destination town for tourism with Frogmore Street being a pedestrianised zone to create a café culture. Discussion ensued

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regarding this matter concluding with officers being asked to undertake a safety audit before a decision is taken in respect of this matter. The Group Engineer - Highways and Flood Management will meet with the County and Town Councillors representing this area.

- Concern was expressed that buses were continuing to illegally pick up passengers outside the Robert Price building. In response, the Group Engineer - Highways and Flood Management stated that bus companies had been told not to stop at this location. However, he would liaise with the Passenger Transport Unit regarding this matter.
- The Group Engineer - Highways and Flood Management would investigate providing additional 'left turn' signing at King Street.
- Concern was expressed that if the bollards were removed near Wetherspoons, this might lead to a minority of young people using this route to speed excessively, as has occurred in other areas of the town.
- There was some debate about whether Frogmore Street should be opened up to traffic in the evenings. The Group Engineer advised the committee that a Safety Audit is currently being carried out to assist in making this decision and it was agreed that officers would meet with the Chair and Local Members to discuss the findings of the report and consider how to proceed.

We noted the report and presentation.

6. Progress report by Team Abergavenny

We received a report by Team Abergavenny on progress to date. In doing so, an update was received in respect of:

- Public Realm Progress.
- The new car parking charges.
- Town Hall Hub development.

In doing so, The Team Abergavenny representative expressed concern that the first two hours free parking provision in Morrison's Supermarket was creating a detrimental effect on the town.

Team Abergavenny would also be writing to the Police and Crime Commissioner expressing its concerns regarding the closure of Abergavenny Police Station.

We noted the report.

7. Speed Management Strategy

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

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This policy will set out the Councils 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:

- The Strategy is welcomed as it will proactively investigate issues and help to reduce road traffic accidents.
- Town and Community Councils will be consulted regarding the Speed Management Strategy.
- Speed gathering instruments, such as tubes 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.

We noted the report and presentation.

8. Verbal update regarding the refurbishment of Abergavenny Hub

We received a verbal update regarding the refurbishment of Abergavenny Hub. In doing so, the following points were noted:

- Approval for the development of Abergavenny Hub was granted in 2016. However, due to some technical difficulties, the development of the hub has not yet been completed.
- Full Council had consented to the development of the Town Hall building in September 2016.
- A Listed building application and a planning application were drawn up in March 2018.
- Plans were drawn up by the scheme's architects whereby a series of discussions were held with users of the building to assess their requirements.
- Amended plans were drawn up in September 2018.
- Planning permission and Listed Building consent were approved in December 2018.
- A budget in the sum of £2.1M for the refurbishment had been approved.
- Work was being undertaken with the Borough Theatre manager regarding integration of the theatre into the refurbishment.

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- Six expressions of interest had been received from construction companies. Two companies had submitted bids for the refurbishment work. It is anticipated that an appointment will be made in due course.
- There will be two lifts, one located at the front of the building, with the other lift located in the existing lift shaft at the side of the building.
- The refurbishment will include a six metre mezzanine.
- The aim is to commence construction work in March 2019.
- There will be six phases of work being undertaken with a build timeframe of 32 weeks.
- The Abergavenny Hub will aim to open in November 2019. However, it was noted that all of the timeframes identified are currently provisional. When the preferred constructor is appointed, the timeframe for the works can be formally agreed.

Having received the verbal update, the following points were noted:

- During the construction phase, the Borough Theatre box office will be temporarily relocated within the One Stop Shop. Officers are working with the Theatre manager regarding this matter.
- Abergavenny Town Council's office will remain on site.
- Two trading pods will be located under the mezzanine. However, should this not be required by the traders, the pods could be removed.
- Dust from refurbishment work will be retained within the work area.
- During the refurbishment every effort will be made to retain all of the traders within the hall. However, if needed, an area outside of the hall, but under cover, could be provided for some traders temporarily.
- A newsletter will be issued to all traders with a time table of construction work when the dates have been agreed.
- Traders' rents will not be increased this year due to the potential disruption during the refurbishment.

We noted the verbal update.

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9. Presentation from the Community and Partnership Development Team - Delivering the Social Justice Plan

We resolved that the Communities and Partnership Development Lead Officer would update the Area Committee via email with regard to delivering the Social Justice Plan.

10. Abergavenny Town Council Town Strategy and Action Plan

We received and noted, for information purposes, the Abergavenny Town Council Town Strategy and Action Plan.

11. Confirmation of Minutes

The minutes of the North Monmouthshire Area Committee dated 28th November 2018 were confirmed and signed by the Chair.

12. Forward Planner for Cabinet and Council Business

We received and noted the forward planner for Cabinet and Council Business.

13. North Monmouthshire Area Committee Future Work Programme

We received and noted the North Monmouthshire Area Committee future work programme.

14. Next Meeting

The next meeting will be held at Gilwern Community Centre, subject to availability, on Wednesday 20th March 2019 at 1.00pm.

The meeting ended at 4.20 pm.