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MONMOUTHSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

Minutes of the meeting of North Monmouthshire Area Committee held at The Gallery Room, Llanfoist Village Hall, Merthyr Road, Llanfoist, Abergavenny, Monmouthshire NP7 9LP on Wednesday, 15th May, 2019 at 1.00 pm

PRESENT: County Councillor M. Powell (Chair)

County Councillors: S. Jones, P. Jordan, J. Pratt, T. Thomas and S. Woodhouse

Llanelly Community Council: Councillor G. Nelmes

OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE:

Will McLean	Chief Officer for Children and Young People
Cath Fallon	Head of Economy and Enterprise
Nicola Edwards	Strategic Food and Tourism Manager
Richard Williams	Democratic Services Officer

ALSO IN ATTENDANCE:

Mr. H. Candler	-	North Monmouthshire Liaison Committee, Team Abergavenny & Llanover Community Council
Ms. T. Evans	-	Abergavenny District Tourism Association
Ms. M. Davies	-	Abergavenny District Tourism Association
Mr. G. Havard	-	Clerk – Llanfoist Fawr Community Council
Ms. J. Lee	-	Clerk, Abergavenny Town Council
Mr. N. Tatam	-	Abergavenny Town Council
Mr. R. Guest	-	Gwent Our Police and Crime Commissioner (OPCC)
Mr. W. Lewis	-	Brecon Beacons National Park Authority
Inspector D. Sowrey	-	Gwent Police
R. Gibson	-	Abergavenny Resident
M. Gibson	-	Abergavenny Resident

APOLOGIES:

County Councillors: M. Groucutt, S.B. Jones and M. Lane
Councillors P. Simcock, O. Dodd and G. Thomas

1. Declarations of Interest

County Councillor M. Powell declared a personal, non-prejudicial interest pursuant to the Members Code of Conduct in respect of agenda item 4 - proposed new 3-19 school in Abergavenny, as she is a governor of King Henry VIII School.

County Councillor T. Thomas declared a personal, non-prejudicial interest pursuant to the Members Code of Conduct in respect of agenda item 4 - proposed new 3-19 school in Abergavenny, as he is a governor of Ysgol Gymraeg y Fenni.

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County Councillor S. Woodhouse declared a personal and prejudicial interest pursuant to the Members Code of Conduct in respect of agenda item 6 – Abergavenny Tourist Information Centre, as she is a trustee of St. Mary's Priory Church, Abergavenny and also a volunteer at the Tourist Information Centre. She left the meeting taking no part in the discussion or voting thereon.

2. Public Open Forum

There were no issues raised by the members of the public present at the meeting.

3. Proposed new 3-19 school in Abergavenny

We received an update by the Chief Officer for Children and Young People regarding the proposed new 3 – 19 school in Abergavenny. In doing so, the following points were noted:

- The proposed 3 – 19 school is in Band B of the 21st Century Schools Programme.
- This will be a more complex project as Deri View Primary School and King Henry VIII School will be consolidated into a 3 – 19 school.
- Ysgol Gymraeg y Fenni will relocate to the larger Deri View site.
- A Welsh Medium Stream will be introduced in the new school as part of its secondary education provision.
- The area of the proposed site is currently being established.
- £42M of investment will come into the town.
- There is significant community interest in the re-provisioning of the proposed new school. Engagement with the community is key, going forward.
- The finance options being investigated are:
 - Capital financing – Welsh Government would fund 65% of the project with Monmouthshire County Council financing the remaining 35%.
 - Mutual Investment Model (MIM) - Welsh Government would fund 81% of the project with Monmouthshire County Council financing the remaining 19%.
- A 3 – 19 school will bring significant benefits for the pupils attending the school.
- Engagement with the community is on-going.

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Having received the update, the following points were noted:

- School staff and pupils will be involved in the design process of the proposed new school.
- It was noted that Gilwern Primary School is currently at capacity. In response to a question raised regarding the impact that the proposed new school will have on Gilwern Primary School, it was acknowledged that there are challenges within Gilwern which were being addressed.
- Depending on the Welsh Stream, there will be in the region of 1900 to 2000 pupils at the new 3 – 19 school.
- It is anticipated that construction of the proposed 3 – 19 school will commence in 2022/23.
- It was considered that in the interim period, all schools within Abergavenny required investment.
- It was noted that investment in Gilwern will come via Section 106 funding.
- The importance of siblings attending the same school was acknowledged. Therefore, this needs to be taken into account when the proposed changes are made.
- Active travel to school will be developed in which local children should be able to attend their local primary and secondary school.
- The plan of the whole area of the site will be reviewed, including the civic space.
- Concern was expressed regarding the proposed Welsh Stream within the new school, as it was considered that students learning through the medium of Welsh needed to be fully immersed in a Welsh speaking school in order to fully reap the benefits.

We noted the update on the proposed 3 – 19 school in Abergavenny.

4. Police and Crime Commissioner for Gwent - The closure of Abergavenny Police Station and crime figures within Abergavenny

We received an update by the Police and Crime Commissioner for Gwent regarding the closure of Abergavenny Police Station and crime figures within Abergavenny. In doing so, the following points were noted:

- The former police station within Abergavenny has been sold for £605,000. The income generated from the sale will go towards the cost of building the new Hub which will be a joint building occupied by the Fire and Rescue Service and Gwent Police.

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- The Estate Implementation Committee will shortly be meeting to discuss the proposed Hub. If approved, a planning application will be submitted outlining details of the new Hub.
- In the interim period, Police officers patrol from a porta cabin located within the fire station. Subject to planning permission, a further porta cabin will be located within the fire station allowing a response team to be despatched to areas in the north of the County.
- The public can meet local police officers at the One Stop Shop within the town.
- The current changes will not impact on the service provided by Gwent Police within the Abergavenny area.

Having received the update by the Police and Crime Commissioner for Gwent, the following points were noted:

- There will not be a custody suite located at the new Hub. This will continue to be located at Newport Police Station.
- Monmouthshire North has 55 staff with 35 of these being assigned to Abergavenny. The majority being response officers and neighbourhood team.
- As Abergavenny police officers currently patrol from Monmouth, there will be periods at the beginning and end of their shift where they will be travelling to and from Monmouth, reducing the time they spend in Abergavenny. However, the additional porta cabin will allow for an increased and regular supply of police officers located within Abergavenny.

Crime figures from May 2018 to present day:

- There has been an overall 4.4% increase in recorded crime in the Abergavenny area. Therefore, the relocation from the former police station site has had minimal effect on crime figures.
- There has been an increase in burglaries. Last year there were 23. This year there has been 48. These have been commercial burglaries, not home burglaries. The burglaries have been committed by four individuals. One individual is now in prison and two others are awaiting sentencing. The remaining individual is a juvenile. More police officers are working night shifts and stop and search is being used which is having a positive impact.
- Footfall at the former police station was low. There has been no reduction in footfall since the relocation.

We noted the update by the Police and Crime Commissioner for Gwent.

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5. Abergavenny Tourist Information Centre

We received a report regarding whether it might be feasible to move Abergavenny Tourist Information Centre (TIC) from the Tithe Barn to Abergavenny Town Hall as part of the upcoming refurbishment programme.

In noting the detail of the report, the following points were identified:

- Strategic signage around the bus station area needs to be investigated to aid visitors and tourists entering the town at this location.
- The new Hub will be an attractive location to house Abergavenny Tourist Information Centre.

We resolved to support the relocation of Abergavenny Tourist Information Centre from the Tithe Barn to Abergavenny Town Hall as part of the upcoming refurbishment programme.

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:

- Safety issues regarding the bus stop near Tesco.
- Redevelopment of the Town Hall, Abergavenny.
- Proposed 3 – 19 school, Abergavenny.
- Local Development Plan.
- Abergavenny Arts Festival.
- Alan Michie had stood down as Chair of Team Abergavenny.

Having received the report, the following points were noted:

- The issues regarding the Market Hall had now been resolved.
- Preparations for the Abergavenny Arts Festival were underway.
- It was considered that strategic signposting was required in the town in order to help visitors and tourists as they enter the town.
- With regard to the bus stop alongside Tesco, it was noted that buses were continuing to stop at the wrong location.

We resolved that the Head of Operations investigates with SWTRA the issue regarding buses stopping at the wrong location in the town and also the need for strategic signposting throughout the town to be investigated.

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7. Abergavenny Town Council Strategy and Action Plan

We received and noted the Abergavenny Town Council Strategy and Action Plan.

8. Update regarding Abergavenny Railway Station

We received an update from Network Rail regarding Abergavenny Railway Station.

The Area Committee was informed that Abergavenny had been successfully nominated as part of the Department for Transport's CP6 Access for All programme, funded jointly in Wales & Borders by Welsh Government.

Network Rail will now begin to mobilise the project to provide step free access at the station.

With reference to the update at the previous Area Committee meeting, Network Rail will likely consider the options for the semaphore signal in the first instance with a view to progressing the existing design that has achieved listed building consent previously. Depending on that output, Network Rail might need to progress a further option selection process to determine the final proposal.

As with all Access for All schemes, Network Rail and its delivery partners will engage with the local community, and in particular, relevant disability and access groups to provide the best possible outcome for all passengers.

We noted the update.

9. Update by County Councillor S. Woodhouse regarding progress in respect of the Strategic Transport Group

We received a verbal update by County Councillor S. Woodhouse.

The next meeting of the Strategic Transport Group will be held on 12th June 2019.

Members were asked to contact Councillor Woodhouse directly if they had any items to be raised at the next Strategic Transport Group meeting.

10. Update by North Monmouthshire Liaison Committee

We received a report by the North Monmouthshire Liaison Committee in which the Area Committee received an update in respect of the following:

- Relationship with Brecon Beacons National Park Association.
- Local Development Plan Training.
- Waste collection.
- Local Issues relating to Abergavenny, Llanfihangel Crucorney, Llanelly, Llanover, Llanfoist Fawr and Goytre.

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Having received the report, the following points were noted:

- In response to a question raised regarding Superfast Cymru broadband roll out, the Cabinet Member with responsibility for Social Justice and Community Development agreed to bring a report on this matter to the next Area Committee meeting.
- In response to a question raised regarding the recent light aircraft crash onto the A40, the local Member for Llanover stated that she would investigate this matter further with the appropriate authorities.
- The local Member for Llanelly Hill informed the Area Committee that she is working with representatives of the Brecon Beacons National Park Association with a view to establishing a liaison Committee.

We resolved that the Cabinet Member with responsibility for Social Justice and Community Development provides the Area Committee with a report regarding Superfast Cymru broadband roll out at the next Area Committee meeting.

11. Confirmation of Minutes

The minutes of the North Monmouthshire Area Committee dated 20th March 2019 were confirmed and signed by the Chair.

12. Monmouthshire Scrutiny Work Programme

We received and noted the Scrutiny Work Programme.

13. Forward Planner for Cabinet and Council Business

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

14. North Monmouthshire Area Committee Work Programme

We received and noted the North Monmouthshire Area Committee future work programme. In doing so, the following items were added:

- Invite representatives from Aneurin Bevan University Health Board and representatives from Monmouthshire County Council's Highways Department to discuss highways issues at the Nevill Hall site.
- To receive an update on progress in respect of the roll out of Superfast Cymru broadband to the north of the County.

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15. Review of the time of future meetings of the North Monmouthshire Area Committee

The Committee resolved to change the commencement time of future meetings of the North Monmouthshire Area Committee to 10.00am.

16. Next Meeting

The next meeting will be held on Wednesday 24th July 2019 at 10.00am.

The meeting ended at 2.33 pm.