

MONMOUTHSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

**Minutes of the Monmouthshire Strategic Transport Group
held at County Hall, Usk on Monday 21st September 2015 at 10.00 a.m.**

PRESENT:

County Councillor D.L.S. Dovey (Chairman)

County Councillors: D. Blakebrough, A. Easson and F. Taylor.

ALSO IN ATTENDANCE:

Mr D. Flint
Mr T. Hand
Mr D. Cole
Mr C. James
Mr G. Nelmes
Mr P. Turner

OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE:

Mr. R. Cope	Passenger Transport Unit Manager
Mr. C. Schmidt	Transport Planning and Policy Officer
Mrs. N. Perry	Democratic Services Officer

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

We received apologies from County Councillors P. Farley, S.B. Jones, Mr. P. Inskip and R. Hoggins.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

3. MINUTES

We received the notes of the meeting held on 28th July 2015.

4. PRESENTATION – NETWORK RAIL

We welcomed Gareth Yates and Andrew Griffiths of Network Rail, who were providing a presentation to update on the South Wales Mainline Electrification. Prior to the presentation, the visitors wished to express their thanks to Members and officers of Monmouthshire County Council for the collaborative work which had progressed greatly in a short space of time.

Following the presentation the following points were noted:

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- There were no set timescales for the new ticket office at Severn Tunnel Junction.
- Works at Severn Tunnel Junction/Rogiet Road were due to commence in October 2016, ending in March/April 2017. Part of the design of the bridge reconstruction would be to look how to improve the access road and parking. MCC had also requested a budget cost for extending the new footbridge. Initial designs were due to be completed in early 2016.
- Members requested a copy of the designs of the parapets, as previously agreed. We were informed that designs for Church Road could be shared. There were concerns around Huggets Road and Magor Road. With regards to Huggets Road consultations had been held with planning, and designs would be shared in due course. Magor Road parapets works would be sympathetic to the bridge and surroundings, further information to be provided. It was noted that works were on schedule which was testament to the collaborative relationship between Network Rail and MCC.
- The Chairman wished to record appreciation to Lois Park at Network Rail for the ongoing programme of communication.
- It was suggested that a Member of the group should sit in on Planning Committee meetings, on an occasional basis.

5. SEVERN TUNNEL JUNCTION AND MAGOR STATION

The Transport Planning and Policy Officer advised members that there were no new stations set for 5 years and it was recommended to reset the schedule.

Four separate bids had been submitted:

- Car parking – extension of overflow car park.
- Facilities in the station – passenger waiting facilities estimating £45,000
- Development costs for footbridge on south side.
- Access improvements – walking access routes and upgrade of existing pavements.

With regards to Magor, Welsh Government had stated they were not looking at an additional station. If WG do not grant funding Monmouthshire County Council would not be in a position to deliver, but it was advisable to be in a position to move quickly should the funds be received.

In terms of the Minister visit, as part of the communication we have asked for £70,000 to be split:

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- Half for STJ car park
- Half for Magor phase 1 and 2

Magor group had also asked First Great Western for funding for the grip 1 and 2 study. Consultants would cost £25000-£30000, to include timetabling.

The Chairman noted that we should be talking to the Minister and Welsh Government officials to make a case for MCC aspirations.

6. M4 CONSULTATION

We received an update on the M4 consultations. In doing so we noted:

- A number of local events had been held from Castleton to Magor to show the design so far.
- Welsh Government were asking for comments. Also recommended to go back to Council regarding public rights of way proposals.
- A number of design proposals had been provided which should be addressed individually.
- The Chairman noted that MCC have a duty of care for residents in Magor and the impact the road would have.
- It was noted that the recent consultation events were better organised than previous events, and provided a much more informative exhibition.
- Severn Tunnel Action Group consulted with the new M4 link to Severn Tunnel Junction off the existing M48, and noted restrictions at the most desired point.
- It was important to look at the opportunity, and impacts on bus and train services.
- The Passenger Transport Unit Manager advised he would be happy to take any comments to the relevant officials at Welsh Government through the Local Access Forum.
- We noted that any response should focus on strategic issues.

7. BUS SERVICES AND FARE CHANGES

We heard that a number of bus services had recently changed and recent changes in the Severnside Area had had a knock-on effect. Funding remains

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an issue, and fares had risen since 1st September 2015. There were no figures available but early indication showed that services remained to be well used.

Officers advised that they were looking into many ways to tackle issues, and looking at partnership agreements.

It was noted that the upkeep of bus shelters and timetable information needed to be addressed. We heard that it was difficult to provide paper timetables due to constant changes. Discussions had taken place for operators to issue their own timetable. Officers were looking to have a strategy to issue information. MCC website would always be a source of correct information.

Officers advised they were hoping to have access to European Funding due shortly, which could be utilised for bus services and community transport.

Members would continue to be updated.

8. DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING

We agreed that the next meeting would be held on Tuesday 12th January 2016 at 10.00am.

The meeting ended at 12.35 p.m.