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MONMOUTHSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

**Minutes of the meeting of County Council held
at County Hall, Usk - Remote Attendance on Thursday, 3rd March, 2022 at 2.00 pm**

PRESENT: County Councillor M.Feakins (Chairman)
County Councillor A. Webb (Vice Chairman)

County Councillors: D. Batrouni, J.Becker, D. Blakebrough, L.Brown, A.Davies, L.Dymock, A. Easson, C.Edwards, R. Edwards, D. Evans, P.A. Fox, R.J.W. Greenland, M.Groucutt, L. Guppy, R. Harris, J. Higginson, G. Howard, S. Howarth, R.John, D. Jones, L.Jones, P. Jones, S. Jones, P. Jordan, M.Lane, P. Murphy, P.Pavia, M. Powell, J.Pratt, R.Roden, V. Smith, B. Strong, F. Taylor, J.Treharne, J.Watkins, A. Watts, K. Williams, S. Woodhouse and P White

OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE:

Matt Phillips	Chief Officer People and Governance and Monitoring Officer
Paul Matthews	Chief Executive
Alan Burkitt	Policy Officer Equalities and Welsh Language
Peter Davies	Deputy Chief Executive and Chief Officer, Resources
Jane Rodgers	Chief Officer for Social Care, Safeguarding and Health
Will McLean	Chief Officer for Children and Young People
John Pearson	Local Democracy Manager
Hazel Ilett	Scrutiny Manager
Richard Williams	Democratic Services Officer
Frances O'Brien	Chief Officer, Enterprise
Matthew Gatehouse	Head of Policy and Governance
Ian Saunders	Chief Operating Officer, MonLife
Joanne Chase	Solicitor
Adam Fall	Local Democracy and Digital Apprentice
Jonathan Davies	Acting Assistant Head of Finance
Phil Diamond	Service Manager, Gwent Regional Partnership Board
Ruth Donovan	Assistant Head of Finance
Cath Saunders	Children and Young People Directorate
Sharon Randall-Smith	Head of Achievement and Attainment
Sally Thomas	Head of HR
Wendy Barnard	Democratic Services Officer
Hayley Jones	Curriculum Partner (SACs and RVE)
Ben Davies	Solicitor

APOLOGIES:

County Councillors S.B. Jones and T.Thomas

1. Declarations of Interests

Item 6a: County Councillor D. Blakebrough declared a personal, prejudicial interest as an employee of the Welsh Ambulance Services NHS Trust. She took no part in discussion of this item.

2. Public Questions

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None.

3. Chairman's Announcement and receipt of petitions

The Chairman opened the meeting with a statement regarding the events unfolding in Ukraine.

County Councillor A. Watts left the meeting at 14.02.

County Councillor S. Jones presented a petition of behalf of residents of Llangybi Fawr ward requesting speed reduction on two sections of road in and around Llantrisant.

County Councillor R. John presented a petition on behalf of Abergavenny Road Club calling on the Council to support the plans for of the proposed Abergavenny Velo Park.

County Councillor R. John presented a petition signed by Residents against the Welsh Ambulance Services NHS Trust plans to withdraw the rapid response vehicles from Chepstow and Monmouth Ambulance stations.

The Chair announced that it was the last meeting of this Council. Group Leaders and Councillors were invited to reflect on the last five years and to pay tribute to those Councillors not standing in the forthcoming Council elections in May.

The Chair remembered County Councillors David Dovey and Peter Clarke who had passed away during this Council term. It was proposed that benches in memory of Councillors Dovey and Clarke are located close to the entrance of County Hall.

4. Reports to Council

5. REVENUE AND CAPITAL BUDGETS 2022/23 AND COUNCIL TAX RESOLUTION

The Cabinet Member for Resources presented the Council Tax Resolution and Revenue and Capital Budgets for 2022/23.

The Council is bound by Statute to specific timescales for Council Tax setting and is also required to make certain defined resolutions. The recommendations that form the major part of this report are designed to comply with those Statutory Provisions.

The recommended resolutions also draw together the Council Tax implications of precepts proposed by the Office of Police and Crime Commissioner for Gwent and Town and Community Councils, thereby enabling the County Council to establish its headline Council Tax levels at the various property bands within each Town or Community area.

The Leader of the Opposition welcomed that the Council Tax increase is below the rate of inflation referring to the higher settlement from Welsh Government. He expressed concerns about increased fees and charges e.g. burial services and domiciliary care. He expressed disappointment that an increase to Council Tax on second homes had not been considered.

Concerns were expressed at the increased cost of Children's Services locally and nationally particularly for Children Looked After and Additional Learning Needs provision against the backdrop of the cost of living crisis. The new administration was urged to address poverty and inequality.

It was suggested that the delay to the Local Development Plan is an opportunity to include higher energy efficiency standards in homes to be built.

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Frustration was expressed that UK Government did not support a Level Up Fund bid and suggested that some Council's reserves are used to refurbish Caldicot Leisure Centre as a priority.

A business case for Ash Dieback disease was requested. Savings made from the new waste contract were challenged with Household Waste Transfer Centres (HWTC) being open fewer days per week. A breakdown of Investment Committee portfolio costs was requested. The Cabinet Member for Infrastructure and Neighbourhood Services confirmed that there is a plan for Ash Dieback and the Tree Officer can provide strategy details. Referring to the three HWTCs, it was confirmed that there is sufficient capacity, an efficient service and an effective kerbside collection service.

The Cabinet Member for Children and Young People welcomed improved investment in schools urging Welsh Government to disburse Covid funding appropriately, to review the funding formula and to reform Council Tax. He highlighted that the impact of the pandemic disproportionately affected children and young people and significant investment will be required over significant time to repair the damage.

The Cabinet Member for Governance and Strategic Planning thanked the Cabinet Member for Resources and the officers for their work on the budget. He welcomed the improved settlement but noted that the funding formula is a disbenefit to rural councils and Monmouthshire is the lowest funded council in Wales. Requests for senior officer Investment Committee time costs, it was commented that it is not possible to separate costs for senior officer time.

The Chair of the Governance and Audit Committee reported on the Committee's consideration of a report to assess the robustness of the budget process, and adequacy of reserves. The Governance and Audit Committee approved the report's ten recommendations. The Committee also considered the 2022/23 Capital Strategy and Treasury Management Strategy. Considering the latter, the Committee satisfied itself that steps were being taken to mitigate risks relating to inflation and rising interest rates where possible.

The Cabinet Member for Economy emphasised that the Investment Committee's portfolio is for a longer term vision to sustain future services. The Enterprise Directorate works hard to create the right environment for investment by businesses. The tighter Covid restrictions in Wales will make it harder for businesses to catch up. The Cabinet Member supported the new Level Up bid for Caldicot Leisure Centre.

The Cabinet Member for Resources replied to the following points.

- Increases to fees and charges were kept as low as possible and where possible were not raised.
- The latest announcement on second homes has been received too late for inclusion in the budget; implementation cannot be until 2024/25.
- Planning permission cannot be granted within the rules around phosphates and this is delaying the building of thousands of homes.
- Reserves were augmented in the last two years and this year to maintain the minimum reserve position.
- The Governance and Audit Committee reviews the Investment Committee annually. Investments contribute significantly to maintaining frontline services. Information that officer time is charged to core budgets has been provided. The costs of advisers and agents is charged to Investments and that information can be provided.
- The 1% is £600,000 covered by additional grants and savings – a table is available in the Cabinet Report.

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- Higher energy standards for new homes and rising costs in Children's Services are items for the next administration.

Upon being put to a vote Council resolved to accept the recommendations as set out in the report.

6. 2022/23 CAPITAL STRATEGY AND 2022/23 TREASURY MANAGEMENT STRATEGY

The Cabinet Member for Resources introduced the 2022/23 Capital Strategy and 2022/23 Treasury Management Strategy.

The purpose of this report is to approve the Capital and Treasury management strategies including the Minimum revenue provision policy and borrowing & investment strategies for the 2022/23 financial year. The report summarises and highlights the key areas relating to the strategies, alongside those areas of key implications and risks resulting from it.

The Leader of the Opposition proposed the Investment Committee drives housing development to generate revenue in the medium to long term and provide affordable and social housing in the County. House prices are the main causes of poverty and inequality. It was recognised that investment is needed to supplement the Council's revenue generating capacity. With interest rates rising, it was questioned if short term borrowing can be moved to long term.

It was suggested that there are opportunities available to improve the quality of housing and the rates of finance to build housing (e.g. green finance).

The Cabinet Member for Governance and Strategic Planning agreed that the next administration must consider affordable housing in the replacement LDP.

The Cabinet Member for Resources confirmed that a move has been made to longer term borrowing aligned to borrowing needs. Projections have been made but are subject to change. A balance of short and long term loans will be maintained to mitigate interest rate risk. Opportunities to fix at lower rates will be explored when possible. The Deputy Chief Executive and Chief Officer Resources added acknowledged the constraints on the ability to build housing noting that the position will be held until it is possible to build and the best option will be explored.

County Councillor R. Harris indicated that the impasse on housing development was due to officers not Welsh Government.

Upon being put to a vote Council resolved to accept the recommendations:

- 1. That Council approves the Capital strategy for 2022/23 (as found at *Appendix 1 of the report*).**
- 2. That Council approves the Treasury management strategy for 2022/23 as found at *Appendix 1*, including the:**
 - **2022/23 Minimum Revenue Provision Policy Statement**
 - **2022/23 Investment & Borrowing Strategies**
- 3. To approve the Prudential Indicators as outlined in sections 3 and 4 of the Treasury strategy shown in *Appendix 1* and that will be used in the performance monitoring of the treasury function during 2022/23.**

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- 4. That Council agrees that Governance & Audit Committee should continue to review the Council's treasury activities on behalf of the Council by receiving & scrutinising the mid-year report and year-end report and also scrutinising the Capital and Treasury strategies before recommending to Council for approval.**
- 5. That Council receive the verbal feedback of the scrutiny undertaken on the Capital and Treasury strategies by the Governance & Audit Committee at its meeting on the 28th February 2022 and confirms that the Committee endorses the strategies.**

7. POPULATION NEEDS ASSESSMENT

The Cabinet Member for Social Care, Safeguarding and Health presented the Population Needs Assessment.

The purpose of the report is to seek approval of the Population Needs Assessment which identifies the care and support needs of the people in the area and their carers in line with the requirements of The Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014.

Additionally, the report is to demonstrate how the PNA aligns to the regional Wellbeing Assessment required Wellbeing of Future Generations Act.

The Leader of the Opposition queried the use of ONS data from 2001 suggesting more up to date data and not per electoral cycle. He drew attention to the concerning spike in numbers of residents who feel lonely and urged the new administration to treat this as a priority.

County Councillor S. Howarth referred to Violence Against Women Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence (VAWDASV) and noted that one bullet point did not include the male aspect.

The Cabinet Member for Social Care, Safeguarding and Health agreed that the male position should be included and would be followed up. It was confirmed that the frequency of the assessment is in line with the requirements of The Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014. It was confirmed that the authority undertakes a significant amount of innovative and creative work to address loneliness and social isolation including digital means and volunteers. It was suggested that the upward trend is related to an aging population and the pandemic. This will be a priority going forward.

The Service Manager, Gwent Regional Partnership Board, confirmed that up to date data is utilised when available via data Cymru. The census data will be updated as soon as possible.

It was confirmed that the male perspective is taken into account when considering VAWDASV.

The Leader of the Opposition pointed out that the spike in loneliness related to 2019 prior to the pandemic. It was agreed that this point will be reviewed to better understand the need. The need identified will drive an action plan for localised support.

Upon being put to a vote Council resolved to accept the recommendations:

- 1. That the Population Needs Assessment be approved by Council prior to publication.**
- 2. Once the Population Needs Assessment has been agreed by all local authorities s to share and upload to the council's website**

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8. 21ST CENTURY SCHOOLS BAND B FUNDING: STATEMENT FROM CABINET MEMBER FOR CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE

The Cabinet Member for Children and Young People read out a statement to provide an update on the progress on the delivery of Monmouthshire's Sustainable Schools Programme to establish a 3-19 School on the King Henry VIII School site, Abergavenny with pupils from King Henry VIII School and Deri View Primary School. On completion, Deri View Primary School will be repurposed to facilitate the expansion of Ysgol Gymraeg Y Fenni.

This is an ambitious project to create a 3-19 all-through School to tackle significant challenges locally; the catchment area of Deri View Primary School is the most deprived in Monmouthshire.

Emerging evidence suggests that all -through schools have beneficial effects such as professional development of staff, the educational experience and outcomes of pupils.

The statutory consultation process commenced in June 2021, concluded in January 2022. Cabinet decided to close King Henry VIII School and Deri View Primary School and to open a new 3-19 School.

Cabinet agreed a temporary governing body will be established and the LA Governors have been appointed. Its tasks will be to appoint a new Headteacher from 1st January 2023. With the new Headteacher, the temporary governing body will develop the staffing structure, the vision and governance for the new school.

Business cases were submitted to Welsh Government to secure 65% funding; the remainder to be contributed by Monmouthshire County Council. The Minister approved the outline business case in December 2021 and the full business case will be submitted this week. A report will be brought to Council to seek approval for the 35% funding. In partnership with the Welsh Government, the business case specifies that the school should be built to zero carbon standard in recognition of the sustainability benefit and our commitment to the Climate Emergency.

As well as the 3-19 all through school, the site will include a centre for children with complex neurodevelopmental needs, a wellbeing centre, additional Flying Start provision and wrap around childcare enhancing support to the community and families.

To minimise disruption and reduce costs, during construction, King Henry VIII School pupils will remain in their existing buildings. Whilst avoiding the cost of temporary accommodation is beneficial to the budget and the stability of pupils' learning experience, this will reduce the availability of land to build on.

The Cabinet Member updated Council on the risks to be addressed:

- Due to the change in scope of the project the floor area has increased and so building costs have increased;
- The impact of the pandemic and other inflationary cost drivers is not fully known both affecting project costs;
- Raw material costs are high and there are delays in supply chain, and labour availability;
- The Project team is continuously reviewing costs as the project progresses through works testing;
- An economic appraisal has been compiled with each option scored against investment objectives, critical success factors and benefit delivery. This has been repeated because

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of rising costs and an appropriate uplift has been applied to all options. The 3-19 school remains the preferred option despite the increased costs.

Aecom has been appointed as project manager and Morgan Sindall Construction has been appointed to the end of Riba 4. Planning permission has been submitted for decision in June 2022. If granted, enabling works will commence through the summer holidays. Building is scheduled to commence in September 2022 to be ready to admit pupils in September 2024. In its first year the School will operate from two separate sites.

A question was asked about plans for the Leisure facilities.

County Councillor M. Groucutt, local member for both schools and member of the temporary governing body, welcomed the development and the acknowledgment of the social and economic difficulties in the area. He paid tribute to the retiring Headteacher, Elspeth Lewis, who has been tremendous asset to the school and has worked extremely hard to improve collaboration in the cluster.

The Leader of the Opposition welcomed the exciting plans and referred to the rising costs querying the response of Welsh Government around additional financial support. Disappointment was expressed that Chepstow School was not included in Band B.

The Cabinet Member for Children and Young People confirmed that there will be considerable upgrade to leisure facilities on the school site (e.g. 4G pitches, additional learning spaces, a Hockey MUGA) as part of the application. The leisure opportunities are separate to Abergavenny Leisure Centre.

It was confirmed that there has been, and will be, negotiations with Welsh Government on increased costs particularly in respect of zero carbon standards. It will be for the new Council to consider the 35% contribution.

9. SACRE: TERMS OF REFERENCE AND AGREED SYLLABUS CONFERENCE

The Cabinet Member for Children and Young People introduced the report on SACRE: Terms of Reference and arrangements for an Agreed Syllabus Conference.

The purpose of the report is to consider the composition of the Agreed Syllabus Conference and revised terms of reference for the SACRE committee.

Upon being put to a vote Council resolved to accept the recommendations:

That Full Council agree to the recommendations of SACRE as to the formation of the Agreed Syllabus Conference and an updated terms of reference for SACRE.

9.1. RE-PURPOSING SCRUTINY ARRANGEMENTS

The Cabinet Member for Governance and Strategic Planning introduced the report on re-purposing scrutiny arrangements.

The purpose of the report is to seek the approval of Council to restructure the authority's scrutiny arrangements to increase opportunities for public engagement, minimise overlaps and duplication and ensure effective scrutiny of performance, budgets and risks aligned with concurrent changes to the Governance and Audit Committee.

The Head of Policy, Performance and Scrutiny explained that the proposal is to increase public engagement in scrutiny and demonstrates the best option to improve the function.

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Welcoming the proposals, some councillors commented:

- That this is an opportunity to meaningfully increase public engagement
- That scrutiny committees can often duplicate topics
- Combining two committees would improve attendance
- That a change in name to move away from “Select” Committees was positive.
- The proposals would encourage better quality debate with improved member engagement.
- Members of the new administration will require early training on scrutiny.

Questions were asked around the number of members on committees and the ability of the committee to hold to account. Regarding engagement with the public, it was suggested that the timings of meetings may require review.

The Leader of the Opposition broadly supported the proposals and suggested that the Policy and Scrutiny Committee should be named the Policy Development and Scrutiny Committee to encourage public engagement.

The Head of Performance, Policy and Scrutiny confirmed that the committees would remain with nine members. Regarding capacity, officer and Member time would be optimised for e.g. budget monitoring. It was agreed that “Scrutiny” will be better understood by the public than “Select”.

Upon being put to a vote Council resolved to accept the recommendations as set out in the report.

- 1. That Council approve: the creation of a new Performance and Overview Scrutiny Committee; the merger of the Children & Young People and Adults Select Committees; the merger of the Economy & Development and Strong Communities Select Committees to create two Policy Scrutiny Committees, and the retention of the Public Services Scrutiny committee.**
- 2. To maintain the number of special responsibility allowances for Scrutiny Committee chairs, with the Public Services Scrutiny Committee now having a dedicated chair rather than being rotated between the chairs of the other committees.**
- 3. That the constitution be amended to reflect these changes, to take effect at the next Annual General Meeting in May 2022.**

10. 5 YEAR WELSH LANGUAGE STRATEGY 2022- 27

The Cabinet Member for Wellbeing and Social Justice introduced the 5 Year Welsh Language Strategy report.

The purpose of the report is to seek approval of the Welsh Language Strategy for 2022 – 2027, which has been produced in line with the requirements of the Welsh Language (Wales) Measure 2011 and describes our ambition to increase the number of Welsh speakers in the county in line with the Welsh Government ambition for a million Welsh speakers by 2050.

The Cabinet Member for Children and Young People confirmed that the Strategy dovetailed with the Welsh in Education Strategic Plan (WESP), the ten year plan to increase opportunities to learn through the medium of Welsh. Key outcomes include more nursery age children and

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more reception age children receiving their education through the medium of Welsh. Also that children moving through phases continue to improve their Welsh Language skills, that more learners study for assessed qualifications in Welsh and studies through the medium of Welsh, more opportunities for learners to use their Welsh in different contexts in school, to increase Welsh medium language opportunities for pupils with Additional Learning Needs and to increase the number of teachers able to teach through the medium of Welsh.

The Cabinet Member added that we are obligated to increase opportunities for Early Years learning Welsh language especially in the South of the County. We also need to increase access to Welsh Language education for parents. The action plan underpinning the WESP will address these points.

The Welsh Language Officer was thanked for his passion and commitment to the Welsh Language.

Upon being put to a vote Council resolved to accept the recommendations:

That Council approve the strategy which is a legal requirement under The Welsh Language (Wales) Measure 2011.

11. STANDARDS COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP

The Chief Officer, People and Governance and Monitoring Officer presented the report on Standards Committee Membership and the recruitment process to appoint an independent member, Marion Gibson. There were no questions.

Upon being put to a vote Council resolved to accept the recommendations:

Council is requested to approve the appointment of Mrs Marion Gibson to the Standards Committee.

12. Motions to Council

13. Submitted by County Councillor R. John

This Council:

Condemns the plans of the Welsh Ambulance Services NHS Trust to remove the rapid response vehicles from Monmouth and Chepstow ambulance stations as part of its National Roster Review.

Believes that downgrading these stations will put the lives of residents in the Monmouth, Chepstow and Caldicot areas at risk, at a time when response time targets for immediately life-threatening category A calls are already being consistently missed, despite the best efforts of paramedics and frontline NHS workers.

Opposes any move to downgrade ambulance stations in Monmouthshire and calls on WAST and the Welsh Government to scrap these plans.

Seconded by County Councillor J. Treharne, echoing the comments of Councillor John that the plans could leave Monmouth with no ambulance cover, are dangerous and should be scrapped. The changes could put many lives at risk particularly older and vulnerable people in Monmouth

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and Parkwall. We need to press for proper NHS infrastructure in our towns. Paramedics should have proper facilities.

Mr. G Bright was thanked for bringing this matter to our attention.

County Councillor L. Jones MS supported the motion denouncing the proposals as dangerous and life threatening.

It was questioned if poor weather had been taken into account and how easily paramedics would locate patients in unfamiliar, rural areas where SatNav doesn't work well. Have the impacts on mortality and morbidity had been assessed and emphasised that time is a critical element in life threatening circumstances. Several Members referred to the Golden Hour for treatment to improve survival chances.

It was commented that the proposals would have a detrimental effect across the whole county and residents will be at great risk.

The Leader of the Opposition stated that there were a lot of concerns and fears for residents. He proposed an amendment to the motion as follows:

“calls on Welsh Ambulance Service Trust (WAST) and ~~Welsh Government~~ to scrap these plans and for the Leader and local MSs to meet the Chief Executive (WAST) as soon as possible to discuss this matter.”

Seconded by County Councillor M. Groucutt echoing the importance of the time element in emergencies recalling his personal experience.

The motion was amended by agreement as follows:

“calls on Welsh Ambulance Service Trust (WAST) and ~~the Welsh Government~~ the Health and Social Care Minister to scrap these plans and for the Leader and local MSs to meet the Chief Executive (WAST) as soon as possible to discuss this matter.”

Upon being put to the vote, the amended motion was carried becoming the substantive motion

Services should be upgraded for Monmouth and Parkwall. Concerns were expressed for seriously ill patients unable to travel to hospital by private car in emergency circumstances.

It was questioned why a Manchester based company had undertaken the National Roster Review for the WAST leading to these proposals. There should be more rapid response vehicles, not less, due to the demographics of high numbers of older residents and the size of the county.

It was added that assistance is provided by the Fire Service to provide emergency response.

It is unacceptable to have ambulances queued at The Grange University Hospital.

It was questioned if the Aneurin Bevan University Health Board had any alternatives to address the concerns such as improved systems.

County Councillor P. Fox MS expressed concerns about the proposals especially in such a large rural area and would have appreciated better communication.

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The Leader thanked the many Councillors who shared their personal experiences. NHS workers are held in the highest regard. Disappointment was expressed that it has taken two months to arrange a meeting with the WAST. The fallback position of additional emergency response vehicles crossing into Monmouthshire from the Gwent region was not acceptable.

Upon being put to a vote the substantive motion was carried.

14. Submitted by County Councillor J. Pratt

This Council is proud to be a coastal county and the starting point of the Wales Coastal Path. We recognise the importance of the marine ecosystem and our role as a stakeholder and guardian of it. A report should be brought forward to Council within 6 months of this motion containing appropriate recommendations to ensure we play our part in ensuring realising a clean, healthy and productive ocean alongside our existing commitment to tackle the climate emergency.

County Councillor J. Pratt introduced the motion referring to the Climate Emergency and that a healthy ocean is essential ally against climate change. Additionally, an unhealthy ocean is bad for the fishing industry, aquaculture, industry, tourism, and the health, wellbeing, and prosperity of coastal communities. The Council would be the first Council in Wales to pass the motion.

Seconded by County Councillor Powell referring to the impact of climate change on wildlife, and to the Rivers Usk and Wye that run into the sea.

County Councillor J. Watkins supported the motion to support our rivers and oceans and objected that the local MP had voted against preventing sewage to be released into rivers.

The Leader of the Opposition proposed an amendment as follows

This Council is proud to be a coastal county and the starting point of the Wales Coastal Path. We recognise the importance of the marine ecosystem and our role as a stakeholder and guardian of it. A report should be brought forward to Council within 6 months of this motion containing appropriate recommendations to ensure we play our part in ensuring realising clean, healthy and productive rivers and oceans alongside our existing commitment to tackle the climate emergency.

Seconded by County Councillor J. Watkins

Upon being put to the vote, the amendment was carried and became the substantive motion.

It was commented that the Council must take its own measures against climate change and asked the authority to draw up a list of chokes in the sewage system and take control. The type of salt used on roads was queried.

County Councillor R. Roden wished to clarify that local MP voted against preventing the release of sewage into rivers as it would allow sewage to back up in homes.

Councillor Pratt responded that it has been a pleasure to Chair the cross-party Climate Change Group. It was confirmed that the Council has invested in a new Vactor machine to clear drains and provide valuable data on drain condition.

Upon being put to the vote the substantive motion was carried.

15. Members ' Questions

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None.

16. Reports to Council

17. PUBLICATION OF PAY POLICY STATEMENT AS REQUIRED BY THE LOCALISM ACT

The Cabinet Member for Resources presented the report for council to approve the publication of Monmouthshire County Council's Pay Policy, in compliance with the Localism Act.

The Leader of the Opposition commented that the public sector settlement should be more than 1.5% in recognition of the pandemic and other emergencies.

It was clarified that pay negotiations will now take place for 1st April 2022.

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

That Council approves the Pay Policy for the year 1st April 2022 to 31st March 2023.

18. Minutes from previous meeting

Council approved the minutes of the meeting held on 27th January 2022.

19. Next Meeting: 17th May 2022 (AGM)

The Deputy Leader thanked the Chair and Vice Chair for their work during their term of office on behalf of all Councillors and Officers.

The Chair thanked Democratic Services for facilitating a successful hybrid meeting of full Council.

The meeting ended at 6.40 pm