

# Public Document Pack

## MONMOUTHSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

**Minutes of the meeting of County Council held  
at Council Chamber - Council Chamber on Thursday, 23rd June, 2022 at 2.00 pm**

**PRESENT:** County Councillor Laura Wright (Chair)  
County Councillor Ann Webb (Vice Chair)

County Councillors: Tony Kear, Catrin Maby, Jan Butler, Ian Chandler, Sara Burch, Alistair Neill, Su McConnel, Mary Ann Brocklesby, Fay Bromfield, Jane Lucas, Emma Bryn, Peter Strong, Meirion Howells, Paul Griffiths, Jackie Strong, Rachel Garrick, Steven Garratt, Angela Sandles, Ben Callard, John Crook, Tomos Davies, Dale Rooke, Catherine Fookes, Sue Riley, Jayne McKenna, Jill Bond, Louise Brown, Lisa Dymock, Tony Easson, Christopher Edwards, Bob Greenland, Martyn Groucutt, Simon Howarth, Richard John, David Jones, Penny Jones, Malcolm Lane, Paul Pavia, Maureen Powell, Frances Taylor, Tudor Thomas and Armand Watts

### **OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE:**

Matt Phillips	Chief Officer People and Governance and Monitoring Officer
Paul Matthews	Chief Executive
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
Nicola Perry	Senior Democracy Officer
Frances O'Brien	Chief Officer, Communities and Place
Matthew Gatehouse	Head of Policy and Governance
Adam Fall	Local Democracy and Digital Apprentice

### **APOLOGIES:**

County Councillors Maria Stevens and Phil Murphy

#### **1. To approve the minutes of the following meetings:**

##### **2. 17th May 2022**

The minutes of the meeting of County Council held on 17<sup>th</sup> May 2022 were approved as an accurate record.

##### **3. 19th May 2022**

The minutes of the meeting of County Council held on 19<sup>th</sup> May 2022 were approved as an accurate record.

#### **4. Declarations of interest**

None.

#### **5. Public Questions**

## MONMOUTHSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

### Minutes of the meeting of County Council held at Council Chamber - Council Chamber on Thursday, 23rd June, 2022 at 2.00 pm

None.

#### **6. Chair's announcement and receipt of petitions**

No petitions presented.

County Councillor Simon Howarth highlighted it being International Women in Engineering Day and felt it was important that Council promote the gender setting for engineering.

#### **7. Monmouthshire Agreed Syllabus for Religion Values and Ethics (RVE)**

County Councillor Martyn Groucutt, Cabinet Member for Education presented the report in order for Council receive and consider the proposed Monmouthshire Agreed Syllabus for Religion, Values and Ethics. In doing so the Cabinet Member congratulated the members of SACRE committee on putting the new document together.

It was noted that any confusion around the format of the syllabus had been addressed for the final version of the document.

The Cabinet Member agreed to review the EQIA to ensure clarification between RSE and RVE.

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

**That Council adopt the Monmouthshire Agreed Syllabus for Religion, Values, and Ethics.**

#### **8. Sustainable Learning Communities Programme Abergavenny 3-19 School**

County Councillor Martyn Groucutt, Cabinet Member for Education presented the report to seek Council's approval to include the construction of a new 3-19 school on the King Henry VIII School site in the Council's Capital Funding Programme. The new 3-19 school will be established through the closure of King Henry VIII and Deri View Schools, as agreed at the Monmouthshire County Council Cabinet meeting on 19<sup>th</sup> January 2022. The funding will enable the relocation of Ysgol Y Fenni to the current Deri View site.

Many Members were keen to support the recommendations and commend the project.

Assurance was sought that robust active travel initiatives be developed and targets set from the planning stage, promoting active and sustainable travel options to ensure that school related congestion does not result in a rise in poor air quality in the local area.

The following suggestions were made in support of the development:

- Engagement with residents of all ages.
- Pop-up site in the town at various phases of completion to maximise engagement, maybe a permanent base within the market.
- Competition to create an artwork or sculpture to be located at the school.
- Extend safe cycling routes to a drop off site at the edge of town where bicycle racks could be installed.

On behalf of the Conservative Group, the Leader of the Opposition commended all officers involved in the project and commended Ms. Lewis for her leadership. He questioned if officers were confident that the cladding being used will be sustainable.

# MONMOUTHSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

## Minutes of the meeting of County Council held at Council Chamber - Council Chamber on Thursday, 23rd June, 2022 at 2.00 pm

The Leader of the Council thanked Welsh Government for the investment, therefore allowing the development of this third 21<sup>st</sup> Century School.

A question was raised regarding the socio-economic aspect of the EQIA, and the impact on those in receipt free school meals. The Cabinet Member for Education stood by the EQIA and explained that he believed the needs of the primary aged children on site would be met far more effectively than it had been possible in the past.

Officers had previously assured County Councillor Tony Eason that the cladding panels used would produce little or no smoke and would not produce flaming droplets.

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

**That Council note that Ministerial approval has been achieved on the Full Business Case confirming Welsh Government (WG) commitment and their contribution of £47,024,335 (67%) towards the total cost of building a new 3-19 school in Abergavenny of £69,292,62**

**That Council approve an increase the approved budget within the Council's Capital Programme from £43,000,000 to £69,792,623, reflecting the revised build cost of £69,292,623 and an additional £500,000 required for associated highways improvements.**

**That Council note that the increase in budget will require a further commitment of Council borrowing of £7,718,288 and that there are consequential revenue budget costs of servicing this borrowing as outlined in the resources section of this report.**

**That Council note the appointment of Morgan Sindall Construction to build the new 3-19 school.**

**To declare Ysgol Gymraeg Y Fenni Primary School surplus to requirements, to be disposed of by the Estates Development Team on terms to be agreed in consultation with the Chief Officer for Resources.**

### **9. Appointments to Outside Bodies - vacancies**

The Chief Officer for People and Governance presented the report to address the remaining vacancies on the Outside Bodies report discussed at the meeting of County Council on 19<sup>th</sup> May 2022.

It was noted that 2 vacancies remain on the report.

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

**That Council make appointments to the outside bodies set out in the attached schedule.**

### **10. Motions to Council:**

#### **11. Submitted by County Councillor Frances Taylor**

*That this Council agrees to write to the Minister for Finance and Local Government in order to request that there is a review of the formula which underpins the un-hypothecated funding of Local Authorities through the Local Government settlement. In particular, that the elements of the formula related to delivering services in a largely rural county are reconsidered.*

County Councillor Ian Chandler seconded the motion.

## MONMOUTHSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

### Minutes of the meeting of County Council held at Council Chamber - Council Chamber on Thursday, 23rd June, 2022 at 2.00 pm

The Cabinet Member for Resources recognised that the Barnett Formula has resulted in poor allocations to Wales over the years and has been publicly criticised by many for its failure to understand the composition of the Welsh population. She agreed that Council could write to WG on the motion but highlighted that the formula is reviewed on an annual basis.

We heard that poverty and inequality are a key focus for the administration and is the number one priority on the manifesto. Clearer targets in term of the poverty action plan and social justice strategy are to be implemented.

**Upon being put to the vote Council unanimously resolved to accept the motion.**

#### **12. Submitted by County Councillor Richard John**

*This Council records its enormous admiration and heartfelt thanks to Her Majesty the Queen for a lifetime of dedicated public service and welcomes the successful community celebrations across Monmouthshire to mark Her Majesty's Platinum Jubilee.*

*Agrees that all group leaders will sign a joint letter to Her Majesty on behalf of the people of Monmouthshire offering our warm congratulations and gratitude for all that Her Majesty and the Royal Family do for our residents.*

County Councillor Lisa Dymock seconded the motion and highlighted the events held across the County for the Platinum Jubilee celebrations.

We heard of a commemorative book to be issued to all primary school children across Wales.

**Group leaders welcomed the proposal and upon being put to a vote Council resolved to accept the motion.**

#### **13. Submitted by County Councillor Tony Kear**

*This Council:*

*Notes the decision of full council in March to become the first in Wales to declare a water quality emergency and commission a strategy to improve our waterways.*

*Has grave concerns about the declining state of the Wye and Usk rivers in Monmouthshire and particularly the excessive and unlicensed raw sewage discharges into the Usk which are threatening biodiversity and wildlife as well as fish numbers.*

*Commits the Leader and Cabinet Member to work with opposition parties and relevant authorities to ensure action is being taken to improve the health of our rivers before it's too late.*

County Councillor Jane Lucas seconded the motion.

*County Councillor Simon Howarth left the meeting at 16:09pm*

The Cabinet Member for Climate Change and the Environment welcomed and fully endorsed the motion. She explained that she has already reached out to Powys and Herefordshire Councils, as well as community groups concerned with the well-being of our rivers. Councillor Maby has also been invited to a meeting with the MP for Hereford and has met with Welsh Water along with Council staff.

## MONMOUTHSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

### Minutes of the meeting of County Council held at Council Chamber - Council Chamber on Thursday, 23rd June, 2022 at 2.00 pm

In supporting the motion, the Cabinet Member expressed that the ecological disaster we are witnessing in our rivers is caused not only by sewage discharge but also by agricultural land management practices, in particular high intensity poultry farming and overly intensive cattle farming.

County Councillor Ian Chandler proposed an amendment to the motion, seconded by County Councillor Frances Taylor:

*This Council:*

*Notes the decision of full council in March to become the first in Wales to declare a water quality emergency and commission a strategy to improve our waterways.*

*Has grave concerns about the declining state of the Wye and Usk rivers in Monmouthshire and **the multiple sources of phosphate and other pollutants including those originating upstream outside of Monmouthshire**, which are threatening biodiversity and wildlife as well as fish numbers.*

*Commits the Leader and Cabinet Member to work with opposition **groups** and relevant authorities including **Powys County Council and Herefordshire County Council** to ensure action is being taken to improve the health of our rivers before it's too late.*

Following discussion Council resolved to accept the amendment, which became the substantive motion.

**Upon being put to a vote Council resolved to accept the motion.**

#### **14. Submitted by County Councillor Louise Brown**

This Council:

Notes the Welsh Government has decided not to progress the WelTAG 2 study on the options for improvement of the High Beech roundabout in Chepstow this year.

Calls on the Welsh Government to urgently commit and financially support all five stages of this study and implement High Beech roundabout studies and improvements as a priority, as the well-known daily traffic congestion and travel delays at this pinch point are having a detrimental impact on the lives of local residents in all areas of life including travelling for school, work, shopping and leisure purposes.

County Councillor Ann Webb seconded the motion.

The was recognised as a passionate topic for those living in Chepstow.

It was suggested that the semi-pedestrianised town centre contributed to the traffic issues.

It was expressed that residents of the ward of Mount Pleasant suffer from some of the worst pollution levels, not only in Wales, but in the UK and they deserve to have something done to alleviate their plight.

The Deputy Leader urged Council to support the motion, highlighting that the case for improvement on the roundabout is very strong. He agreed that the impact is not only on drivers but also the success and vitality of Chepstow as a town centre. Agreeing the motion would allow Cabinet to contact the Transport Minister to say that funding for the WelTag study is urgent.

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

# MONMOUTHSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

## Minutes of the meeting of County Council held at Council Chamber - Council Chamber on Thursday, 23rd June, 2022 at 2.00 pm

### 15. Members Questions:

#### 15.1. From County Councillor Paul Pavia to County Councillor Martyn Groucutt, Cabinet Member for Education

*Can the Cabinet Member for Education make a statement regarding the steps the Council is taking to provide mental health support for Key Stage 4 and Sixth Form pupils in Monmouthshire?*

*County Councillors Tony Easson and Richard John left the meeting at 17:38pm*

The Cabinet Member thanked the member for the question which had come at an opportune time to reflect on the experiences of learners who will have just sat the first set of formal examinations since 2019. The added layers of the covid experience has disrupted learning and heightened anxieties. There is a myriad of approaches to support learners and a wide range of support accessible from partners both within and outside MCC. At the broadest level a universal approach to emotional well-being and mental health is being established. All schools are working towards embedding a whole school approach to mental health and well-being, this encompasses mental health support. In this approach King Henry VIII and Chepstow Schools have taken part in phase 1 of the Public Health Wales pilot which has gone well. Caldicot and the Pupil Referral Service will be phase 2 starting in September 2022.

MCC have developed a well-being sub-group action plan from the secondary school health research network data. This survey addresses a number of health and well-being related issues and helps to determine areas of focus. As needs increase pupils can also access broader offers such as the Educational Literacy Support Assistance or school-based counselling. These services offer more intense support with individuals. All secondary schools have a link educational psychologist who can provide support as well as training and raising awareness around specific issues.

This year schools have received training including Youth Mental First Aid in Schools, Trauma Informed Schools, and Suicide and Self Harm Prevention. A training package has also been developed to support learners with emotionally based school avoidance. Other offers of support are via Monmouthshire Early Help Panel and agencies such as the Youth Service and the Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service.

Beyond Schools Monmouthshire Youth Service provides the Shift Project which offers non-clinical one-to-one support to young people aged 11-25. Mind Monmouthshire have been commissioned to support young people with emerging mental health concerns.

As a supplementary County Councillor Pavia asked if the Authority is putting any additional support in place around the key dates in August for both A-Level and GCSEs.

The Cabinet Member confirmed that every year officers work hard around the results period and he would talk to senior officers to ensure sufficient and adequate support is made available.

### 16. Date of next meeting - Thursday 21st July 2022

Noted.

**MONMOUTHSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL**

**Minutes of the meeting of County Council held  
at Council Chamber - Council Chamber on Thursday, 23rd June, 2022 at 2.00 pm**

**The meeting ended at 5.50 pm**

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