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MONMOUTHSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

Minutes of the meeting of County Council held
on Thursday, 18th April, 2024 at 2.00 pm

PRESENT: County Councillor Meirion Howells (Chair)
County Councillor Su McConnel (Vice Chair, in the Chair)

County Councillors: Rachel Buckler, Laura Wright, 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, Paul Griffiths, Jackie Strong, Rachel Garrick, Maria Stevens, 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, Martyn Groucutt, Simon Howarth, Richard John, David Jones, Penny Jones, Malcolm Lane, Phil Murphy, Paul Pavia, Maureen Powell, Frances Taylor, Tudor Thomas, Armand Watts and Ann Webb

OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE:

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	Chief Officer People, Performance and Partnerships.
Ian Saunders	Chief Officer Customer, Culture and Wellbeing.
James Williams	Chief Officer Law & Governance

APOLOGIES:

County Councillors

1. Declarations of Interest

None.

2. Chair's Announcement

Noted.

3. To confirm the minutes of the meeting held on the 29th February 2024

The minutes of the meeting held on 29th February 2024 were approved as an accurate record.

In doing so County Councillor Neill asked that it be clarified in the minutes that the expectation is that Cabinet Members should answer questions put to them by councillors, and that any report brought to a Full Council meeting should be open to debate. The Monitoring Officer agreed this is confirmed in the Constitution.

<https://www.youtube.com/live/74kF3PYiyF0?feature=shared&t=127>

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4. URGENT CABINET DECISION TAKEN ON 6th MARCH 2024

The Cabinet Member for Social Care, Safeguarding and Accessible Health Services, presented the report to update members on a decision taken by Cabinet on 6th March 2024, where call-in was disapplied due to urgency.

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

That Council notes the decision of Cabinet on 6th March 2024 and the reasons for urgency as set out in the recommendations of the Cabinet report attached at Appendix 1.

<https://www.youtube.com/live/74kF3PYiyF0?feature=shared&t=451>

5. DEVELOPING CHILDREN'S RESIDENTIAL AND 16+ SUPPORTED ACCOMMODATION PLACEMENTS

The Cabinet Member for Social Care, Safeguarding and Accessible Health Services presented the report in order to set out a proposed approach for the development of children's residential and 16+ supported accommodation placements based on an analysis of current and predicted need.

The report considered two distinct elements of developing placements, these being:

- i) the building-based / accommodation element of the provision; and
- ii) the provision of direct care and support.
- iii) The report locates the development of residential and supported accommodation placements within the context of national and local policy objectives.

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

Council endorses the approach to developing 'in-house' residential placements and 16+ supported accommodation placements for children who are looked after and young people who are care experienced or homeless.

Council endorses the proposal that, in the first instance, Children's Services will look to re-purpose existing assets available to the Council in order to provide children's residential and 16+ supported accommodation placements, subject to appropriate business cases and cabinet approval.

Where re-purposing is not viable Council endorses the direct acquisition from the open market of suitable properties or land for the purpose of developing children's residential provision or 16+ supported accommodation, subject to appropriate business cases and cabinet approval.

Council agrees that borrowing headroom is increased to up to £3 Million to support the direct acquisition from the open market of suitable properties or land; and / or to support refurbishment or repurposing costs, subject to appropriate business cases and cabinet approval.

Council agrees that the any decisions to draw on the borrowing headroom for the purposes set out within this report will be made by Cabinet.

Council agrees that a report is provided to Performance and Overview Scrutiny Committee on a six-monthly basis for assurance that we are obtaining value for money

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with specific acquisitions and that the policy approach is delivering the impact and outcomes expected.

<https://www.youtube.com/live/74kF3PYiyF0?feature=shared&t=951>

6. MOTIONS TO COUNCIL:

7. Submitted by County Councillor Frances Taylor

That this council agree that it is of concern that the chair of Standards Committee has resigned citing that the proper functioning of the Committee, and his role as Independent Chair, has been undermined to the extent that he is not prepared to continue as a member.

That this Council commits to upholding standards of conduct in public life to supporting the committee in addressing the issues the independent members of the committee identify as undermining the proper functioning of the committee.

Upon being put to a vote the motion was accepted.

<https://www.youtube.com/live/74kF3PYiyF0?feature=shared&t=3961>

8. Submitted by County Councillor Richard John

This Council:

- *Recognises the significant public support for local procurement to back Monmouthshire businesses, reduce food miles and minimise the county's carbon footprint.*
- *Deeply regrets the decision of the administration to award a contract for dairy products to a business based over 100 miles away, so Monmouthshire schools, care homes and leisure centres can no longer use milk from Monmouthshire farms.*
- *Instructs the administration to take urgent steps to restore local provision of dairy products.*

Seconded by County Councillor Fay Bromfield.

The Leader of the Council, County Councillor Mary Ann Brocklesby proposed the following amendment:

This Council:

Recognises the significant public support for local procurement to back Monmouthshire businesses, reduce food miles and minimise the county's carbon footprint,

Acknowledges that the decision to join the All Wales framework for food procurement in 2018 was taken to reduce costs and whilst the framework serves Monmouthshire well in many regards, it is not suitable for the Council's milk and dairy requirements,

Supports the intention of the Cabinet to review the supply of milk and dairy products and undertake a procurement separate from the All Wales framework with the objective of achieving greater local sustainability and decarbonisation.

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Seconded by County Councillor Ben Callard.

Upon being put to a vote the amendment was accepted and became the substantive motion. Debate ensued.

Council resolved to accept the motion.

<https://www.youtube.com/live/74kF3PYiyF0?feature=shared>

9. Submitted by County Councillor Tony Kear

This Council:

Believes that elected members should aspire to the highest possible standards in public life.

Expresses concern that opportunities for scrutiny, engagement and public consultation have been eroded over the past two years.

Agrees to set up a cross-party working group to review current arrangements and make recommendations to improve accountability in council decision-making.

Seconded by County Councillor Alistair Neill

County Councillor Maureen Powell left the meeting at 17:42pm

County Councillor Jayne McKenna left the meeting at 18:11pm

County Councillor Richard John left the meeting at 18:42pm

Upon being put to a vote the motion was defeated.

<https://www.youtube.com/live/74kF3PYiyF0?feature=shared&t=12017>

10. MEMBERS QUESTIONS:

11. From the Independent Group and County Councillor Simon Howarth to County Councillor Ian Chandler, Cabinet Member for Social Care, Safeguarding and Accessible Health Services

When will the work on the Melville Theatre in respect of the My Day My Life Base be commenced and when is it anticipated to be concluded?

<https://www.youtube.com/live/74kF3PYiyF0?feature=shared&t=17294>

12. From the Independent Group and County Councillor Simon Howarth to County Councillor Ian Chandler, Cabinet Member for Social Care, Safeguarding and Accessible Health Services

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Please provide an update on the work to support The Gathering's business plan and the projected timeline for The Gathering to occupy Tudor Street?

<https://www.youtube.com/live/74kF3PYiyF0?feature=shared&t=17679>

13. From County Councillor Frances Taylor to County Councillor Paul Griffiths, Cabinet Member for Planning and Economic Development Deputy Leader

Please provide an update on the Gypsy and Traveller Pitch Provision process in respect of the timelines and the relationship with the timeline for consultation on the Replacement Local Development Plan?

<https://www.youtube.com/live/74kF3PYiyF0?feature=shared&t=17972>

14. From County Councillor Simon Howarth to County Councillor Catrin Maby, Cabinet Member for Climate Change and the Environment

Would the cabinet member please update the council and the public on the ongoing repairs required to the section off carriageway the A40 from the Hardwick roundabout to the Raglan roundabout? There are many rumours around with reference to the speed reduction.

<https://www.youtube.com/live/74kF3PYiyF0?feature=shared&t=17972>

15. From County Councillor Jane Lucas to County Councillor Catrin Maby, Cabinet Member for Climate Change and the Environment

Has the Cabinet Member considered introducing free parking in Monmouth at key times to encourage residents to support local businesses through the duration of current disruption?

<https://www.youtube.com/live/74kF3PYiyF0?feature=shared&t=17972>

16. From County Councillor Jane Lucas to County Councillor Catrin Maby, Cabinet Member for Climate Change and the Environment

Would the Cabinet Member provide an update on the work taking place at the junction of Wonastow Road and Rockfield Road?

<https://www.youtube.com/live/74kF3PYiyF0?feature=shared&t=17972>

17. From County Councillor Jane Lucas to County Councillor Catrin Maby, Cabinet Member for Climate Change and the Environment

What public consultation and scrutiny has taken place on proposals to partially close Goldwire Lane to traffic?

<https://www.youtube.com/live/74kF3PYiyF0?feature=shared&t=17972>

18. From County Councillor Jane Lucas to County Councillor Ian Chandler, Cabinet Member for Social Care, Safeguarding and Accessible Health Services

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Would the Cabinet Member provide an update on the Cabinet decision to purchase a property in Monmouth for a residential children's home?

<https://www.youtube.com/live/74kF3PYiyF0?feature=shared&t=19409>

19. **From County Councillor Paul Pavia to County Councillor Paul Griffiths, Cabinet Member for Planning and Economic Development Deputy Leader**

Will the Cabinet Member provide an update regarding improving Chepstow's transport infrastructure?

<https://www.youtube.com/live/74kF3PYiyF0?feature=shared&t=19494>

20. **Next Meeting 16th May 2024**

Noted.

The meeting ended at 7.30 pm