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MONMOUTHSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

Minutes of the meeting of Strategic Transport Group held
at Council Chamber, County Hall, The Rhadyr, Usk, NP15 1GA on Monday, 18th January,
2016 at 10.00 am

PRESENT: County Councillors: D. Blakebrough, P. Farley, F. Taylor.

D. Cole, D. Flint, T. Hand, P. Inskip, G. Nelmes, P. Smith, P. Turner
and C. James

OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE:

Nicola Perry	Democratic Services Officer
Roger Hoggins	Head of Operations
Christian Schmidt	Transport Planning and Policy Officer
Martin Davies	Planning Policy Manager

APOLOGIES:

Councillors A. Easson and S.B. Jones

1. Declarations of interest

There were no declarations made by Members.

2. To confirm the minutes of the meeting held on 21st September 2015

The minutes of the meeting held on 21st September 2015 we confirmed as correct.

3. Community Infrastructure Levy

We received a presentation from the Planning Policy Manager providing detail on the Community Infrastructure Levy.

Following the presentation Members were invited to comment, during which time the following points were noted:

In comparison with other authorities the standard CIL charge of £80/sq.m MCC were comparable with Caerphilly, and were in line with Newport and Cardiff consultations. It was confirmed that affordable housing was exempt from CIL. The increase in development of affordable housing would have viability implications for CIL.

Following a request for clarification it was confirmed that the regulations state that 15% of CIL would go to town or community councils in the area in which the development takes place. It was hoped there would be liaison with the County Council.

A member requested clarification if Section 106 monies could no longer be used for offsite transport work was any money was being collected for this, or had it been ruled out. We heard a lot more care was now taken when drawing up a Section 106 agreement to ensure that it would relate to a specific item of infrastructure.

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A Member referred to the strategic site in Magor with Undy, and with the planning application likely to be in place before the policy on CIL in agreed, could an offsite transport contribution to infrastructure costs. The officer explained that as long as the other Section 106 agreements were complied with, there may be other transport schemes that specifically related to the transport developments.

The Chair thanked the officer for the report.

4. First Great Western Customer and Communities Improvement Fund 2016-2017

We welcomed Mark Youngman, from Great Western Railway who was in attendance to discuss the customer and Communities Improvement Fund 2016-2017.

During discussion the following points were noted:

In regards to Cardiff Central Station developments, it was questioned if GWR were working in partnership with Welsh Government. We heard that primarily GWR were working with Arriva as the operators of Cardiff Central Station but ultimately with regards the developments around Cardiff, as with any station, the planning authority would be the main driver.

A Member noted that if more money was invested in infrastructure there would be less needed for the M4.

It was suggested that a sub group meeting with Great Western be arranged to discuss in further detail.

5. Rail station update

The Transport Planning and Policy Officer provided members with a Rail Station update. With regards to Severn Tunnel Junction car park extension and Magor Station study the following points were highlighted:

- We have been offered £20,000 from the Great Western Railway Customer and Communities Infrastructure Fund, subject to contract, to be spent after 1st April 2016, on STJ.
- We have been offered a grant from Welsh Government of £55,000 to be spent by 31st March 2016.
- Also, Section 106 allocations can be used for the Magor Grip 1 and 2 study.
- MCC have agreed to provide funding for the car park extension.

We also heard that the Council were to look at projects to be funded through City Deals with UK Government, where Welsh Government would put up funding, which would be matched by UK Government.

In terms of metro projects, the Welsh Government have compiled a long list of infrastructure projects, including Chepstow and Abergavenny station upgrades, and officers were seeking to ensure these were prioritised.

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Discussions had also begun with Network Rail regarding Chepstow and Abergavenny.

It was confirmed that the £55,000 funding from Welsh Government could be used for Magor Grip 1 and 2, and the car park extension at Severn Tunnel Junction. The Chair suggested a written agreement should be received to confirm.

It was confirmed that it was the intention to take forward the development of the car parking on the south side of the line, ie. Rogiet Countryside Park.

Following a request for clarification we heard that the value from the Section 106 funding allocated to Magor and Undy Community Hall was up to £30,000. It was agreed that there should be a conversation, with Grip 1 and 2 being commissioned shortly, to ensure no opportunities were missed.

6. Rail consultation / franchise update

The Transport Planning and Policy Officer provided an update on the rail consultation and franchise. The following points were noted:

- Following the last meeting we had responded to the cross country timetable consultation.
- We had responded previously to the Network Rail Route Study, and officers had been invited to attend a meeting on the outcomes of the route study. The comments we have made with regard to station and rail improvements have been noted and would be addressed. The study would be published in March 2016.
- A Member expressed that it was important to note that both Cross Country and Severn Tunnel Junction were in breach of their passenger charter on over-crowding. We would have to await publication of the study to see how this has been addressed.
- It was proposed to contact Richard Gibson for further information on Cross Country issues.

7. Local Transport Fund update

We received an update on the Local Transport Fund and Members were invited to comment.

When a question was raised regarding pedestrians and the A4042 bridge at Llanellen, we were informed that one of the non-metro projects put forward as part of city deal is the A4042 Abergavenny to Newport, where the issue could be included. Delivery would be the responsibility of the trunk road agency.

A Monmouthshire Eisteddfod meeting had discussed signage and it was questioned if MCC were funding this. In response we heard that there were meetings were taking place and further information could be circulated when available. A Member noted that it had been agreed at full Council to allocate an amount of money for capital signage and improvement of the local environment.

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8. Active Travel - final existing routes maps

The consultation on the Existing Route Maps closed in December 2015. There had been 25 responses by the consultation deadline. Comments had mainly been surrounding problems and issues on the routes, but not actually on the routes themselves.

We would now submit final ERMs, a consultation report to Welsh Government and set out what we plan to do next.

The next step would be to develop draft future walking/cycling routes networks as part of the Integrated Network Maps. All Members would be invited to workshops to identify routes and problems.

It was questioned if official existing walking routes should be up to standard in terms of disabled access. It was confirmed that walking routes must be accessible by wheelchair.

In terms of quick wins, it is proposed to submit a LTF bid for funding in the next financial year, which must be submitted by end of the January 2016.

There had been several meetings with Abergavenny Town Team regarding the pedestrianisation of Abergavenny. It was hoped that work would start mid-February, with completion prior to the Eisteddfod.

9. Any other business

We noted the following issues:

- It was suggested that the 65 and 69 bus service should go to the station in Chepstow which would in particular help tourists to the Wye Valley.
- Static car parks were suggested as an idea to address parking issues.
- Important to create joined-up thinking in terms of website, leaflets – communication. Need to connect with Leisure and Tourism.
- Officers should be looking to find ways to make bus timetables readily available.
- The routing of the 73 bus was cause for debate and an update would be requested from the PTU Manager.
- County Councillor L. Guppy will no longer be available to attend meetings but would be grateful to be kept up to date with information. It was agreed to look for a new member.

10. To confirm the date and time of next meeting as Wednesday 13th April 2016

The meeting ended at 12.45 pm