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## MONMOUTHSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

**Minutes of the meeting of County Council held  
on Thursday, 23rd October, 2025 at 2.00 pm**

**PRESENT:** County Councillor Peter Strong (Chair)  
County Councillor Martyn Groucutt (Vice 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, Meirion Howells, Paul Griffiths, Jackie Strong, Rachel Garrick, Steven Garratt, Angela Sandles, Ben Callard, John Crook, Tomos Davies, Dale Rooke, Sue Riley, Jayne McKenna, Jill Bond, Louise Brown, Lisa Dymock, Tony Easson, Christopher Edwards, Simon Howarth, Richard John, David Jones, Penny Jones, Malcolm Lane, Phil Murphy, M. Newell, 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 for Resources
Nicola Perry	Senior Democracy Officer
James Williams	Chief Officer Law & Governance
Deb Hill-Howells	Chief Officer Infrastructure
Craig O'Connor	Chief Officer, Place and Community Well-being

### **APOLOGIES:**

County Councillors Maria Stevens

#### **1. Declarations of Interest**

None.

#### **2. Chair's Announcement**

Noted,

#### **3. Public Questions**

#### **4. Question for Full Council on 23rd October 2025 from the Gateway to Wales Action Group**

*In the RLDP, partly underpinning the need for more housing in Monmouthshire is the County Council's ambition to create 6240 new jobs by 2033. Information from the Office of National Statistics and Nomis show that in the first 7 years of the RLDP just 600 jobs were created or put it another way, the employed workforce increased by just 1.7%. The workforce of the county would need to increase by 5640 jobs or 15.4 % by 2033 to achieve this goal. MCC appointed consultants, Lichfield's, forecast a loss of 100 jobs in the period 2022 to 2042. Commercial estate agents, Avison Young, forecast a growth rate for top performing unitary authority, Cardiff, of just 4.1 in the five years to 2029. Does the county council now agree that its job forecast increase is, to say the least, widely optimistic?*

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The Cabinet Member thanked David Cummings for the question, acknowledging its importance. In response he referred to the Lichfield's 2022 baseline study, which informed the RLDP. Monmouthshire's economy is at full capacity with 99% of employment spaces occupied and 97% of economically active people are employed. Local employers are eager to invest and grow, but face shortages in land and labour.

Councillor Griffiths explained that the RLDP aims to provide 50 hectares of employment land. It aims to deliver affordable housing to retain younger workers.

The plan is not reliant on inward investment—growth is expected from existing businesses. He clarified that Lichfields' projection of job loss was conditional. If no land or labour is added, jobs will decline. If land and labour are provided, growth is achievable.

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#### **5. Question for Full Council on 23rd October 2025 from David Cummings, resident of Monmouth**

*In the RLDP the county council have created an extremely ambitious objective of achieving 50% social housing in the housing development sites selected. One of the stated objectives of the county council is to reduce the housing waiting list. In their own report entitled, Local Housing Market Assessment Refresh 2022 to 2037, it states that 80% of those on the housing waiting list are single and are seeking single bedroom accommodation. Surely a modern housing estate of detached and terrace houses will not suit those on the housing waiting list who are seeking single bed accommodation. Would not a better solution to be to build, close to good public transport and jobs, dedicated single bedroom accommodation in apartment blocks?*

The Cabinet Member thanked Mr. Cummings for the question and suggested that Mr. Cummings may be proposing a tower block of single-person accommodation in Monmouth town centre, possibly at Vauxhall Fields. He noted that while this might please some residents (e.g., Dixon Road), it would be poor planning and unpopular with many others.

He went on to emphasize the council's goal of mixed developments across all strategic sites, with families, single young people, and single older people living together. He clarified that single people on the housing waiting list are not just young people and that single older people are one of the fastest-growing demographics.

Councillor Griffiths stressed the importance of diverse, neighbourly communities, and stated that if the plan passes, the council will continue creative master planning for the strategic sites to ensure high-quality design and supportive environments for varied lifestyles

He concluded that there would be no single-purpose accommodation in town centres.

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#### **6. Question to Councillor Griffiths from Richard Liddell**

*With regard to the Mounton Road site, and Policies H1 and H3, this site, in accordance with PPW edition 12 para 3.67 which requires local authorities to designate Green Wedges to prevent the coalescence of settlements and safeguard the views into and out of the area, has been designated as a Green wedge for the last 42 years in the 1983 Gwent Structure Plan, in*

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*the 1991 Gwent Structure Plan, has been reinforced as Green Space in the 2011 LDP, and there are alternative sites for the above proposals that do not impinge on this Green Space. Given the above, would you not agree that the majority of the residents of Chepstow are not in favour of development on the Mountain Road site, and that, given the recent refusals on the site and alternative suitable and available sites, there is no valid planning policy argument in favour of the proposals to develop the site and destroy the green wedge.*

The Cabinet Member thanked Mr. Liddell for his question. He explained that the in original proposal in 2022 the preferred site was Bayfield, near the racecourse. Through consultation feedback Bayfield was criticized for being too far from town amenities, relying on the oversubscribed Dell Primary School and the impact on Barnett Wood.

In the revised proposal the Mountain Road site was chosen instead, with the condition that safe walking routes must be provided to Pembroke School (Bulwark), Chepstow School and local amenities in Bulwark and Chepstow.

Though part of a green wedge for decades, development will preserve a minimum 0.5 km buffer between Chepstow and Pwllmeyric.

The masterplan includes 146 homes; economic development space; extensive amenity land, especially westward toward Pwllmeyric and public parkland from previously enclosed grazing land.

All strategic sites aim to balance urban housing with accessible green space and sustainable drainage. The site integrates well with Chepstow's natural surroundings. Settlement boundaries naturally evolve with development plans.

As a supplementary, Mr Liddell acknowledged the council's effort to listen but raised concerns that the green wedge referred to is not visible from key roads due to tree cover and the Mountain Road site is the first visible countryside when entering Chepstow. He stated that through a resident Survey in Penterry Park, of 35 homes surveyed, 33 opposed the development and 320 objections were submitted during consultation. He suggested reverting to Bayfield, citing overwhelming public opposition.

In response, Councillor Griffiths acknowledged the visual limitations of the green wedge from the motorway. He emphasised the important vista between Chepstow and Pwllmeyric, which will be preserved. He notes that local opposition near development sites is common and pointed out that Bayfield received similar levels of opposition during 2022 consultation.

He reaffirmed that Chepstow needs affordable housing and that Mountain Road is the smallest strategic site and best suited to meet this need. He felt that no compelling reason had emerged to replace it with Bayfield

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#### **7. To confirm the minutes of the meeting held on the 18th September 2025**

The minutes of the meeting held on 18<sup>th</sup> September 2025 were accepted as an accurate record.

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#### **8. Governance and Audit Committee Annual Report 2024/2025**

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The Chair introduced Andrew Blackmore, Chair of the Governance and Audit Committee, who presented the 2024/25 Annual Report of the Council's Governance & Audit Committee [which the Committee endorsed at its meeting on 11<sup>th</sup> September 2025].

**Council accepted the report.**

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### **9. Deposit Local Development Plan Submission**

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The Deputy Leader, Cabinet Member for Planning and Economic Development presented the report to:

- Inform Council of the results of the public consultation/engagement on the Deposit Replacement Local Development Plan (RLDP) as set out in the Deposit RLDP Consultation Report and the subsequent proposed minor non-material amendments to the Deposit RLDP.
- To inform Council of the feedback from Place Scrutiny Committee on 25th September 2025.
- Seek Council's approval of the Deposit RLDP Consultation Report and the Deposit RLDP (as amended following public consultation) and associated documents prior to submission to Welsh Government and Planning and Environment Decision Wales (PEDW) for independent examination.
- Seek Council's agreement to delegate authority to the Chief Officer for Place and Community Well-being and the Head of Planning, so that either may, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Planning and Economic Development and Deputy Leader, make any minor changes to the Deposit RLDP and associated supporting documents prior to submitting the documents to Welsh Government and PEDW, and make any changes to the RLDP on behalf of the Council as requested by the Inspector(s) during the RLDP Examination.

At 16:16pm County Councillor Louise brown proposed a closure of the debate and that a vote be taken.

Council resolved to take a recorded vote and the proposal was defeated.

For: 20

Against: 25

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NAME	For	Against	Abstain
Councillor J BOND		x	
Councillor M A BROCKLESBY		x	
Councillor F BROMFIELD	x		
Councillor L BROWN	x		
Councillor E BRYN		x	
Councillor R BUCKLER	x		
Councillor S BURCH		x	
Councillor J BUTLER	x		
Councillor B CALLARD		x	
Councillor I CHANDLER		x	
Councillor J CROOK		x	
Councillor T DAVIES	x		
Councillor L DYMOCK	x		
Councillor A EASSON		x	
Councillor C EDWARDS	x		
Councillor M. NEWELL	x		
Councillor S GARRATT		x	
Councillor R GARRICK		x	
Councillor P GRIFFITHS		x	
Councillor M GROUCUTT		x	
Councillor S.G.M. Howarth	x		
Councillor M HOWELLS		x	
Councillor R JOHN	x		
Councillor D. W. H. Jones		x	
Councillor P. Jones	x		
Councillor T KEAR	x		
Councillor M LANE	x		
Councillor J LUCAS	x		
Councillor C MABY		x	
Councillor S MCCONNEL		x	
Councillor J MCKENNA	x		
Councillor P MURPHY	x		
Councillor A NEILL	x		
Councillor P PAVIA	x		
Councillor M POWELL	x		
Councillor S RILEY		x	
Councillor D ROOKE		x	
Councillor A SANDLES		x	
Councillor M STEVENS			
Councillor J STRONG		x	
Councillor P STRONG		x	
Councillor F TAYLOR		x	
Councillor T THOMAS		x	
Councillor A WATTS		x	
Councillor A WEBB	x		
Councillor L WRIGHT		x	

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Following an extensive debate and being put to a recorded vote Council resolved to accept the recommendations:

For: 22

Against: 22

Chair with the casting vote: For

#### That Council:

- **Approves the Deposit RLDP Consultation Report and the RLDP, as amended following public consultation, and associated documents prior to its submission to Welsh Government and Planning and Environment Decision Wales (PEDW) for independent examination.**
- **Delegates authority to the Chief Officer for Place and Community Well-being and the Head of Planning, so that either in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Planning and Economic Development and Deputy Leader, may:**
  - a) **make any minor changes to the Deposit RLDP and associated supporting documents, prior to submitting the documents to Welsh Government and PEDW, and**
  - b) **make any changes to the RLDP on behalf of the Council as requested by the Inspector(s) during the Examination.**

NAME	For	Against	Abstain
Councillor J BOND	X		
Councillor M A BROCKLESBY	x		
Councillor F BROMFIELD		X	
Councillor L BROWN		X	
Councillor E BRYN		X	
Councillor R BUCKLER		X	
Councillor S BURCH	X		
Councillor J BUTLER		x	
Councillor B CALLARD	X		
Councillor I CHANDLER	X		
Councillor J CROOK	X		
Councillor T DAVIES		X	
Councillor L DYMOCK		X	
Councillor A EASSON	X		
Councillor C EDWARDS		X	
Councillor M. NEWELL		X	
Councillor S GARRATT	X		
Councillor R GARRICK	X		
Councillor P GRIFFITHS	X		
Councillor M GROUCUTT	x		
Councillor S.G.M. Howarth		X	
Councillor M HOWELLS	X		
Councillor R JOHN		X	
Councillor D. W. H. Jones		X	
Councillor P. Jones		X	
Councillor T KEAR		X	
Councillor M LANE			
Councillor J LUCAS		X	
Councillor C MABY	X		
Councillor S MCCONNEL	X		

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Councillor J MCKENNA		X	
Councillor P MURPHY		X	
Councillor A NEILL		X	
Councillor P PAVIA		X	
Councillor M POWELL		X	
Councillor S RILEY	X		
Councillor D ROOKE	X		
Councillor A SANDLES	X		
Councillor M STEVENS			
Councillor J STRONG	X		
Councillor P STRONG	X		
Councillor F TAYLOR		X	
Councillor T THOMAS	X		
Councillor A WATTS	X		
Councillor A WEBB		X	
Councillor L WRIGHT	x		

#### 10. Date of the next meeting - 4th December 2025

Noted.

**The meeting ended at 6.55 pm**

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