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MONMOUTHSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

Minutes of the meeting of County Council held
at Council Chamber - Council Chamber on Thursday, 26th January, 2017 at 2.00 pm

PRESENT: County Councillor J. Higginson (Chairman)
County Councillor P. Jordan (Vice Chairman)

County Councillors: D. Batrouni, J. Prosser, D. Blakebrough, M. Powell, V. Smith, G. Burrows, R. Chapman, P. Clarke, D. Dovey, A. Easson, D. Edwards, R. Edwards, P. Farley, P.A. Fox, R.J.W. Greenland, E. Hackett Pain, R. Harris, B. Hayward, M. Hickman, P.A.D. Hobson, G. Howard, S. Howarth, D. Jones, P. Jones, S.B. Jones, P. Murphy, B. Strong, F. Taylor, A. Webb and A. Wintle

OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE:

Paul Matthews	Chief Executive
Kellie Beirne	Chief Officer, Enterprise
Joy Robson	Head of Finance/Section 151 Officer
Robert Tranter	Head of Legal Services & Monitoring Officer
Nicola Perry	Senior Democracy Officer

APOLOGIES:

Councillors J. Crook, G. Down, D. Evans, L. Guppy, S. Jones, J. Marshall, A. Watts, S. White and K. Williams

2. Cardiff Capital Region City Deal

Council were presented with the Cardiff Capital Region City Deal report by the Chief Executive. The purpose of the report was to outline the next steps for the Cardiff Capital Region City Deal and:

- To seek approval for the establishment of the Cardiff Capital Region ('CCR') Joint Cabinet (the 'Regional Cabinet'), as a joint committee, to oversee the Region's economic growth agenda and delivery of the commitments set out in the CCR City Deal.
- To seek approval of the CCR City Deal Joint Working Agreement ('JWA'), the CCR City Deal Assurance Framework and Implementation Plan which are required to establish the Regional Cabinet and the City Deal Investment Fund.

Following presentation of the highlights of the report the following questions/comments, along with responses were noted:

- Conversations among residents have been heard about how City Deal will solve problems the local area face, and it was suggested that we should temper the language used in public arenas.
- It was thought that the Joint Cabinet structure would be far removed from the public, and there were concerns that it would be another bureaucratic structure.

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RESPONSE: The Joint Cabinet is probably all we have at this stage. It could be re-visited in the future if necessary.

- The lack of specific projects could be an issue in terms of scrutiny.

RESPONSE: As the programme develops the void will be filled.

- With reference to item 2.8 of the report 'deferring power to the Chief Executive, Leader or Deputy Leader to make amendments' – how would we be sighted on such amendments?

RESPONSE: It was highly unlikely that we would exercise delegation which would change the outcome of today's conversation. This would defeat everything the City Deal is trying to do, as an inclusive, cohesive approach.

- With reference to point 3.2, delivering key targets – how would this be measured, and how would we prove the City Deal, as opposed to other factors, have delivered the targets.

RESPONSE: In early city deals GVA uplift was used as the measurement. The hard GVA measure would not be the gateway for these programmes. The gateway is not currently clear.

- The Joint Cabinet would be scrutinised by the Regional Assurance Committee – could we see detail or membership of that?

RESPONSE: The principle is that each of the 10 authorities can nominate an individual to offer a degree of oversight as good governance.

- Clarity was sought around servicing of the monies.

RESPONSE: £12.9m is an all-inclusive figure for Monmouthshire. It contains principle and interest payments on our share of £120m. It also contains the apportionment of carry costs that we would meet around UK Government lending

- It was thought the figures seemed low for a period of 25 years and much more was needed to reach the same levels as other areas.

RESPONSE: It was believed this was material but not fundamental, an intervention which will enable things to happen that otherwise would not have. But alone would not transform the economy of Wales.

- Comparison was made to the cost of the small area of the Heads of the Valleys road, to the figure for the Metro investment.

- It was asked why the amount allocated to Metro was included in the paper.

RESPONSE: The funding balance sheet was explained:

Overall investment fund - £1.229 billion

UK Government - £500 million

Wales Government - £503 million – not new money, Wales Government had prioritised this for the commencement of a South Wales Metro. The UK Government allowed this to be used as match funding.

10 Councils - £120 million

ERDF - £106 million

The Metro will have its own assurance framework. It is all packaged together as without this there would be no deal without the match funding.

- If the deal is irrevocable for 5 years, if we don't agree with the projects how can we change them if locked in for 5 years?

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RESPONSE: It is a complication but it was hoped that 10 Councils could come to a resolution over the first 12 months of a 25 year programme.

- In terms of strategic planning, paragraph 3.3, the Cabinet will be responsible for strategic planning, including housing, transport and land use. The assurance framework language seems to change to a more participatory nature. Clarification about ownership was sought. It was also questioned how this would fit with the SDP.

RESPONSE: This work stream is evolving and our Head of Planning is chairing. Not talking about local development control, or local planning applications. Having a local development plan in place is hugely important. We are taking the view that we intend to review the LDP. We are exploring how we can embrace a SDP. Not hugely developed piece of work as yet.

- Residents have three main questions:

1. How much will it cost us?
2. What could go wrong, what are concerns/risks?
3. Over 25 years, what will we get for our money?

RESPONSE: In terms of cost £12.9 million builds up to £800,000 in year 11. The finance will be determined by the next Council. We are recognising the need to fund a programme office, pro-rata on us at 6.1% of the total. The biggest risk would be not participating, not using the opportunity to help shape the future of our future generations. It is about collaboration and influencing the economy

- Following the election on 5th May 2017, it was expected that the Leader of the new Council would be the designated Member, who could appoint a deputy.
- In terms of scrutiny, Council recognised the need for regular updates.

The Leader paid tribute to the officers of the Council, and thanked Members for a quality debate and taking shared ownership.

Upon being put to the vote, Council unanimously agreed the recommendations in the report:

- Approve the Joint Working Agreement (the 'JWA') as the legal document that formally establishes the Cardiff Capital Region ('CCR') Joint Committee (the 'Regional Cabinet') as a Joint Committee, with delegated functions, with a Commencement Date of the 1st March 2017. The elected member representative to the Regional Cabinet shall be the Leader of the Council, or his/her nominated Deputy;
- Approve the financial contributions from each constituent council towards the collective £120m total, (together with such associated costs e.g. carry costs), as detailed in the body of this report;
- Approve the carry forward of any remaining revenue funds from 2016/2017, contributed by each constituent council, into 2017/2018 in order that the support structure for the Regional Cabinet continues;
- Approve the collective revenue contributions of up to £1m (inclusive of recommendation 2.3 above, on a proportional basis as set out in the JWA) to the 2017/2018 budget, in order that the support structure for the Regional Cabinet continues;
- Approve that the City of Cardiff Council acts as the Accountable Body with the responsibilities as set out in the JWA

The meeting ended at 4.15 pm

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