

**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE RADNORSHIRE HELD AT COMMITTEE ROOM
A - COUNTY HALL, LLANDRINDOD WELLS, POWYS ON
WEDNESDAY, 11 JANUARY 2017**

PRESENT: County Councillor P J Medicott – Chairman

County Councillors G R Banks, J H Brunt, K W Curry, W J Evans, D O Evans, E M Jones, H Lewis, MC Mackenzie, , W J T Powell, K F Tampin and G Williams.

In attendance:

Councillor Rosemarie Harris – Cabinet Portfolio Holder: Property, Buildings, Housing, Customer Services and Catering and Cleaning

Councillor Graham Brown – Deputy Leader/Cabinet Portfolio Holder: Commissioning and Procurement/Children's Services

Paul Griffiths – Strategic Director: Place, Martin Jones – Superfast Cymru/BT, Tony Caine – Traffic and Travel Manager and Shane Thomas - Clerk.

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| 1. | APOLOGIES | RS1-2017 |
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An apology for absence was accepted from Councillor J. Gibson-Watt.

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| 2. | MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING | RS2-2017 |
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The Chairman was authorised to sign the minutes of the previous meeting of the Committee held on Wednesday 16th November 2016 as a correct record. During discussion particular reference was made to:

- a. **Radnor Roller (Aveling Roller EP3339 and Living Van)** – Graham Eales, Principal Legal Assistant had recently retired. Graham and David Micah, Commercial Property Manager had been the nominated lead officers in relation to considering future arrangements for the storing and maintaining of the roller and living van and Councillor Kelvyn Curry had agreed to help as designated member. In the light of the retirement of Graham Kelvyn would link to determine the best way to progress the matter and would provide an update report for circulation to members

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| 3. | CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS | RS3-2017 |
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The Chairman reported on:

- a. **Bleddfa (Elan Valley Connection Project)** –having attended when the borer was delivered at Bleddfa and put in to start boring as part of works being undertaken to improve the water network from the Elan Valley, having also attended when drilling in this area was complete and having seen the drill emerge at the other end. Further works would be undertaken at Nantmel and Knighton as part the wider project. There's a strong focus on community

engagement and there would be events to mark key milestones during the project at each location

- b. **Chairman's Allowance** – the Chairman had donated his allowance to the 10 scout groups which operate in the Radnorshire area
- c. **Judge's Lodgings (Presteigne)** – the lodgings had been offered for asset transfer and a Trustee group had entered into an agreement with the Council for the site. The Authority had provided £50k to undertake much needed capital works which included a significant sum for the roof. Members supported the suggestion to hold the March shire meeting at the lodgings and for the meeting to include discussion in relation to the transfer of the asset to include an update regarding how the site was being run after transfer. It was noted that the agreement contained a clause which required that the asset would transfer back to the Council in the first instance in the event of the arrangement with the Trust ending

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| 4. | DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST | RS4-2017 |
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There were no declarations received in relation to matters to be discussed on the agenda.

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| 5. | SUPERFAST CYMRU (10.15 - 10.30) | RS5-2017 |
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Members welcomed Martin Jones, BT/Superfast Cymru to the meeting to provide an update in relation to the roll out of Superfast Cymru. Members were reminded that BT had been awarded the tender to upgrade the network so that residents and business could take advantage of the benefits of fibre connections. During discussion particular reference was made to:

- a. **Coverage (Wales)** – 88.9% of the Welsh network had been upgraded and residents could access speeds of greater than 30mb. The roll out would allow for 15,000 - 20,000 connections each month
- b. **Coverage (Brecon and Radnor Area)** – 65% of the Brecon and Radnor area could access the network which would deliver connection speeds of up to 24mb. It was reported that just 28% of those Powys residents who could take advantage of fibre connections had entered into agreements
- c. **Rural Solutions** – there are a number of rural solutions and options can be considered and explored (this includes community connection schemes)
- d. **Exchange Connections** – 1,300 exchanges had been upgraded to support connection work in Powys, however, connections via exchanges were limited by distance to those who reside 3km from exchange boxes (there is no benefit to the connection beyond 3km of the exchange box)
- e. **Fibre to The Premises (FTTP) Connections** – connections via FTTP are a good rural solution, however, the roll out of this method as oppose to connecting via the exchange is much slower due to the nature of the work involved
- f. **Wayleaves** – 29,000 Welsh premises are not able to connect to the network due to landowners not permitting access to land for network works. BT had been working with landowners to arrive at agreements and the Welsh Government had recognised the position and would support negotiations. The normal financial contribution to the landowner would be £750

- g. **Communications / Media etc. (Welsh Government)** – the Welsh Government had recently taken over communications in relation to the roll out of the programme. BT had overseen communications prior to the current arrangement
- h. **Residential Developments** – BT would support a planned approach to providing networks where there would be residential developments. Where developments are progressed without engagement BT would not meet network connection costs. It would be best for developers to engage at the onset
- i. **Network Connection Costs** – the contract with BT requires that fibre solutions which would cost more than £1,700 per dwelling should be removed from the programme and would sit outside of the scheme. Where costs would exceed £1,700 BT would work with communities and the Welsh Government to explore options to provide connections
- j. **Bleddfa (Powys)** – the local member reported that an exchange connection for the area of Bleddfa was not an option because of the distance the exchange box was from dwellings i.e. over 3km so there would be no benefit. An initial costing for a FTTP solution had come out at a cost of £9-10k per dwelling. There had been a review and re-evaluation against a different option which was being considered by the Welsh Government, the review could deliver a solution that would cost in the region of £3k per dwelling. BT had been keeping the community updated through engaging with a designated community representative
- k. **Llanyre** – the local member requested details in relation to the exchange e.g. connection speeds
- l. **Communicating with Residents** – it's the feeling that residents don't realise they have to contact their providers to connect to fibre networks and that they assume that the upgrade to the fibre network is automatic. This is not the case. Residents would need to contact providers to arrange to be connected. In most cases connection costs for access via. the fibre network are cheaper than current costs for broadband access. It would be important to engage with residents and communities in order to advise them that connections are not automatic. It would also be important to remind them to review their needs and purchase the right package for them

Members thanked Martin for attending to update them on matters regarding the programme and for clarifying the position. Martin agreed to attend and update on request and to provide his presentation so that members could use it for their own purposes and sharing with their communities etc.

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| 6. | REPORTS FROM AND QUESTIONS TO CABINET PORTFOLIO HOLDERS (10.30 - 11.30) | RS6-2017 |
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Members welcomed the opportunity to receive reports from, and to put questions to, Cabinet Portfolio Holders. During an update and discussion particular reference was made to:

a. Councillor Graham Brown, Deputy Leader/Cabinet Portfolio Holder: Commissioning and Children's Services

- i. **Community Asset Transfers** – there continue to be discussion with those communities which are interested in engaging with regard to asset transfers. The Authority had entered into an agreement with the Trustees at the Judge's Lodgings, Presteigne for operating the site
- ii. **Knighton Leisure Centre** – Cabinet had agreed to use additional funding (received from the Welsh Government) to continue to operate the site It was noted that usage figures for the site in comparison to a neighbouring site at Presteigne were very good
- iii. **Commercial Services** – the commercial services team continues to support services in identifying areas where a more commercial approach could deliver savings or avoid spends. The service also has the advantage of oversight on spends. To date the service has supported activities which have avoided £2 million worth of spend
- iv. **Local Spends** – the Portfolio Holder confirmed that there was a strong focus on supporting local businesses in bidding for and securing tenders for Powys works. Maximising the in-county spend was recognised as very important in order to support the local economy
- v. **Children's Services (Locality Based Model)** – there had been a move to create local teams comprising of agencies that support children in order to provide a better service. Four teams are operating in Powys. This arrangement was introduced back in October
- vi. **Looked After Children Budget** – the spend is on track to deliver within budget, however, the Authority has a duty to support placements and the budget could, at any time, need to meet pressures and unplanned costs which could be significant
- vii. **Foster Care Service** – the service had been restructured. There would be more of a focus on supporting those who foster. It would be important to use the Powys foster network as opposed to using agencies for fostering services
- viii. **Director of Social Services** – Carol Shillabeer, Chef Executive – Powys teaching Health Board would fulfil the role of Director of Social Services as an interim arrangement. The cost to the Council of fulfilling the duties for the vacancy arising from the Strategic Director: People having left position would broadly be cost neutral
- ix. **Village Hall Grants** – there had been some confusion arising from notifications and information provided by the Council regarding village hall grant reductions. The Director apologised for the position and confirmed that clarification had been provided to confirmed that there would be no grant funding with effect from the end of the 2016/17 financial year

b. Councillor Rosemarie Harris, Cabinet Portfolio Holder: Property, Buildings, Housing, Customer Services, Catering and Cleaning, Gypsies, Business Services and Complaints/Ombudsman

- i. **Property** – there continues to be significant activity to consider how best to manage the property portfolio i.e. sales, purchases, transfer considerations
- ii. **StAMP (Strategic Asset Management Plan)** – members had been invited to attend StAMP meetings to discuss options for the management/treatment of properties/assets. Members expressed concern about the short notice given for meetings and lack feedback on projects

- discussed. The Portfolio Holder would review both areas and stressed the importance of member input and engagement
- iii. **Agile Working** – the programme would be progressed in order to support accommodation reviews and provide a better experience for those employees who would benefit from working this way. A member requested detail in relation to the programme and the success to-date. The Director reported that the scheme would be reviewed and monitored
 - iv. **Ladywell House, Newtown** – the Council would be looking to purchase the premise
 - v. **School Organisation** – there are significant demands in terms of activity to review the school estate in terms of building fit for purpose sites and disposing of assets that are no longer of use to the Council
 - vi. **Brecon Cultural Hub** – officers are supporting the creation of the hub which would be a £10 million project within Brecon town
 - vii. **Archives** – the Authority had been found failing in its archive provision and had undertaken significant capital works to upgrade facilities at Ddole Road, Llandrindod Wells. Members would be invited to tour the facility (there had been a £1.7 million investment)
 - viii. **Gypsy and Travellers** – the Authority had been found lacking in its provision to meet the recognised need. Further units would be provided using Welsh Government funding at Brecon (3 additional units) and Machynlleth (5 units)
 - ix. **Right to Buy** – the previous application to the Welsh Government to suspend right to buy had been unsuccessful. A further application, supported by housing associations, had been submitted and it's hoped that this application would be approved
 - x. **Affordable Housing** – there's a recognised shortfall in affordable housing. Providing the right type of dwelling would be important i.e. 1 bedroom and 2 bedroom flats. The impact of single occupancy (the bedroom tax) had an impact on those in larger dwellings. There are good links between housing and those delivering on adult social care to ensure that needs are recognised and built into plans
 - xi. **Older People's Accommodation** – the Council has in the region of 2000 designated dwellings and would be looking to provide to meet the need
 - xii. **Supporting Local Businesses/Loan Scheme** – when considering build projects there would be as strong focus on supporting local tradesmen etc. The Portfolio Holder confirmed that an agreement had been entered in to ensure the use of local timber in relation to some developments. The Council also operates a loan scheme that developers could access
 - xiii. **Syrian Refugees** – the Council would play its part in re-settling Syrian refugees in line with a national programme. There are two accepting areas (Newtown and Ystradgynlais). Communities in both areas had been very welcoming
 - xiv. **Armed Forces Covenant** – the Portfolio Holder chairs the Covenant Board. The Board can provide funding to support activities which link to the forces (serving, ex-serving and forces families/communities). It would be important to maximise the drawdown of funding to support Powys projects
 - xv. **Catering and Cleaning Services** – the Portfolio Holder suggested that those who run the service should deliver an update to a future shire meeting to explain activities which mostly go unrecognised. The service has an annual budget of in the region of £6million. The service continues to be recognised and had received a number of high level awards. There had been an issue at one Radnorshire secondary school in relation to the

- transfer of services to the school which, once known, had been resolved quickly. It would be important to use the learning from the situation
- xvi. **Cashless System for Schools (Business Services)** – business services are supporting the roll out of school cashless payment systems which have proven positive and welcome. The roll out would focus on high schools first then be introduced in the primary sector. Members recognised the financial benefit to schools where all those entitlement for Free School Meals had been recognised (the Welsh Government provide additional funding linked to the numbers on role who are entitled to Free School Meals)

Members thanked the Portfolio Holder for a very comprehensive update and for responding to issues raised.

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| 7. | REPORTS FROM AND QUESTIONS TO MEMBERS SERVING ON OUTSIDE BODIES | RS7-2017 |
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Members welcomed the opportunity to receive reports from, and to put questions to, members serving on outside bodies. It was reported that at the last meeting of the Police and Crime Panel budget pressures had been the focus of discussion. Raising the precept would be considered.

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| 8. | ROAD SAFETY AND TRAFFIC MANAGEMENT SCHEMES (11.30 - 11.45) | RS8-2017 |
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Members welcomed Tony Caine, Traffic and Travel Manager to the meeting for this item of business.

a. **Newbridge-on-Wye – Prohibition of Waiting at Any time (Dol Y Fan)**

Restrictions had been introduced by the housing department but were not enforceable because they had not been introduced in accordance with Traffic Regulation Order requirements. In the light of the position and need to follow due process members **RESOLVED** that the proposal be approved and to initiate the Traffic Regulation Order consultation procedure and if no substantive objections are received the proposal be implemented.

b. **Bleddfa – 30 mph Speed Restriction**

Members agreed that the restrictions currently in force are excessively long and don't deter speeding. Given significant work in the area being undertaken by Severn Trent Water they had agreed to fund a Traffic Regulation Order. Members **RESOLVED** to initiate the TRO consultation and if no substantive objections are received the proposal be implemented

c. **Presteigne – Speed Limit Considerations (30 and 40 mph)**

As a condition of a housing development there had been a requirement to fund a Traffic Regulation Order in order to extend a 30 mph zone and introduce a 40 mph restriction along a highway which would pass near a playpark. Members

RESOLVED to initiate the TRO consultation and if no substantive objections are received the proposal be implemented

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| 9. | CORRESPONDENCE | RS9-2017 |
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There were no items of correspondence.

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| 10. | DATE OF NEXT MEETING | RS10-2017 |
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The next meeting would be held on Wednesday 15th March 2017 at the Judge's Lodgings in Presteigne.

**County Councillor P J Medicott
Chairman**