

**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE MONTGOMERYSHIRE HELD AT COUNCIL
CHAMBER - NEUADD MALDWYN, WELSHPOOL, POWYS ON
WEDNESDAY, 10 JANUARY 2018**

PRESENT: County Councillor G Breeze, Vice-Chairman (in the Chair)

County Councillors MC Alexander, G Breeze, B Davies, D E Davies, L George, S M Hayes, H Hulme, A Jenner, D Jones-Poston, E Jones, G Jones, M J Jones, D R Jones, F H Jump, K Lewis, N Morrison, P C Pritchard, G Pugh, K M Roberts-Jones, L Roberts, D Rowlands, D Selby, R G Thomas and J M Williams

In attendance:

Representatives from the Montgomeryshire Young Farmers Club, Katie Wood - Customer Relations - Severn Trent Water, Councillor Rachel Powell – Cabinet Portfolio Holder, Mark Evans – Interim Strategic Director: Resources, Nicola Williams – Business Services Programme Delivery Manager, David Micah – Commercial Property Manager, Sarah Page – Strategic Property Project Manager and Chris Lloyd – Area Traffic Officer.

1. APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were accepted from County Councillors M Barnes, A. Davies, P. Davies J. Jones (Chairman), P. Lewis and E Vaughan.

2. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

The Chairman was authorised to sign the minutes of the previous meeting held on Wednesday 8th November 2017 as a correct record.

3. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations received in relation to matters to be discussed on the agenda for today's meeting.

4. CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

In the absence of the Chairman the Vice-Chairman reported that he had not undertaken any official functions. However, particular reference was made to:

- a. **Local Meetings with Town and Community Councils** - the Vice-Chairman (Chair for the meeting) took an update to the shire from Councillor Heulwen Hulme in which she explained that a local community council had attended a local planning meeting which had been very positive in terms of explaining processes and discussing local matters. Members agreed the value in local discussions about services and supported the proposal to request regular, local meetings in order to update communities in relation to the operation of a range of services
- b. **Democratic Services (County Council Meetings)** – a member reported that Democratic Services would be considering a proposal to hold monthly Council meetings (excluding meeting in December and August) in order to improve systems for involving, updating and engaging with all members in relation to

Council matters. There's a view amongst members that they are not involved as back-benchers

- c. **Chairman of Council (Sunday Lunch)** – members were reminded that the Chairman of Council had invited them to a Sunday lunch at the local golf club

5. MONTGOMERYSHIRE YOUNG FARMERS CLUB - (9.40 - 10.00)

Members welcomed representatives from Montgomeryshire Young Farmers to the meeting to provide an update in relation to activities undertaken. During update and discussion members were pleased to note the range of activity being undertaken, the number of clubs operating and membership growing (18 clubs operate with the Montgomeryshire area with a membership in 2015/16 totalling 736, 60% of the membership being young people who are not directly involved in agriculture). The bilingual element of provision is very important to the Montgomeryshire YFC. The YFC promote themselves widely and use local schools in order to attract new members. Members agreed that the contribution from the YFC movement to the provision of youth services in Powys was significant, however, there are other clubs/groups which also play an important part but don't receive Council funding at the same levels (if at all). The Portfolio Holder for Youth Services (Councillor Rachel Powell) reported that the success of the YFC and the importance of retaining provision had been raised by the Local Authority at Welsh Government level (options to recognise the contributions of the YFC are being explored). It's difficult to quantify what groups (including the YFC) provide which support the Council in delivering a youth service.

6. SEVERN TRENT WATER - PAYMENT SCHEMES (10 - 10.15)

Katie Wood - Customer Relations, Severn Trent Water attended the meeting for this item of business. During discussion and update particular reference was made to:

- a. **Payment Schemes** – there are a number of payment schemes that can be accessed in order to support those who are finding it difficult to meet water costs. In previous years schemes had focused on providing equipment to reduce use, however, the focus of current schemes would be on supporting payments (some funding could be used to support the purchase of equipment)
- b. **Disposable Income** – support would normally take account of disposable income
- c. **Direct Debits** – payments can be made by weekly direct debit
- d. **Engagement** – Severn Trent view engagement with communities as very important
- e. **Water Meters** – there are around 3 million dwellings connected to Severn Trent water and around a third of those have water meters fitted. Meters had proven positive in terms of residents paying for what they actually use as opposed to being charged on fixed rates regardless of use. Meter installation is free and removal can be arranged, however, it could take up to 24mths for removal
- f. **Rateable Value** – water rates are based on the rateable value of dwellings. The value was set a number of years ago and can be challenged (there's an application process for re-assessment)
- g. **Local Engagement** – members were invited to provide details of local events in order that Katie could consider attending to promote schemes

- h. **Dee Water / Severn Trent Water** – Severn Trent had acquired Dee Water and would take over operations from 1st April. The commitment to support those in hardship situations would continue and would, more than likely, include additional schemes to support those in difficult financial situations

Members with specific concerns were encouraged to contact Katie outside of the meeting. Members thanked Katie for her presentation and the information provided.

7. REPORTS FROM AND QUESTIONS TO CABINET PORTFOLIO HOLDERS (10.15 - 11.15)

Members welcomed the opportunity to receive reports from, and to put questions to, Cabinet Portfolio Holders.

Councillor Stephen Hayes – Cabinet Portfolio Holder: Adult Social Care

- a. **Inspection of Adult Social Care** – there had been significant work to prepare for the forthcoming inspection of Adult Social Care to be undertaken by CSSIW. The inspection would review the experiences of those who had received support and the journey taken. The Portfolio Holder expects some issues to be highlighted for improvement but would be disappointed if significant failings in care are uncovered.
- b. **Delayed Transfers of Care (DTOCs)** – there's regular dialogue between the Local Authority and District General Hospitals/local hospitals to discuss DTOCs. There's increased pressure during the winter months because of seasonal illnesses. The priority for the Local Authority would be to ensure care packages are in place in order for patients to be discharged and free hospital space
- c. **Budget** – the Powys budget for Adult Social Care is in the region of £57 million per annum (2016/17). ASC also generates approximately 14% of the Council's income. The Welsh Government had capped care contributions to £70 per week. The Welsh Government would be likely to increase the amount of capital which could be held without any impact on financial contributions to residential care. The service would be likely to need an additional £6million in the 2018-19 budget in order to meet increasing pressures
- d. **Care Homes (BUPA / HC1)** – Powys owns 12 care homes which are run by BUPA under contract and have been since 1999. BUPA had announced that it would transfer operations to HC1. The Local Authority had expressed concern because there had been no engagement with the County Council. There are on-going discussions between the Authority's legal team and BUPA regarding the position
- e. **Telecare/Home Support** – there had been significant success in terms of using technology to support people in being safe at home. Members were reminded that officers are regularly present with a stall in the foyer of County Hall demonstrating telecare/home support solutions.
- f. **Learning Disability Services** The service had been recommissioned about 18months ago, making significant savings. There are a relatively small number of people receiving support which is high cost. More and more of those receiving care are getting older

Councillor Rachel Powell – Cabinet Portfolio Holder: Children's, Youth, Leisure and Library Services

- a. **Youth Service** – there would be a new youth strategy shortly. Services would need to deliver in the spirit of the strategy
- b. **Youth Justice Service** – the Portfolio Holder had visited the service and learnt a lot about workings and support provided. Members were encouraged to do the same
- c. **Youth Centres** – the Portfolio Holder values member input in relation to proposals for local youth services. There would be a focus on working with communities to safeguarding existing provision where possible and where communities have an appetite to engage
- d. **Member Engagement** – the Portfolio Holder would welcome members engaging with staff in order to better their understandings of services across all portfolio holder areas
- e. **Leisure Services** – there are regular meetings and good engagement with Freedom Leisure. Freedom Leisure operate leisure sites under contract with the Local Authority
- f. **Sports Wales** – the Portfolio Holder had met with representatives from Sports Wales. Child Sexual Exploitation is an area of focus. Body image and mental health are also recognised issues for young people. Local authorities would receive information from Sports Wales regarding how these issues could be tackled locally and within Wales
- g. **Mental Health** – body image is a real issue for young people and there are programmes to help identify and support young people who display worrying behaviours
- h. **Local Communities** – it would be important to work with communities to identify where there are local issues and need of support
- i. **Foster Carers** – there continues to be a need for additional foster carers. Nine new carers had recently joined the Council. It's recognised that it would be important for the Council to support its foster carers. Members could help in identifying potential carers. An offer for discounted use of leisure facilities would be available to foster carers. The Council would consider what benefits it could provide in order to attract and retain foster carers
- j. **CSSIW Inspection of Children's Services** – the Authority had responded well to the areas for improvement identified by CSSIW. The Portfolio Holder had been re-assured by actions taken. A number of vacant positions had been filled by agency staff. Member interest into local team functions would be welcome
- k. **Regional Safeguarding Board** – a member expressed concern with regard to the issues found in need of improvement by CSSIW having not been identified by the regional safeguarding board. The Portfolio Holder explained that the working of safeguarding boards had been recognised as an area for local review
- l. **Bannau/Camlas** – the Portfolio Holder attends the site every 4-6 weeks in order to offer advice and support. Members were invited to visit the site with the portfolio holder (those interested were encouraged to link with Rachel direct)
- m. **Corporate Parenting** – members were urged to undertake activities to support them in their Corporate Parenting role. Training requirements in relation to domestic violence would need to be met (members were reminded that they had recently been e-mailed a link in order to complete a domestic violence training package)
- n. **Staylitttle Outdoor Pursuits Centre** - the Authority had engaged in a process to tender for the operation of the site and would favour an operator retaining the facility
- o. **Children's Team (Newtown)** – it is recognised that there are staffing issues with the team. Some relief social workers had expressed an interest to stay with Powys for the longer term. The staffing of positions would be monitored

8. SERVICE COMMERCIALISATIONS (11.15 - 12 NOON)
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Members welcomed Mark Evans – Interim Strategic Director: Resources and Nicola Williams – Business Services Programme Delivery Manager to the meeting. During discussion particular reference was made to:

- a. **Shire Committees** – officers welcome attending shire meetings in order to connect and engage with local members regarding service delivery matters. Members would welcome regular updates in relation to business services i.e. bi-annual updates
- b. **Business Service Functions** – business service functions include meeting statutory obligations in relation to providing a payroll and pensions function, collecting contributions for care costs, billing and collecting council and business tax, running the customer services function etc.
- c. **Responding to the Customer** – responding to customer preference would be important. Housing tenants had expressed a preference for face-to-face contacts, services had been changed to focus on face-to-face experiences as a result
- d. **Purchase Cards** – introducing purchase cards to order and pay for goods had proven positive in terms of saving the costs associated with payment processing
- e. **Cashless Payments (Schools)** – cashless payment systems were being rolled out to schools. The project was providing very positive and would reduce risks associated with cash handling. There had been an increase of take up of Free School Meals as a direct result which had increased the Local Authority's grant from the Welsh Government
- f. **Funding Change** – Management Team recognise that funding had been needed to pump-prime change projects which would yield savings in the longer term
- g. **Income Generation** – there's potential to 'sell' services in order to generate income. The Local Authority undertakes DBS checking and Fraud Services for other local authority areas (at a charge). The payroll function could also be sold to those who need to operate payroll systems

9. LADYWELL HOUSE - NEWTOWN (12 NOON - 12.15)
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Members welcomed David Micah – Commercial Property Manager and Sarah Page – Strategic Property Project Manager to the meeting for this item of business. The site (a four-storey building with external parking) was purchased in April 2017 for £1.1 million. The refurbishment project is estimated at £2.5 million, of which £500,000 is optional works. There is a potential for £400,000 / year income from commercially letting the building at full capacity; the current income is £200,000 as the refurbishment project is retaining a vacant floor to enable the refurbishment work to start.

Heart of Wales Property Services (HoWPS) are providing the Design Consultancy for the project. Members would welcome the use of local tradesmen to undertake the refurbishment works. Current car park marking and policing issues are being addressed. Whilst the purchase of the site is currently intended as a commercial venture, there could be scope in identifying space for Council use if required.

A member urged thorough surveys of all assets held in order to review usage and consider options before engaging in discussions in relation to purchasing additional sites.

10.	REPORTS FROM AND QUESTIONS TO MEMBERS SERVING ON OUTSIDE BODIES (12.15 - 12.25)
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Members welcomed the opportunity to receive reports from, and to put questions to, members serving on outside bodies.

- a. Joint Meeting of the Shrewsbury to Aberystwyth Railway Liaison Committee and the Cambrian Coastline Railway Liaison Conference – 24th November 2017 – members welcomed the update report from Councillor Michael Williams.

Members were informed that Arriva Trains had withdrawn from the bid for operating the local train franchise. Three potential operators would be considered for the contract.

11.	ROAD SAFETY AND TRAFFIC MANAGEMENT (12.25- 12.35)
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Members welcomed Chris Lloyd – Area Traffic Officer to the meeting.

Proposed Waiting Restrictions at Kerry (Public Consultation) – members were reminded that they had agreed (on 5th July) to proceed to a public consultation regarding proposed traffic calming measures and proposed waiting restrictions. A public consultation had been held and a number of views received. Having considered the views received and following input from the local member it was **RESOLVED** to accept option 3 in the recommendation 'To take into account the representations received and implement the post public consultation refined waiting and loading prohibitions put forward for consideration in the 10th January 2018 committee report'.

12.	DATE OF NEXT MEETING
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The next meeting would be held on Wednesday 7th March 2018.

**County Councillor G Breeze
Vice-Chairman (in the Chair)**