

**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE BRECKNOCKSHIRE COMMITTEE  
HELD AT NEUADD BRYCHEINIOG, BRECON  
ON WEDNESDAY 28<sup>th</sup> MAY 2014**

**Present:** County Councillor Mrs. S. Williams – Chairman

County Councillors P.C. Ashton, Mrs. M.J.B. Davies, Mrs. S. Davies, M.J. Dorrance, L. Fitzpatrick, Mrs. M.R. Harris, J. Holmes D. W. Meredith, J.G. Morris, W.D. Powell, Mrs. K. Silk, D.A. Thomas, Mrs. D.G. Thomas, T. Van-Rees and H. Williams.

**In attendance:**

Councillor Mrs. M. Alexander, Cabinet Portfolio Holder: Education and Children's Services

Councillor D. Mayor, Cabinet Portfolio Holder: Adult Social Services

David Powell – Strategic Director: Resources, Phil Jackson – Transportation and Development Control Manager, Mark Evans – Head of Business Services, Joy Garfitt – Head of Adult Social Care and Shane Thomas – Clerk.

<b>1.</b>	<b>APOLOGIES</b>	<b>BS24-2014</b>
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Apologies for absence were received from Councillor G. Brown – Cabinet Portfolio Holder: Commissioning and Procurement who provided a written update regarding the Additional Learning Needs Consultation and Councillor J. Powell, Cabinet Portfolio Holder for Highways and Environmental Health who had arranged for Councillor Mrs. R. Harris to stand in and provide an update in relation to her portfolio.

Apologies for absence were also accepted from Councillors S. Davies, G. Hopkins, Mrs. S. McNicholas, E.T. Morgan, D. Price, G. Ratcliffe and Mrs. A. York.

<b>2.</b>	<b>MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETINGS – 26<sup>th</sup> MARCH AND 14<sup>TH</sup> MAY 2014</b>	<b>BS25-2014</b>
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The Chairman was authorised to sign the minutes of the previous meetings of the committee held on Wednesday 26<sup>th</sup> March and Wednesday 14<sup>th</sup> May 2014 as correct records.

<b>3.</b>	<b>DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST</b>	<b>BS26-2014</b>
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Councillor L. Fitzpatrick declared an interest in relation to discussions regarding adult social care. There were no other declarations of interest.

<b>4.</b>	<b>CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS</b>	<b>BS27-2014</b>
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The Chair reported on the following:

- a. **Blaubeuren Visit** – a delegation from Blaubeuren would visit during the week of 7<sup>th</sup> July as part of arrangements to celebrate twinning with the shire. The Chair and Vice-Chair would assist with planning arrangements, prior to the visit there would be an exhibition in the town library. Members with potential exhibits were encouraged to link with Julie Lewis, Tourism Officer

- b. **Brecknockshire Meetings** – the Chair confirmed that she would be looking to hold shire meetings at alternative venues within the shire as opposed to meeting at Neuadd Brycheiniog. Members with venue ideas were encouraged to discuss them with the Chair or Clerk. It was suggested to hold the July meeting at the Regimental Museum of the Royal Welsh Guards. It is likely that the September meeting would be held in Ysgol Maesydderwen

<b>5.</b>	<b>ROAD SAFETY AND TRAFFIC MANAGEMENT SCHEMES</b>	<b>BS28-2014</b>
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Members welcomed Phil Jackson, Transportation and Development Control Manager to the meeting to present the below reports. Members were reminded that the moratorium on traffic regulation orders had only recently been lifted. Following discussion and having voted on each item members:

**5.1 Llangattock Parking Review Objections – RESOLVED to:**

- a. Uphold the objections to the waiting restriction on Park Drive and to over-rule the objections to the disabled parking
- b. Over-rule objections to the prohibition of waiting on Park Drive
- c. Over-rule the objections to the prohibition of waiting and no stopping except buses on Plasderwen

**5.2 Crickhowell Parking Review ‘A40T Parking Restrictions and Crickhowell Parking Review Objections’** – subject to amending the report to replace references to Castle Street with Castle Road and whilst noting that there had been significant local objection it was **RESOLVED** to:

- a. Uphold the objections for Bridge Street, Castle Road, Lamb Lane and Cwmbeth Close
- b. Note and over-rule the objections for Beacons Court and High Street
- c. Note objections for Everest Drive and introduce a lesser Order of No Waiting Monday - Friday 8 a.m. – 5 p.m.
- d. Note the objections for Llanbedr Road and reduce the length of the Prohibition of Waiting to the lengths shown on the plan

It was further **RESOLVED** to write to the Welsh Government and request clarification in relation to the policy for operating laybys alongside trunk routes. There had been some concern with regard to closures being used to control trading from laybys and vehicles blocking layby exit routes. It was noted that some authorities had introduced licensing schemes to secure income and to control trading. It could be an option for Powys, however, there would need to be consideration in relation to who would undertake enforcement action. Members requested information to clarify who should be contacted in the event of there being potential breaches of restrictions which could require enforcement i.e. when to contact the police as opposed to the Authority because of parking concerns/issues

**5.3 Talgarth Parking Review** – was **RESOLVED** that consultation procedures be initiated and if no substantive objections are received the proposal for Talgarth be implemented.

Members welcomed Mark Evans, Head of Business Services to the meeting to provide an overview in relation to the functions undertaken by Business Services which include:

- a. **Income and Awards** – bill and collect from 65,000 residents and bill and collect business rates from 6,500 business premises. Officers had recently supported arrangements for providing additional funding via. the Discretionary Housing Grant (the Authority had drawn down the maximum grant of £544k)
- b. **Pensions Administration** – pension benefits, maintenance of pension records, advice and guidance and meeting statutory data requirements – the pension fund is currently valued at around £438 million. More recently officers had very successfully supported arrangements for releasing staff under the voluntary severance scheme
- c. **Employment Services** – recruitment, safeguarding, employment contracts, absence calculations, expenses, payroll, HMRC and pension compliance – the current annual pay bill being in the region of £170 million. Automated systems had improved the delivery of functions
- d. **Business Support** – financial and administrative support (all services), care council training support and Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check processing – as an example the management of social care income per annum is in the region of £8 million

Whilst discussing matters particular reference was made to:

- a. **School Support Packages** – during the summer there would be a review of school support packages to ensure that they are fit for purpose and charged at the right level. Representatives from schools would feed into the review. During the period of review it would be important to confirm arrangements with schools
- b. **Welfare Reform** – members would welcome being kept informed of actions to be taken to comply with the Welfare Reform Act (quarterly updates)
- c. **Council Tax Collections** – Powys performs very well in terms of Council Tax collection rates and ranks very highly against other Welsh authorities (a 97.6% collection rate which is likely to rise when year-end accounts are closed)
- d. **Discretionary Housing Grant (DHG)** – the impact of reform on those in receipt of housing benefit had been reduced because some of the additional cost had been met by the awarding of DHG. It is likely that the grant would not continue. Members were re-assured to learn that the Authority has sound links with housing providers
- e. **Service Re-design** – reviewing processes for delivering services, existing and new requirements remains a priority
- f. **Pension Fund** – pressures on the pension fund continue to be monitored, the release of staff under the voluntary severance scheme could have an impact. In general terms the fund is performing well. It's a legal requirement to conduct three yearly fund reviews
- g. **Assets** – a member urged the speedy sale of surplus assets as a priority i.e. vacated school sites. It was also suggested that a Council department should take central control of the Council estate and manage it accordingly. In terms of the management of workshops a member suggested that those wanting background should review a scrutiny report produced in 2011 which identified issues with the external body which had been managing the estate

Due to the success of the operation of business services there could be scope to undertake functions for other agencies and secure additional income for the Council (the Authority current charges other organisations for using its services for undertaking DBS checks, four authorities had expressed a strong interest in using Powys to administer their DBS checks which would deliver an income of in the region of £90k per annum).

<b>7.</b>	<b>REPORTS FROM AND QUESTIONS TO CABINET MEMBERS</b>	<b>BS30-2014</b>
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**7.1 Councillor Rosemarie Harris** – Cabinet Portfolio Holder: Regeneration and Planning

**7.2 Councillor Daren Mayor** – Cabinet Portfolio Holder: Adult Social Care

**7.3 Councillor John Powell** – Cabinet Portfolio Holder: Highways and Environmental Health – apologies presented

Members welcomed the opportunity to receive reports from, and put questions to, Cabinet members and were informed that Councillor Myfanwy Alexander had attended the meeting to provide a portfolio update in relation to education and children's services.

- a. **Awarding of Contracts/Transfer of Domiciliary Care** – members with concerns regarding the operation of domiciliary care were encouraged to contact the portfolio holder or head of service direct. There had been some negative, unhelpful and mostly inaccurate media reports. Lessons had been learnt during the re-tendering, awarding and transfer exercise. There had been some minor teething problems but in general terms the transfer had been successful. In-house staff had been offered positions with care providers prior to transferring services but had, in the main, declined positions. Contracts with providers would put the Council in a better position to deliver the service whilst benefiting care providers, their staff and service users. Providers would need to sign up to a code of conduct and meet requirements imposed upon them by the Authority. Tenders had been awarded for five years and delivery would be monitored. Officers encourage service users to report any concerns in relation to the quality of service, it was suggested to remind service users of their obligations in terms of reporting concerns and to quash any fears about potential reprisal
- b. **Day Centres / Meals on Wheels** – there would be local discussions with day centre staff, communities and services users regarding options for delivering day care services. At the same time it would seem appropriate to discuss options for providing a meals on wheels service. Members would be kept informed of local matters
- c. **Direct Payments** – a member requested a direct payments update to a future shire meeting
- d. **Health and Social Care Integrated Board** – a joint health and Council Board would move forward with joint initiatives and had agreed carers, mental health, learning disabilities and older people as areas of focus
- e. **Mid and West Wales Collaboration Group** – the principle of working as a Mid and West Wales Group for delivering social and health care presents practical challenges

- f. **Eligibility Review** – the Authority would meet obligations in terms of reviewing the criterion it uses to determine levels of need and subsequently care packages
- g. **Minister for Health and Social Care** – the Portfolio Holder had recently met with the Minister, issues discussed included the recent capping of care charges (a maximum contribution of £55) and the pressure of delivering services in Powys in terms of its aging population with increasing care needs and high expectations
- h. **Fairer Care Policy** – to comply with legislative requirements the Authority would introduce a Fairer Care Policy in due course, there would be significant consultation with a range of stakeholders
- i. **Glan Yr Afon Integrated Care Centre (Builth Wells)** – there had been registration issues which had delayed the opening of the bedded unit
- j. **Local Development Plan (27<sup>th</sup> May)** – members were thanked for their input at yesterday's LDP session
- k. **Tourism** – funding had been secured undertake activities to assess the economic benefit of tourism (Powys had been identified as an area with particular issues)
- l. **Affordable Housing** – the Brecon Beacons National Park had seemingly decided not to engage in terms of providing additional affordable needs housing and had distanced itself by determining that representatives would not attend future meetings to discuss local needs planning issues. It was agreed to write to the Brecon Beacons National Park to seek clarification of their intentions moving forward
- m. **Leisure Services (Trust)** – Cabinet would move forward with considering options for delivering leisure services using a trust arrangement. A more commercial approach could produce a self-funding estate
- n. **Estyn Inspection of Learning** – members could expect a public announcement shortly, members wanting to discuss the inspection prior to any formal announcement should contact the Portfolio Holder direct
- o. **Additional Learning Needs** – with effect from 2<sup>nd</sup> June the Portfolio Holder for Education and Children's Services would lead the ALN review (previous to the 2<sup>nd</sup> she had a declarable interest). Members can expect a report to Cabinet in July
- p. **School Budgets** – there had been significant internal challenge to the Fair Funding Forum (the formula used to deliver funding to schools) by officers, school based staff and colleagues from Ceredigion. It was felt by Cabinet that it would be timely for there to be an external review
- q. **School Modernisation** – an extended range of factors would be used when moving forward with reviewing the school estate (standards, staffing, surplus capacity, the condition of sites etc.). Schools would be ranked in terms of risk and reviewed accordingly. Members were reminded that the Authority had closed two high schools in the last two years (Ysgol Bro Ddyfi and John Beddoes School)
- r. **School Success/Areas of Excellence** – in areas where schools excel they would be supported and their expertise promoted subject to there being no detrimental impact on learners from neighbouring schools
- s. **Post 16 Learning** – there have been significant reductions in funding, it would be important to review the delivery of learning to ensure learners are provided with the best opportunity. The Welsh Government impose minimum requirements

- t. **School Populations** – in general terms it is expected that the primary school population would, in the near future, increase by 20%. Plans to review the school estate would include future expected demand
- u. **Brecon High School** – the governing body would welcome support from officers of the Authority in order to respond to issues of significant concern and bring the school out of special measures. The Governing Body have concerns about the level of support provided
- v. **Brecon Strategic Outline Case (SOC)** – members were invited to discuss issues regarding the Brecon SOC (the document which sets out plans for the future school estate in the area). The SOC allows for the removal of a learning site, Price Waterhouse Cooper consultants has contributed to the SOC

<b>8.</b>	<b>REPORTS FROM AND QUESTIONS TO MEMBERS SERVING ON OUTSIDE BODIES</b>	<b>BS31-2014</b>
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Members welcomed the opportunity to receive reports from, and put questions to, members serving on outside bodies.

#### **8.1 To Consider Appointing to a Radnorshire Position on the Brecon and Radnor Community Health Council**

Members **RESOLVED** not to accept the **RECOMMENDATION** from the Radnorshire Committee to fill the vacancy, for one term, on the Brecon and Radnorshire Community Health Council for a Radnorshire member.

<b>9.</b>	<b>SHIRE MEETINGS</b>	<b>BS32-2014</b>
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#### **9.1 Delegation of Functions**

It was felt that reviewing the delegation of any functions to shires should be considered alongside a wider review of operating shire meetings. The view would be reported to the Democratic Services Committee. Costings for supporting the operation of committees in accordance with requirements under the current constitution would be provided to members once confirmed.

#### **9.2 Appointments to the Chairman of Council**

Members agreed that any change to the current system to appointing to the Chairman of Council position, if agreed, should be introduced in the life of the new Council. There are varying views from shire members in terms of retaining the status quo and changing to proportional arrangements. It was felt that a review should include consideration of arrangements for continuing to operate shire meetings.

<b>10.</b>	<b>CORRESPONDENCE</b>	<b>BS33-2014</b>
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There were no items of correspondence.

<b>11.</b>	<b>DATE OF NEXT MEETING</b>	<b>BS34-2014</b>
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Members were reminded that the next meeting would be held on Wednesday 30<sup>th</sup> July 2014 and, hopefully, in the Regimental Museum of the Royal Welsh Guards.

**COUNTY COUNCILLOR MRS S WILLIAMS  
CHAIR**