

10 April 2024

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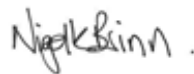
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Dear Councillor,

You are summoned to attend a meeting of the **Full Council** to be held in the Council Chamber, Council Offices, on **Thursday, 18 April 2024 at 6.00 pm.**

If the business is not completed the meeting will reconvene on Wednesday 24 April 2024 at 6.00pm.

Yours faithfully,



Chief Executive Officer

To: Councillors James Bevan, Adrian Birch, Matt Bishop, Alison Bruce, Philip Burford, Richard Burton, Jackie Dale, Clive Elsmore, Jamie Elsmore, Nick Evans, John Francis, Jackie Fraser, Julia Gooch, Tim Gwilliam, Julie Hudson, Harry Ives, Gillian Kilmurray, Patrick Kyne, Johnathan Lane, Beth Llewellyn, Di Martin (Chairman), Andrew McDermid, Chris McFarling, Andy Moore, Gill Moseley, Bernie O'Neill, Sid Phelps, Simon Phelps (Vice chairman), Alan Preest, Trevor Roach, Jacob Sanders, Shaun Stammers, Mark Topping, Dave Tradgett, Mark Turner, David Wheeler, Ian Whitburn and Clayton Williams

AGENDA

1. APOLOGIES

To receive apologies for absence.

2. MINUTES (Pages 1 - 24)

To confirm the minutes of the meeting held on Thursday 22 February 2024.

3. URGENT BUSINESS

The Chair to identify any items of urgent business.

4. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

To receive any declarations of interest in any matter to be discussed at the meeting. Members and officers are requested to identify the nature of the interest.

5. CHAIR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

6. CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER'S UPDATE

7. LEADER OF THE COUNCIL

To elect the Leader of the Council.

Note: this appointment is for the remaining term of the Council until 2027.

The Leader will represent the Council on the following bodies or equivalent :

Gloucestershire Economic Joint Committee
Leadership Gloucestershire
Local Government Association General Assembly
South West Councils
South West Councils Employers' Panel

8. PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

8.1 Linda Borne

Though over 70% of all land in England is classified as " Agricultural Land" not all agricultural land is created equal.

The very small proportion of our land classified by Natural England as "Best and Most Versatile" is a critical resource for fighting climate change and building a sustainable future.

Government guidelines for LPA's on the management of this resource can be found here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/agricultural-land-assess-proposals-for-development/guide-to-assessing-development-proposals-on-agricultural-land>

This land is important because it is constantly able to produce the highest yield of crops, the widest variety of crops and has the greatest potential to continue to be productive through climate change.

BMV land is generally level or gently sloping land on rich but well drained soils. Often found close to historic market towns, it is as much a part of their heritage as the market square.

The likely and actual locations of this land are recorded by Natural England/Defra here:

<https://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/category/5208993007403008>

FoDDC is custodian to only a small area of this vital natural resource: mainly surrounding the town of Newent. Its existence seems to have been largely overlooked by previous administrations.

How will the council recognise the significance and value of this land in emerging strategic and development plans?

8.2 Jeff Steers

During a period of heavy rains earlier this month raw sewage bubbled up through manhole covers in Newent and ran through the street for several days. Severn Trent have now been trying to remedy this for the last 10 days with traffic lights a large tanker and diggers. The infrastructure was simply unable to cope with the combined flow and weight of rainwater and effluent.

In a response to a recent planning application Severn Trent have stated that their facilities in Newent will be unable to cope with the impacts of more new houses being built until planned upgrades at their facilities have been completed which will likely be 2030 or later.

How will this knowledge impact on policies relating to Newent in the emerging local plan?

8.3 Mark James

The current Forest of Dean Local Plan (2012 - 2026) sets out the following

strategy for Newent:

"The strategy is to support the town and to increase its range of employment, to widen its service base. At the same time limited new housing will be promoted, in order to provide for local needs without encouraging increased commuting"

What happened? Despite the policy set out, Newent has gained over 1000 new homes during the current plan period - a faster rate of development, relative to the town's size than any of the other Forest towns. At the same time the planned investment in employment and facilities has failed to materialise.

Newent residents could be forgiven for feeling neglected and betrayed by previous F.O.D.D.C. administrations.

Does the new Green administration have plans to get things back on track for Newent, and ensure our future as a sustainable working agricultural market town?

9. HR POLICIES (Pages 25 - 50)

Leader of the Council to present report LD.731.

10. INDEPENDENT PERSON APPOINTMENT (Pages 51 - 56)

The Monitoring Officer to present report LD.732.

11. NOTICE OF MOTIONS

11.1 Councillor Matt Bishop

Since 2010, local government workers have lost an average of 25% from the value of their pay. Our staff, other local government staff and school support staff are experiencing an ongoing cost of living crisis. Since 2010, the cost of living has risen by 60%; more and more local government workers have been pushed into debt, and their basic spending has overtaken their income, with 1 in 5 households having less than £100 to spare each month. This is a terrible situation for anyone to find themselves in.

At the same time, workers have experienced ever-increasing workloads and persistent job insecurity. Across the UK, the local government workforce has fallen by 30% because of job cuts, not uniquely but in many cases due to cuts from central government. This has had a disproportionate impact on women, with women making up more than three-quarters of the local government workforce.

Local government continues to show how indispensable it is. But staff are

increasingly leaving the sector for better paid jobs elsewhere, for example in retail, which leaves local authorities with a massive skills gap, and vacancies in a range of key services, including in social care, education and youth services.

Local government finance is in an enormously difficult state, facing an estimated funding gap of more than £3.5 billion for 2024/25. Recent research shows that if the Government were to fully fund the unions' 2024 pay claim, around half of the money would be recouped thanks to increased tax revenue, reduced expenditure on benefits and tax credits, and increased consumer spending in the local economy.

This council believes:

Our public workers keep our communities clean and safe, look after those in need and keep our neighbourhoods, towns and cities running. Without the professionalism and dedication of our staff, the council services our residents rely on would not be deliverable.

Local government workers deserve a proper real-terms pay increase. The Government needs to take responsibility and fully fund this increase; it should not put the burden on local authorities whose funding has been cut to the bone.

This council resolves to:

Support the pay claim submitted by UNISON, GMB and Unite on behalf of council and school workers, for an increase of £3,000 or 10%, whichever is the greater. We call on the Local Government Association to make urgent representations to central government to fund the NJC pay claim, working with the unions to present a united front in defence of the local government workforce.

We will write to the Chancellor and Secretary of State to call for a pay increase for local government workers to be fully funded with new money from central government.

We will meet with local NJC union representatives to convey support for the pay claim (fully funded by central government) and consider practical ways in which the council can support the campaign.

We encourage all local government workers to consider joining a trade union.

11.2 Councillor Andrew McDermid

Rivers and Ocean Recovery for Forest of Dean District

Despite this council having declared climate and biodiversity emergencies in 2019 & 2020, the state of the ocean & of our own rivers Wye & Severn flowing into the sea on our coast which are at the heart of our heritage & economy, continues to degenerate. Populations of salmon worldwide have fallen 75%

with eels/elvers virtually extinct in Wye & Severn. Plastic pollutes the ocean such that by 2050 it is expected it will exceed the mass of fish by weight. We witness the decline of rivers from farm & sewage runoff. The sea is both carbon sink & heat reservoir i.e. it absorbs 20% of carbon emissions & 90% excess heat, but its capacity to do so is being compromised. The Severn is identified as the worst river in England for sewage pollution, jeopardising ecological, economic & recreational activity & human health. Whilst it is impossible to fix things acting alone local government can play its part. We need a “source to sea” (2) approach. Monmouth County Council approved its own motion in March '22 as have some 20 other councils all tiers. The Environment Act 2021 requires local government to act & report back on biodiversity gain but that is perverse & a nugatory exercise unless acknowledging rivers are the fount of all life.

This Council resolves to:

- (a) Report to Full Council by December setting out what Council/Cabinet can do within its finite resources & identify possible sources of funds to fulfil ocean & river improvement going forward. The report will include items along the following lines:

Estuary Management & nature recovery:

- as an active member of the Severn Estuary Partnership (SEP) (1), we embed ocean recovery in our decisions (procurement, budgets etc), recognising land & river activity impact the ocean – “source to sea”
- Sign up to “planning for planet” guide (3), supporting nature friendly farming, tackle river pollution through planning policy
- Recognise the council’s already existing obligation to protect waterways, including cumulative effects of polluting activity, per the Local Plan being developed & the NPPF & with this council’s own resolution on nutrient neutrality (Oct '22)
- Coastal protection officer to identify coastal landfill sites.

River Catchment Management:

- Investigate possibility within the report of use of Grampian conditions in pursuit of the Local Plan being drafted, delaying new developments until specified infrastructure such as upgrades to sewage management are complete.

Education & Awareness:

The burden of climate & ecological devastation will be felt overwhelmingly by future generations – our grandchildren – we need to grow their “ocean literacy”

- Give all primary pupils the opportunity to experience the ocean & rivers first hand
- Embed understanding of the “source to sea” approach – how all are impacted by ocean health by promoting equitable access to the ocean physically & digitally for all residents
- Devise a “toolkit” for Town & Parish Council Neighbourhood Plans on “source to sea”

- Our officers ensuring all work they do to this end is logged centrally on a simple database for transparency on progress of fulfilment of the Motion & silo working is avoided.

And

- (b) Our CEO to write to the government of the day urging govt to appoint a Minister for the Ocean to improve water quality by such means as inter alia stopping plastic pollution by regulating single use plastic & working with communities to co – develop marine policy for sustainable outcomes in local placemaking.
- (c) Our CEO to write to Severn Trent & Welsh Water asking for clarification on their measures to eliminate non – emergency sewage discharges & what work where is done & planned on treatment plants in FoD catchment area & enquire about possibly a phosphate stripping facility, suggesting regular meetings on these topics.

Key:

- 1 Severn Estuary Partnership (SEP) works with estuary stakeholders since 1995, promoting a sustainable approach to planning management of the estuary & coastal communities to deliver ocean recovery & local prosperity
- 2 “source to sea” approach – recognising how activities (individual & collective) on land & rivers connect to & impact on the ocean & how the ocean impacts on our economy & health
- 3 (<https://www.foodfortheplanet.org.uk/planning>) A company run by Sustain Food matters & the Soil Association offering access to online resources to help implement policy to reduce river pollution
- 4 ASERA (1998) represents majority of relevant authorities on the Severn estuary to help them discharge their statutory duties in respect of the Habitats Directive

11.3 Councillor Clayton Williams

On behalf of the people of the Forest of Dean.

I motion that this Council, Forest of Dean District Council, write to the Lord Lieutenant of Gloucestershire, Edward Gillespie OBE, to convey our thoughts, best wishes and hopes for speedy recoveries to both His Majesty King Charles III and Her Royal Highness Catherine, Princess of Wales.

Long live the King.

12. CABINET AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE REPORTS (Pages 57 - 68)

The Leader of the Council and the chairman of the scrutiny committee to report on recent activities, followed by questions from members. Depending on time the Chairman will rule and only take one question per member relating to reports.

- a) Cabinet
- b) Strategic Overview and Scrutiny Committee

13. FUTURE MEETINGS

All meetings commence at 6.00pm.

Thursday 25 May 2024 (Annual Meeting)

Thursday 25 July 2024

Thursday 24 October 2024

Thursday 12 December 2024