ABERGAVENNY TOWN COUNCIL

POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE

WEDNESDAY 13TH DECEMBER 2023

PR142/23: PRINCIPAL OFFICER’S UPDATE

1. GWENT POLICE NEIGHBOURHOOD UPDATE

A report for November has been circulated to all Councillors from the Abergavenny CSO team at Gwent Police on incidents which they have recorded or dealt with over that month. It is anticipated that an officer will try to join one of our meetings each month so we can have regular updates and feedback on any issues you may wish to raise from residents.

1. INDEPENDENT REMUNERATION PAVNEL DRAFT REPORT AND RESPONSE

Cllr Bowyer and the Principal Officer have submitted a response to the draft consultation as these were originally asked for by 8th December 2023. The deadline has now been extended to the 20th December, but for information the draft report, a presentation made to One Voice Wales, and the consultation response, have been attached for your information.

1. MONMOUTHSHIRE LOCAL TRANSPORT PLAN CONSULTATION

Cllr Bowyer, and both the Principal and Deputy Principal Officer sat and went through the virtual consultation for the Local Transport Plan which originally had a 4 week time frame for responses. The process took 3 hours, and after submitting our responses we emailed the officers at Monmouthshire County Council to express our concerns:

“We understand that there is a drive to try and reach as many people in the shortest time possible. 4 weeks in our opinion is too short a time frame to enable everyone the chance to go through and digest the whole 72 page document (if you are able to download this once you find where this is). The column layout is not user friendly and very difficult to follow. The graphs and diagrams, although breaking up the text, are incomprehensible, with little or no explanation as to what they are depicting. Wording and language varies page to page, and inconsistent messaging makes it difficult to know what is being asked of us to comment on.

We filled in the questionnaire as we went along as directed by the virtual area, and we ‘walked’ round the room in what we thought was a logical direction, but it didn’t fit the layout of the 72 page consultation document.

If you truly want to hear all the voices of the community, this format has automatically discounted and excluded those who can’t or won’t spend half a day trawling through the documentation and attempting to fil in the questionnaire. Expecting those without access to the technology to come into the library to access this, without someone assisting them, is a big ask, and not providing interpretation boards and a printed readable version with the ability to respond is unacceptable.

Finally, those using reader software on their devices are likely to have huge issues with following and responding to this consultation.

Abergavenny Town Council would have been keen to engage with and be part of stakeholder discussions earlier when looking at how to consult the community on this proposed plan which will have a huge impact on everyone going forward. It is disappointing that the three stakeholder events held virtually did not give town councils an opportunity to attend and at least try and gain some understanding behind the rationale behind large parts of this consultation document.”

A response was received that night from Debra Hill-Howells and an invitation to join an online meeting being hosted by them on Tuesday 12th December at 10:30am. The consultation has also been extended to 5th January 2024. Verbal feedback from the online meeting will be delivered by Cllrs Bowyer, Simcock, Powell and Holland who expressed an interest in joining the meeting.