



MONMOUTHSHIRE AND BRECON CANAL – CRUMLIN ARM WORKING GROUP – 27TH FEBRUARY 2020

**SUBJECT: MEMBERSHIP OF THE MONMOUTHSHIRE AND BRECON CANAL
– CRUMLIN ARM WORKING GROUP**

**REPORT BY: CORPORATE DIRECTOR EDUCATION AND CORPORATE
SERVICES**

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 The report reviews the current membership of the Monmouthshire and Brecon Canal – Crumlin Arm Working Group and sets out various membership options for consideration by the Working Group, although it should be noted that any changes would need to be considered and approved by Council at its Annual Meeting.

2. SUMMARY

- 2.1 At its meeting on the 7th November 2019, Members of the Working Group expressed an interest in reviewing its composition particularly in relation to representation from wards that have no visible or accessible connection to the canal, specifically representation from the Crumlin, Newbridge and Abercarn wards.

3. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1 Option 1
Membership of the Monmouthshire and Brecon Canal – Crumlin Arm Working Group remain unchanged with full representation from all wards adjoining the canal:

Abercarn (2), Crosskeys (1), Crumlin (2), Newbridge (3), Risca East (3) and Risca West (2) including the Cabinet Member for Environment and Neighbourhood Services giving a committee membership of 13.

- 3.2 Option 2
The Working Group be comprised of 1 Member + 1 nominated substitute from each of the wards adjoining the canal plus the Cabinet Member for Environment and Neighbourhood Services:

Abercarn (1), Crosskeys (1), Crumlin (1), Newbridge (1), Risca East (1) and Risca West (1) – giving a committee membership of 7.

3.3 Option 3

The Working Group be comprised of full ward representation from those wards that have accessible connectivity to the canal plus 1 representative + 1 nominated substitute from each of the remaining adjoining wards (Crumlin, Abercarn and Newbridge) and the Cabinet Member for Environment and Neighbourhood Services.

Abercarn (1), Crosskeys (1), Crumlin (1), Newbridge (1), Risca East (3) and Risca West (2) – giving a committee membership of 10.

3.4 Option 4

The Working Group be comprised of full representation from all wards apart from the Newbridge ward who would be invited to attend as and when such matters of interest to the ward arise, plus the Cabinet Member for Environment and Neighbourhood Services.

Abercarn (2), Crosskeys (1), Crumlin (2), Risca East (3) and Risca West (2) – giving a committee membership of 11.

4. REASONS FOR THE RECOMMENDATIONS

- 4.1 To respond to the reservations raised by the Members of the Brecon and Monmouthshire Canal – Crumlin Arm Working Group.

5. THE REPORT

- 5.1 The report reviews the current membership of the Monmouthshire and Brecon Canal – Crumlin Arm Working Group and sets out various membership options for consideration by the Working Group, although it should be noted that any changes would need to be considered and approved by Council at its Annual Meeting.
- 5.2 The Monmouthshire and Brecon Canal – Crumlin Arm Working Group was established in September 2005 as a result of the Corridor Study and its 3 stage enhancement and restoration strategy. Its primary function would be to oversee the ongoing management and maintenance of the Crumlin Arm of the Monmouthshire and Brecon Canal and to put in place measures to licence and control activities on the canal. Working to support and participate in any measures or proposals that would result in the full restoration of the canal to navigable standards between Cwmcarn and Fourteen Locks Visitor Centre at Newport. It was agreed by Cabinet and subsequently by Council that the Canal Group would be comprised from the Members of those wards areas adjoining the canal, namely Abercarn, Crumlin, Crosskeys, Newbridge and Risca.
- 5.3 Although a lot of work has been completed since 2005, the aims of that strategy have not been fully realised and at this point in time it is unlikely that any further navigable stretches of the canal will be progressed beyond that which is presently accessible. This means that although adjoining the canal, Crumlin and Newbridge have no visible or accessible canal infrastructure within their wards and Abercarn has only limited sections of the canal infrastructure remaining across its ward, with little prospect of this position changing.
- 5.4 The Canal Group is currently made up of 13 Members, as the Cabinet Member for

Environment and Neighbourhood Services also represents Risca East. Each of the wards that adjoin the canal are represented as follows: -

Abercarn – 2 Members (Councillors D.W.R. Preece and A. Whitcombe)

Crosskeys – 1 Member (Councillor J. Simmonds)

Crumlin – 2 Members (Councillors M. Davies and C.J. Thomas)

Newbridge – 3 Members (Councillors A. Hussey, L. Jeremiah and G. Johnston)

Risca East – 3 Members (Councillors N. George, P. Leonard and A. Passmore)

Risca West – 2 Members (Councillors B. Owen and R. Whiting)

- 5.5 At the last meeting of the Canal Group, Members from the Newbridge Ward expressed reservations over the relevance of their membership given the tenuous physical link the ward has to the canal and for this reason they felt limited in the contribution they could make to the work of the Group. However the Members from Abercarn expressed their willingness to continue their representation, even though the ward has only a few sections of canal infrastructure remaining.
- 5.6 Given the many and varied demands on Councillors time, the Canal Group agreed to seek advice from the Cabinet Member for Environment and Neighbourhood Services and requested that the relevance of its current membership be reviewed and a report be provided to the next appropriate meeting.
- 5.7 Having taken into account the views of the Members and the terms of reference for the Working Group there are several options that might offer a suitable solution to the concerns raised. It should be noted that representation from the Monmouthshire, Brecon and Abergavenny Canals Trust would be unaffected by any of the proposals.

Option 1

The Membership of the Group remain unchanged, however this would not address the reservation raised.

Option 2

The Membership of the Group could be reduced to a single representative from each of the wards adjoining the canal plus the Cabinet Member. The current Cabinet Member for Environment and Neighbourhood Services is also a Ward Member for Risca East, however this might not always be the case, therefore to ensure continuity of representation for each ward it is recommended that this place be in addition to 6 wards identified giving a committee membership of 7. Nominations would need to be sought from the Ward Members for a principal representative and a substitute, in order to mitigate availability issues.

Option 3

The Membership of the Group could be amended to reflect the areas where the majority of the works are undertaken and therefore of greater relevance for those associated wards. Members could consider the suitability of having all member representation from Crosskeys, Risca East and Risca West wards and 1 representative from Crumlin, Abercarn and Newbridge wards. The current Cabinet member for Environment and Neighbourhood Services is also a Ward Member for Risca East; however this might not always be the case, therefore to ensure continuity

of representation it is recommended that this place be in addition to the 9 representatives the above rationale would generate, giving a committee membership of 10. Nominations would need to be sought from Crumlin, Abercarn and Newbridge ward members for a principal representative and a substitute, in order to mitigate availability issues.

Option 4

The Membership of the Group could be amended to reflect the areas where the majority of works are undertaken and the wishes of the Crumlin and Abercarn Ward Members to continue to support the Working Group with a nominated representative from the Newbridge ward invited to attend as and when such matters of interest to the ward arise. The current Cabinet Member for Environment and Neighbourhood Services is also a Ward Member for Risca East; however this might not always be the case, therefore to ensure continuity of representation it is recommended that this place be in addition to the 10 representatives the above rationale would generate, giving a committee membership of 11. Nominations would need to be sought from the Newbridge ward members for a representative and substitute, in order to mitigate availability issues.

6. **ASSUMPTIONS**

6.1 There are no assumptions made in relation to this report.

7. **LINKS TO RELEVANT COUNCIL POLICIES**

7.1 The composition of committees and sub-committees of Caerphilly County Borough Council are in accordance with the Councils Constitution

Councillor attendance is governed by the Local Government Act 1972

7.2 **Corporate Plan 2018-2023.**

The Monmouthshire and Brecon Canal – Crumlin Arm Working Group contributes to the Corporate Plan in relation to:

Objective 5 - Creating a county borough that supports a healthy lifestyle in accordance with the sustainable Development Principle within the Wellbeing of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015. The canal provides a linear park suitable for users of all abilities who wish to engage in various forms of activity

Objective 6 - Support citizens to remain independent and improve their well-being. The canal provides a linear park suitable for users of all abilities who wish to engage in various forms of activity

8. **WELL-BEING OF FUTURE GENERATIONS**

8.1 This report contributes to the following Well-being Goals as set out in the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act:-

- A healthier Wales
- A more equal Wales
- A Wales of cohesive communities
- A Wales of vibrant culture and thriving Welsh Language

It is also consistent with the five ways of working as defined within the sustainable development principle in the Act in that Canal Group will seek to consider the long-term impact of the management of the canal and its impact on residents, service users and visitors and ensure that the Council as a public body meets its regulatory duties and corporate objectives.

9. EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

9.1 There are no equalities implications

10. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

10.1 There are no financial implications.

11. PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS

11.1 There are no personnel implications

12. CONSULTATIONS

12.1 All comments from consultees have been incorporated into the report.

13. STATUTORY POWER

13.1 Local Government Act 1972 and Local Government (Wales) Measure 2011.

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Consultees: Rob Tranter – Head of Legal Services and Monitoring Officer
Lisa Lane – Deputy Monitoring Officer and Head of Democratic Services
Kevin Kinsey – Principal Engineer
Cllr N. George – Cabinet Member for Environment & Neighbourhood Services
Cllr A. Whitcombe – Chair of Monmouthshire and Brecon Canal – Crumlin Arm Working Group.