

Cllr Frances Taylor

- I attended a meeting of the Strategic Transport Group where members and other Councillors received a presentation from Network rail regarding the electrification of the Great Western Main Line. There was a great deal of specific discussion regarding the impact on local communities when the bridges in particular are worked on. We have been advised that Network Rail will carry out a good deal of community engagement to minimise any adverse impacts.
- Subsequent to this Cllr Crook and I met Network Rail with regard to their proposals for Undy Footbridge and Subway. Network Rail are seeking an informal consultation prior to potentially moving to an extinguishing order for the PROW over the footbridge. Their preferred option is to take down the footbridge and make substantial improvements to the subway. Should any consultation support this I have requested that improvements to the subway comply as far as possible with the Equalities Act. However, at present I understand that there is some dispute in finding the relevant legislation to achieve this and this has delayed matters significantly. Cllr Crook and I have also asked to be involved in the design stage for the work to bridges, so as to ensure as much sympathy with the original structures.
- In addition the Strategic Transport Group is currently working to pull together the Local Transport plan and local priorities feature heavily
- In terms of the ongoing meetings with Welsh Water a couple of matters of note; the private pumping station at the Europark which has caused so many issues for local residents is almost ready for adopting, however residents remain cautious as we have had a few dosing failures of late. The response from Welsh Water has been exceptional and demonstrates the benefit of joint work. We also confirmed that Monmouthshire Council have now sought costings from Welsh Water for the Hydraulic testing associated with the Strategic LDP site at Vinegar Hill/Rockfield Grove.
- Bev and I met with Mark Davies regarding the Homezone and our discussions about promoting the Musla carpark as a drop off point and a safe route along sycamore terrace to sycamore playing field. Mark suggested road markings showing the highway sign for school and Bev will include this in her survey for residents of sycamore.
- At full Council on the 22nd October, we discussed the Williams Commission proposals and the white paper on local government delivery. The County Council resolved that the current options available were not viable and that it was not in the interests of resident to simply seek a merger proposal with Newport in the absence of any clear business case from Welsh Government. At this point the Council ought to keep its options open and seek further detail on the most effective and efficient route for delivering excellent services in a cost effective way. The lead administration favour a federated approach and the Labour group favour a merger with other authorities such as Newport/Torfaen/Blaenau Gwent. Personally, I favour an approach based on a clear business case in common with some others who are concerned about the lack of detail, we await an update at next full Council.