

**Minutes of the Special Adults Select Committee held at County Hall, Usk on  
Wednesday 17<sup>th</sup> December 2014 at 10.00 a.m.**

**PRESENT:** County Councillor P.S. Farley (Chairman)

County Councillors: R. Chapman, R. Harris, P. Jones, and A. Wintle.

Also in attendance: County Councillors G Burrows, Cabinet Member for Social Care & P. Murphy, Cabinet Member for Finance.

**COOPTED MEMBERS:**

None Present

**OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE:**

Mrs. J. Boothroyd	-	Head of Adult Services
Mr. S. Burch	-	Chief Officer for Social Care and Health
Mrs. J Robson	-	Head of Finance / Section 151 Officer
Mrs. T Norris	-	Policy and Performance Officer
Mr. J. Pearson	-	Local Democracy Manager

**APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

1. Apologies for absence were received from County Councillors R. Edwards, M. Hickman and Mr D. Hill (co-opted representative)

**DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

2. County Councillor A. Wintle declared a personal and non-prejudicial interest, pursuant to the members' code of conduct as a Director of Monmouthshire Housing Association.

**TO SCRUTINISE THE DRAFT CAPITAL BUDGET PROPOSALS 2015/16 TO 2018/19**

3. We received a report, for scrutiny and comment, from the Head of Finance which outlined the proposed capital budget for 2015/16 and the indicative capital budgets for the three years 2016/17 to 2018/19.

Members were advised to scrutinise the draft capital budget proposals, the issues were highlighted in the attached appendices of the report.

During discussion members were invited to ask questions and the following points were noted:

- A member raised a query as to the effect of still awaiting income from the sale of the cattle market in Abergavenny and the effect that had on the capital available to deliver the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Schools Programme. We were informed by the Head of Finance / Section 151 Officer that while we wer still awaiting

**Minutes of the Special Adults Select Committee held at County Hall, Usk on  
Wednesday 17<sup>th</sup> December 2014 at 10.00 a.m.**

income from the sale of the cattle market, forecasts were based on estimate receipt of income and short term borrowing could be utilised to fill any shortfall.

- A member queried the expense of two sewage treatment plants as detailed in the appendix 1a and whether options such as considering a hand over to Welsh Water had been considered to ease the budget pressure. The Head of Finance / Section 151 Officer informed us that all options were being considered by the responsible officers but further details would need to be obtained from them directly.
- The Chairman raised concern that there appeared to be no cost included for the replacement of the old iron bridge in Chepstow included in the forecasts. A discussion took place around who was responsible for the bridge and whether it was a trunk road and therefore the responsibility of the Welsh Government or Highways agency, or the responsibility of the Council. The Chairman requested clarification as to who was responsible for the maintenance of the bridge.
- The Chairman also queried the extent of how tied into the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Schools Project the Council was and whether there was any leeway to reconsider or reapportion the costs. Concerns were raised that the current forecasts may end up with an imbalance between the standards of the proposed schools. We were informed by the Cabinet Member for Finance that the project was taken in partnership with the Welsh Government who were providing 50% of the costs associated with the scheme which commenced before the financial pressures for future years had been identified.

Members thanked officers for their report.

**TO SCRUTINE THE BUDGET PROPOSALS 2015/16 TO 2018/19**

4. We welcomed a report from the Head of Finance / Section 151 Officer to provide detailed proposals on the budget savings required to meet the gap between available resources and need to spend in 2015/16.

It was recommended that members scrutinise the budget savings proposals. The Committee were asked to note Cabinet's intentions to continue to work on the areas required to balance the Medium Term Financial Plan.

Members were made aware that the reduction in funding for next year was 4.3%.

The budget process had been brought forward in order to give officers more time, when the budget had been agreed, to ensure savings would be implemented for a full year.

The officer informed members that public consultation on the proposals contained in the report had taken place with further consultation planned for the new year.

During discussion following the report, we noted the following points:

- A member asked whether any useable suggestions had been identified at consultation meetings that the Council could use in making further savings. The Cabinet Member for Finance informed members that whilst they were still

**Minutes of the Special Adults Select Committee held at County Hall, Usk on  
Wednesday 17<sup>th</sup> December 2014 at 10.00 a.m.**

evaluating the comments received, the general feedback was that the content of the proposals was in line with the feedback that is being received. He also informed members that the Made Open consultation website had proved very popular with useful feedback coming through that channel, as well as the public meetings.

### **SERVICE AREA BUDGET MANDATES**

5. We received a report detailing the service area budget mandates for scrutiny from the Housing and Regeneration Manager and the Head of Adult Services.

#### **(i) Mandate 2 – Collaboration of Housing & Community Services.**

The Committee considered the report received from the Housing and Regeneration Manager in relation to the budget mandates. The Chairman expressed his regret that the officer was not in attendance at the meeting to answer members questions but requested that they be taken away for response from the officer at a later date.

The following questions were raised by members:

- A member raised a question in relation to page 3 of 13 of the mandate around the Housing Solutions Service. The member requested further information on the 21 units in the Shared Housing & Lodging Scheme, including the location of the units and how they are shared between Monmouthshire and Torfaen. Another member queried whether these units had been purchased and if so why, as we should be using housing association buildings.
- A member also queried the appointment to support the management of the scheme and requested more information including whether the appointment was a shared appointment between Monmouthshire and Torfaen and who was responsible for funding the appointment.
- Members also raised concerns in relation to the Careline element of the mandate. Concerns were regarding the reduction in staffing whilst still delivering the service going forward. Members queried the positioning of the Careline service within the authority stating their belief that it would be better situated under social services rather than housing but agreed the discussion was for a future meeting.

#### **(ii) Mandates 33 & 34 – Revised Adult Social Care Service Transformation.**

The Head of Adult Services presented a report on revised adult social care service transformation and detailed the content in relation to the budget mandates.

The officer advised members that the report extends the work that had already been undertaken in the last three years in service transformation with much of the savings identified established through delivering services in a different way rather than cutting services to those who need it.

Members discussed the report and the following points were noted:

**Minutes of the Special Adults Select Committee held at County Hall, Usk on  
Wednesday 17<sup>th</sup> December 2014 at 10.00 a.m.**

- A member congratulated the officer on the work they do and identifying the savings, but wanted clarification on the large reduction of savings in the adult teams identified on page 11 of 16 of the mandate. The member queried what cuts to the service would be made to achieve those savings and whether redundancies were needed to reach the targets. The officer informed members that savings would be made around service redesign and evenly spreading costs between services and that the proposals did not include any redundancies.
- The Chief Officer for Social Care and Health supported the comments made by the Head of Adult Services and informed members about a recent visit to the Council from Mark Drakeford, Assembly Minister for Health and Social Services, who praised the work that the social services team were undertaking. The Cabinet Member for Social Care and Health also endorsed the work of the social services team.
- The Chairman sought clarification as to the communication strategy that would be used to ensure residents were informed about the services available to them and ensure that residents were aware that services were not being cut. Officers and the Cabinet Member stated that it was difficult to engage with residents who were not in receipt of the service but there was much activity already taking place with My Day My Life events and open days at Mardy Park that were promoting the services available.

The Chair thanked the Head of Adult Services for the detailed report and work undertaken by the service.

### **TO SCRUTINISE THE WHOLE AUTHORITY RISK LOG**

6. We received the Strategic Risk Assessment to provide Members with an overview of the current and future strategic risks facing the authority.

Members were required to identify whether the risks identified within the report were the most significant issues the Authority faced over the following three years and have regard to the risk log when making decisions at future meetings.

The risk assessment ensured that:

- Strategic risks were identified and monitored by the Authority
- Risk controls were appropriate and proportionate
- Senior managers and Elected Members systematically reviewed the strategic risks faced by the Authority.

Members discussed the report and raised the following points:

- Members noted that the log contained risks associated with vulnerable children but not vulnerable adults and wished to see that included in the log. The Policy and Performance Officer stated that the omission had been highlighted at other select committees and would be included in future versions.
- A member stated that there were a lot of high level risks in the log which made it difficult to identify the significance of a risk. The Policy and Performance

**Minutes of the Special Adults Select Committee held at County Hall, Usk on  
Wednesday 17<sup>th</sup> December 2014 at 10.00 a.m.**

Officer stated that they would be looking to revise some of the scorings in future documents to take account of the varying nature of the risks.

The Chairman summarised that the risk log was a good tool for the committee to consider when identifying future items for scrutiny and aided them in being pro-active in identifying issues.

**The meeting ended at 11:35am**