

MONMOUTHSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

Minutes of the Children and Young People Select Committee held in the Council Chamber, County Hall, The Rhadyr, Usk on Tuesday 27th January 2015 at 2.00p.m.

PRESENT: County Councillor P. Jones (Chairman)

County Councillors: D. Blakebrough, P.S. Farley, R.G. Harris, and M. Powell

ALSO IN ATTENDANCE:

County Councillor E.J. Hackett Pain - Cabinet Member for Education and Learning.

ADDED / CO-OPTED MEMBERS:

Mr. K. Plow (Monmouthshire Association of School Governors)

OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE:

Ms. T. Jelfs	-	Head of Children's Services
Ms. J. Morris	-	21 st Century Schools
Mr. R. Austin	-	Principal Office for Inclusion
Ms. S. Hawkins	-	Principal Officer Additional Learning Needs
Mrs. N. Wellington	-	Finance Manager
Mr. M. Gatehouse	-	Policy and Performance Manager
Mr. M. Jones	-	Acting Access Unit Manager
Ms. D. Morgan	-	Senior Officer
Ms. A. Drew	-	Deputy Finance Manager
Mr. A. Evans	-	Accountant
Ms. S. Harp	-	Families First Programme Manager
Ms. H. Ilett	-	Scrutiny Manager
Mr. R. Williams	-	Democratic Services Officer

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

1.- Apologies for absence were received from County Councillors P.R. Clarke, L. Guppy, D.W.H. Jones, A.E. Webb, Canon Dr. S. James, Ms. S. McGuinness, Chief Officer for Children and Young People

DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

2.- Declarations of Interest are identified under the relevant minute.

MINUTES

3.- The minutes of the Children and Young People Select Committee dated 10th December 2014 were confirmed and signed by the Chairman.

**Minutes of the Children and Young People Select Committee
dated 27th January 2015 - continued**

PUBLIC OPEN FORUM

4.- There were no items raised by members of the public.

STRATEGIC RISK ASSESSMENT

5.- We scrutinised the Strategic Risk Assessment report in which Select Committee Members were provided with an overview of the current strategic risks facing the authority.

The purpose of the report was to inform the Select Committee's work programme. The Strategic Risk Assessment was available on The Hub and was now a live document allowing it to be updated and monitored regularly throughout the year.

Having received the report the following points were noted:

- Risk 8a and 8b presented separately but the risk levels were the same. It was noted that these risks were intertwined but an explanation for their separation would be added and would be available on The Hub.
- Risk 4 – It was important that the Authority was able to demonstrate progress. Further visits by Estyn would be held and it was noted that good progress was being made and was able to be demonstrated.
- In response to a Select Committee Member's question regarding the income generation target required to be met by the Youth Service, the Policy and Performance Manager stated that as a whole, the Enterprise Directorate was looking to develop support and guidance to help officers with income generation including on marketing services.
- It was noted that the Youth Service would be attending the Select Committee in May 2015.
- The Select Committee would receive further updates at future Select Committee meetings with regard to the Strategic Risk Assessment.

We resolved to:

- (i) receive the report and noted its content;
- (ii) use the Risk Register to inform the future work programme for the Select Committee.

PROPOSED CHANGES TO THE SCHOOL FUNDING FORMULA

6.- County Councillor P. Farley declared a personal, non-prejudicial interest under the Members' Code of Conduct, as he is a governor of Chepstow Comprehensive School.

Minutes of the Children and Young People Select Committee dated 27th January 2015 - continued

We scrutinised the report regarding the proposed changes to the School Funding Formula for threshold payments and job evaluation.

The Finance Manager informed the Select Committee that threshold payments were made to teaching staff that were paid on the upper pay spine. Currently all staff were funded on their actual scale point and progressed every two years to reflect actual pay increases.

Threshold Funding

Recently, the pay policy for teaching staff had changed and staff could progress much quicker. They were no longer required to wait for two years and they could move more than one incremental point in the form of performance related pay.

The decision on pay progression was the decision of the governing body, and they must follow the performance pay policy. Should a governing body decide to accelerate a teachers pay, incrementing them every year or above a one point progression, under the new proposals this will not be funded.

The funding will continue at the current rate of every other year for teachers on the upper pay spine. This is proposed to allow all schools to have access to the funding of pay. Should governing bodies wish to accelerate teachers progression then the school would need to fund this.

Of the thirteen consultation responses received, twelve were in agreement with this proposal. One did not agree with this proposal and suggested an alternative.

It was noted that the proposal was to leave the funding as it currently stood moving on a two year basis when staff reach the upper pay spine.

Job Evaluation Funding

Three proposals were put to the working group:

- (i) The total Job Evaluation funding is distributed via the Age Weighted Pupil Unit element, (pupil numbers).
- (ii) The funding for Mounton House job evaluation element remains with Mounton House and the remaining schools funding is pooled and distributed via the Age Weighted Pupil Unit, (pupil numbers).
- (iii) The funding for Mounton House job evaluation element remains with Mounton House and the remaining schools funding is pooled and distributed via the General allowances element of the formula.

Mounton House has a higher ratio of non-teaching staff due to the nature of the provision. The working group raised concerns that by pooling the funding this would see a large reduction in its budget.

**Minutes of the Children and Young People Select Committee
dated 27th January 2015 - continued**

Having received the report the following points were noted:

- In response to a Select Committee Member's question regarding Mouton House School, it was noted that the school was included in stages two and three of the review of consultation.
- It was noted that there had been a low response regarding of the consultation process. However, officers had informed Head Teachers at cluster meetings so they were aware of the consultation process being undertaken.
- In response to a Select Committee Member's question regarding teacher progression, it was noted that all schools had to follow the pay policy. Head Teachers did not regard the changes as being an issue for staff members.
- In comparing with other local authorities across South East Wales and Wales as a whole, around 90% were reviewing changing their school funding formula.

We resolved to receive the report and noted its content.

CHANGE TO THE DELEGATION OF SEN FUNDING (SEN LUMP SUM ALLOCATION) FOR SCHOOLS WITHIN MONMOUTHSHIRE

7.- County Councillor P. Farley declared a personal, non-prejudicial interest under the Members' Code of Conduct, as he is a governor of Chepstow Comprehensive School.

County Councillor M. Powell declared a personal, non-prejudicial interest under the Members' Code of Conduct, as she is a governor of King Henry VIII Comprehensive School.

We scrutinised a report in which Select Committee Members were provided with an update on the proposed change to the formula for distributing the SEN delegated lump sum to schools within Monmouthshire.

Having received the report, the following points were noted:

- Draft schools' budgets were being prepared and savings were being identified.
- Work was being undertaken with schools to help them achieve a balanced budget.
- The Cabinet Member for Education and Learning informed the Select Committee that having spoken with head teachers, most schools will not be in deficit. Initially, some schools will be but this will not be the case in 2015/16.

**Minutes of the Children and Young People Select Committee
dated 27th January 2015 - continued**

- Individual targets for individual children were being identified.
- The Education Achievement Service (EAS) has a business case targeting performance.
- Concern was expressed that, as an authority, we might be discriminating against some children if funding for Additional Learning Needs (ALN) and Free School Meals (FSM) provision were brought together. It was noted that deprivation was linked to FSM provision and that this option provided the least disruptive influence. It was also noted that this was not the Authority's only funding mechanism as band funding was also available.
- If funding was maintained then current staff levels will be maintained.
- Endeavouring to upskill staff in order for children with ALN to remain within school to receive their education. Budgets were delegated to schools in order to identify their respective needs.
- There was currently no special school for girls located within Monmouthshire.

We resolved to receive the report and receive an update in six months' time.

SCHOOL ADMISSION POLICY AND CATCHMENT AREA REVIEW

8.- We scrutinised a report in which Select Committee Members were provided with information regarding the changes being proposed to the School Admission Policy and the School Catchment Review.

Having received the report the following points were noted:

- The proposed changes, if approved by Cabinet, will apply to applications for school places for the academic year 2016/17 and onwards. The proposals were currently out for consultation.
- The proposed changes to the catchment areas will increase the number of children living in Monmouthshire attending schools within the County.
- There has been an increase in demand from parents of children living in the Usk area for their children to attend Monmouth Comprehensive School.
- In response to a Select Committee Member's question regarding arrangements for secondary school catchment areas and whether a balanced view was being undertaken due to the uneven sizes of the four secondary schools within Monmouthshire, the Cabinet Member for Education and Learning stated that catchment area distribution was not

**Minutes of the Children and Young People Select Committee
dated 27th January 2015 - continued**

a simple process with various factors having to be addressed. The Catchment Area Review Advisory Group had taken on board the views of all of the schools which had been added to the information collated via the consultation process. The consultation process will be looked at holistically.

- Pupil projection figures were being looked alongside Local Development Plan (LDP) data.

We resolved:

- (i) to receive the report and note its content;
- (ii) that any further comments regarding the review of catchment areas should be referred to the Children and Young People Directorate;
- (iii) that the Select Committee receives a further update regarding the review of catchment areas after the consultation period has closed.

WORK PROGRAMME

9.- We received the Children and Young People Select Committee Work Programme. In doing so, the following points were noted:

- The time of the next Children and Young People Select Committee Meeting, to be held on 12th February 2015, would be amended to commence at 2.00pm.
- The following items would be added to the work programme:
 - Progress update on the Schools Funding Formula.
 - Home to School Transport.
 - Youth Service
- Due to tight timescales it might not be feasible to bring an update regarding the Review of School Catchment Areas to the Children and Young People Select Committee meeting in February 2015. Therefore, Select Committee Members might wish to forward any comments to the Head of Resources, Children and Young People Directorate regarding this matter to be incorporated into the School Catchment Advisory Panel.
- Performance of Safeguarding Children will be scrutinised by the Select Committee in June 2015.
- Adoption matters to be added to the work programme.

**Minutes of the Children and Young People Select Committee
dated 27th January 2015 - continued**

- Ongoing dialogue with Head Teachers of Secondary Schools to continue regarding schools' performance / progression. The meetings to be held within a County Council building.

We resolved to receive the work programme and noted its content.

CHILD POVERTY STRATEGY CONSULTATION

10.- We scrutinised a report on the Child Poverty Strategy consultation and were informed that the Welsh Government was consulting on revisions to the draft Revised Child Poverty Strategy for Wales. The consultation period was scheduled to conclude shortly.

We were informed that the revised Strategy underlines the Welsh Government's commitment to achieve the three strategic objectives set out in their 2011 Child Poverty Strategy:

- To reduce the number of families living in workless households.
- To improve the skills of parents / carers and young people living in low income households so they can secure well paid employment.
- To reduce the inequalities which exist in the health, education and economic outcomes of children and families by improving the outcomes of the poorest.

Having received the report, the following points were noted:

- The Select Committee was pleased that rural poverty had been recognised in the report.
- The Welsh Government needs to revisit its transport policy as it was not mentioned in this document. Particularly, funding for Post 16 Transport provision, which was vital in rural areas.
- Pre-School support - In England it equates to 15 hours in which the parent may choose how to use this time, e.g., over a two day period allowing the parent to seek employment over a two day period. In Wales, the 15 hours was spread over the five working days, equating to three hours per day of pre-school support. This did not make it easy for the parent to seek employment under these conditions. An amendment to the policy similar to that in England would be more beneficial. The Families First Programme Manager stated that the comments would be added to the document.
- Concern was expressed that the document received today had come to the Select Committee for scrutiny quite late and that in its current form it would not be regarded as a proper response from the County Council. In order for the document to meet the consultation deadline, it

**Minutes of the Children and Young People Select Committee
dated 27th January 2015 - continued**

needs to be badged accordingly, i.e., incorporating the consultations from a number of groups but not the response from the County Council. The Select Committee should receive copies of the considered views of the groups that have been consulted and their submitted responses.

- The comments of the Select Committee would be noted.
- A Select Committee Member suggested that the Farmer's wives groups associated with the Farmers' Unions should be consulted on this document.
- It was noted that the Welsh Government has a consultation email circulation list. There may be an opportunity, in terms of the Select Committee's work programme, that if future consultation processes are imminent, officers could report these directly to the Select Committee in order for the Committee to receive early sight of them. However, the Scrutiny Manager stated that this matter needed further debate as there was a need to schedule the forward work planner in advance and documentation would be required in good time.

We resolved:

- (i) to receive the report and note its content;
- (ii) that In order for the document to meet the consultation deadline, it needs to be badged accordingly, i.e., incorporating the consultations from a number of groups but not the response from the County Council. The Select Committee should receive copies of the considered views of the groups that have been consulted and submitted responses.

CABINET FORWARD WORK PLANNER

11.- We received the Cabinet Forward Work Planner and noted its content.

NEXT MEETING

12.- The next meeting of the Children and Young People Select Committee will be held at County Hall, Rhadyr, Usk on Thursday 12th February 2014 at 2.00pm.

The meeting ended at 3.55pm.