

MONMOUTHSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

Minutes of the Children and Young People Select Committee held in the Council Chamber, County Hall, The Rhadyr, Usk on Thursday 27th November 2014 at 10.00a.m.

PRESENT: County Councillor P. Jones (Chairman)

County Councillors: D. Blakebrough, P.S. Farley, L. Guppy, R.G. Harris, D.W.H. Jones, and M. Powell

ALSO IN ATTENDANCE:

County Councillor E.J. Hackett Pain - Cabinet Member for Children and Young People.

County Councillor R.J.W. Greenland - Chairman of the Education Achievement Service (EAS).

Mr. E. Price – Challenge Advisor, Education Achievement Service (EAS).

County Councillor V.E. Smith.

ADDED / CO-OPTED MEMBERS:

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

OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE:

Mrs. D. Mountfield	-	Head of Service: Achievement & Learning Infrastructure
Mrs. N. Wellington	-	Finance Manager
Ms. S. Randall-Smith	-	Head of Service, Children and Young People
Mr. M. Gatehouse	-	Policy and Performance Manager
Ms. H. Ilett	-	Scrutiny Manager
Mr. R. Williams	-	Democratic Services Officer

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

1.- Apologies for absence were received from Canon Dr. S. James, Ms. S. McGuinness, Chief Officer for Children and Young People and Mrs. T. Norris, Policy and Performance Officer.

DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

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

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MINUTES

3.- The minutes of the following meetings were confirmed and signed by the Chairman:

- Children and Young People Select Committee dated 18th September 2014
- Special Meeting - Children and Young People Select Committee dated 14th October 2014.
- Special Meeting - Children and Young People Select Committee dated 6th November 2014.

PUBLIC OPEN FORUM

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

QUARTER 2 PERFORMANCE REPORT 2014/15: IMPROVEMENT OBJECTIVE AND OUTCOME AGREEMENT

5.- County Councillor L. Guppy declared a personal, non-prejudicial interest in this item under the Members' code of conduct in relation to information contained within the report regarding Flying Start. Councillor Guppy is an employee of Aneurin Bevan Health Board as a health visitor for Monmouth Flying Start.

We scrutinised a report, presented by the Policy and Performance Manager, in which Select Committee Members received quarter 2 performance data for the Improvement Objective and Outcome Agreement objectives under the remit of this Select Committee.

Select Committee Members were informed that the scores based on half year performance for 2014-15 indicated that:

- Improvement Objective 1 had been scored cautiously as Level 3 Adequate - Strengths just outweigh weaknesses.
- Outcome Agreement theme 1 had been scored as Partially Successful.
- Outcome Agreement theme 3 had been scored as Partially Successful.
- Outcome Agreement theme 5 had been scored as Fully Successful.

Scores for the half year across the five themes in the Outcome Agreement was "Fully Successful" based on scoring 8 points out of a possible 10. At this point this was a cautious indication. However, we were on course to receive full funding.

Having received the report the following points were noted:

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- In response to a Select Committee Member's question regarding reducing budgets and maintaining minimum targets, the Policy and Performance Manager stated that reducing council budgets throughout Wales was a common theme and that tough decisions had to be made. However, the Authority had a legal duty to maintain and improve services. It might be necessary to look at providing some services differently at times. With regard to some areas of performance, a minimum standard might need to be set with regard to the statutory requirements of these services.
- The Authority was constantly striving to increase attainment in schools.
- The funding provision for the 21st Century Schools Programme was on target and within budget. There were five stages to go through with regard to the business case and the Authority was at stage 5.

We resolved to receive the report and noted its content.

USE OF 2013-14 EDUCATION ACHIEVEMENTSERVICE UNDERSPEND

6.- We scrutinised a report by the Finance Manager in which Select Committee Members received an update on the proposed use of the 2013-14 underspend from the Education Achievement Service (EAS). The total under spend for the EAS was £534,528. The Monmouthshire County Council share of this figure was £69,000.

Select Committee Members were informed that at the end of the financial year 2013-14 the EAS had notified the five authorities within the South East Wales consortium that they had not spent their budget and as the EAS was a non-profit organisation the agreement allowed for this to be transferred back to the relevant local authorities.

The EAS had asked for an in principal agreement that this underspend would be transferred back to them during 2014-15 for use within the service. This had been agreed by the directors.

Monmouthshire County Council had informed the EAS of the process to transfer this underspend back to them, explaining that use of reserves would require approval by Members and confirming that this would require a plan of how these funds were to be used which would need to be approved by Members.

During recent weeks the Welsh Government had informed all authorities that it was intending to cut some education grants in the current financial year. For the EAS region this totalled £822,856. The EAS and Authorities had been reviewing areas that could be cut to meet the in year reduction and a paper had been agreed in principle detailing these areas.

The schools have already agreed grant plans and have programmes of work to deliver on these plans. Any cuts to Monmouthshire schools could have an effect on these programmes and impact on the pupils in Monmouthshire schools. In

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addition, some of the grants were being used to employ staff, therefore any reductions might lead to redundancies.

Given this background and the desire to minimise the cuts to Monmouthshire schools grants, the proposal was to use 50% of the under spend to fund part of the in year grant cuts. Schools would still be facing a 4.75% grant cut and were adjusting their plans to achieve this.

The remaining 50% will be split in two ways, firstly to support a new development in ICT and secondly to fund restructure costs that have been incurred by the EAS.

The ICT investment for the region was £116,000 and relates My School Improvement Dashboard (MySID). MySID phase 2 was a development from the first phase in 2013-14, which delivered a technology environment in which schools could set out their planned activities for school improvement as funded by all their grant plans. Phase 2 would enable schools to use the same environment to see their categorisation, set out their self-evaluation and planning priorities, then select the set of actions to deliver their improvement priorities. In addition, the environment would enable the school to monitor the financial aspect of their plan, and evaluate the impact of the actions on their priorities and self-evaluation.

The restructure costs were incurred by the EAS over the summer 2014. In total the cost equated to £176,000 for the region. If these costs were not met by the under spend then the EAS would need to make further cuts to services to fund these costs.

Having received the report, the following points were noted:

- This process was a joint approach by the five authorities within the South East Wales consortium.
- It was not anticipated that there would be an under spend in the EAS budget for 2015/16.
- This matter would be discussed at the next Cabinet Meeting.

We resolved to receive the report and supported the proposal for the use of the under spend.

QUARTER 2 2014/15 PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT FRAMEWORK REPORT

7.- We received a report, presented by the Policy and Performance Manager, in which Select Committee Members received an update on progress against key measures of school performance in the 2013/14 academic year contained in the Planning and Performance Management Network. Select Committee Members also received a presentation by the Education Achievement Service (EAS) in respect of Pupil Performance 2013/14 – Foundation Phase, Key Stage 2, Key Stage 3 and Key Stage 4 (Provisional).

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It was noted that significant improvement in schools' performance has been achieved, particularly in Key Stage 4, as follows:

Level 1 Threshold – ranked 5 in 2014 (ranked 18 in 2013).

Level 2 Threshold – ranked 5 in 2014 (ranked 16 in 2013).

Level 2 Threshold including English / Welsh & Maths - ranked 1 in 2014 (ranked 5 in 2013).

Core Subject Indicator - ranked 1 in 2014 (ranked 4 in 2013).

Capped Points Score - ranked 8 in 2014 (ranked 14 in 2013).

English L2 - ranked 1 in 2014 (ranked 4 in 2013).

Mathematics L2 - ranked 1 in 2014 (ranked 4 in 2013).

Having received the report and presentation, the following information was noted:

- In response to a Select Committee Member's question regarding cluster collaboration, it was noted that the EAS, via its challenge advisors, works with the school leadership to ensure that the monitoring and quality of teaching in schools was maintained.
- It was noted that for a number of years Monmouthshire's secondary schools have been working closely with its feeder primary schools which has been proving to be very successful.
- Schools work closely with the EAS as part of the excellent teacher programme.
- In response to a Select Committee Member's question regarding pupil attainment, the Challenge Advisor informed the Committee that at Key Stage 2, the more abled pupils could achieve Level 6. Whilst at Key Stage 3, the more abled pupils could achieve Level 7.
- The local Authority was looking at Level 6 achievement with a view to maximising outcomes at all levels, especially the more abled pupils.

On behalf of the Children and Young People Select Committee, we thanked Mr. Price for providing the Committee with an interesting and informative presentation.

We resolved to receive the report and presentation and noted their content.

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WORK PROGRAMME

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

- **Special Meeting – Children and Young People Select Committee dated 10th December 2014 – Agenda items:**
 - Budget Mandates:
 - Home to School Transport
 - Schools Delegated Budgets
 - School Music Service
 - Children’s Additional Learning Needs
 - Youth Service
 - Whole Authority Risk Log
- **Ordinary Meeting – Children and Young People Select Committee dated 8th January 2015 – Agenda Items:**
 - Schools Funding Formula
 - Risk Assessment (invitation to be extended to the Cabinet Member to attend)

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

CABINET FORWARD WORK PLANNER

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

NEXT MEETINGS

10.- The next meetings of the Children and Young People Select Committee will be held at County Hall, Usk, as follows:

- Special Meeting – Wednesday 10th December 2014 at 2.00pm.
- Ordinary Meeting – Thursday 8th January 2015 at 2.00pm.

The meeting ended at 11.41am.