

**Minutes of the Adults Select Committee held at County Hall, Usk on
Tuesday 19th May 2015 at 10.00 a.m.**

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

County Councillors: R. Edwards, R.G. Harris, M. Hickman, P. Jones,
P.A. Watts and A. Wintle.

CO-OPTED MEMBERS:

Mrs. D. Hudson
Mr. D. Hill

OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE:

Mrs. E. Parkinson	-	Monmouth Integrated Team Leader
Mr. S. Burch	-	Chief Officer, Social Care and Health
Mr. C. Robinson	-	Lead Commissioner SC&H, QA and Supporting People
Ms. H. Ilett	-	Scrutiny Manager
Mrs. N. Perry	-	Democratic Services Officer

The Committee noted the appointment of County Councillor P. Farley as Chairman of the Adults Select Committee.

County Councillor Farley expressed gratitude for being elected for another term and appointed County Councillor R. Harris as Vice-Chairman.

It was noted that Membership of the Committee would be confirmed by the date of the next meeting.

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from County Councillor R. Chapman

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

3. PUBLIC OPEN FORUM

No members of the public addressed the Committee as part of the public open forum.

4. MINUTES

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Members confirmed and the Chairman signed the minutes of the meetings of the Adults Select Committee held on:

- i. 24th February 2015.
- ii. 14th April 2015.

5. PERFORMANCE REPORT – GWICES (GWENT WIDE INTEGRATED COMMUNITY EQUIPMENT SERVICE)

Context:

Members received a report for scrutiny from the Integrated Team Leader of Adult Services in order to inform Members of recent changes in the year, and in particular outlined significant changes in the apportionment of costs.

Key Issues:

- To recap on the previous presentation, GWICES is a section 33 partnership with a number of pan Gwent Local Authorities and Health to provide Aids and Adaptation equipment to service users to remain in their homes.
- When the section 33 partnership was established from 1st October 2008, it was agreed to apportion annual costs based on the length of time equipment was held out in the community. With the current Section 33 agreement up for renewal on 1st April 2016, it was a good time to approach the lead authority, Torfaen County Borough Council, to table the review of a new cost apportionment methodology. As such, a new methodology was agreed, which would result in estimated savings of £89,477 in 2015/16.
- In addition to the new cost apportionment, work had been happening on a professional level with the employment of a resident Occupational Therapist working in the stores. The Occupational Therapist had helped reduce costs by keeping up to date with new equipment, intercepting orders and liaising with colleagues to provide alternative cheaper equipment and/or alternatives. As the resident Occupational Therapist was a professional colleague, their advice was readily accepted by prescribers and trust had been gained throughout the year from their advice and results.
- A review had taken place in terms of collection of equipment less than £25 and deemed it not cost effective to collect such equipment, given the unit cost for collection of £20 and decontamination unit cost of £16 per piece of equipment, making a total unit cost of £36 to recover equipment costing £25. When equipment was delivered, service users were told that the equipment was theirs, and not needed to be returned when no longer required.
- A partnership agreement was in place with GWICES and Rhondda Cynon Taff for the sharing of specialised complex equipment. If an order was placed, the resident OT would make enquiries to see if the other stores had a suitable

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piece of equipment and which could then be loaned across areas. The scheme was planned to extend to other Integrated Equipment Stores.

Member Scrutiny:

It was considered an excellent idea to have a resident Occupational Therapist.

Members queried the costs of crutches and commodes in relation to the collection of unwanted equipment. It was also questioned if there were ways to recycle equipment, or if there were central points where equipment could be returned, rather than the expense of arranging collections. Officers informed the Committee that general standard items such as commodes and crutches would be of value under £25. It was explained that the collection service was from a community perspective, rather than an out-patient/physiotherapy perspective, where items could be returned when no longer needed. Recycling was not an appropriate method of disposal due to infection control and storage issues.

A Member questioned if patients were asked to return the equipment. Officers explained that there was a telephone number provided to arrange collection, also faulty equipment would be replaced. Many crutches were returned and were not risk items.

The Chief Officer for Social Care and Health asked Members to reflect on the finances surrounding GWICES as in previous years lack of budget had resulted in over spend. Credit was given to the Finance Manager who had spent over 18 months working on achieving a fair allocation which now resulted in expected savings of £89,000.

The Chairman informed the Committee of a meeting with WAO where discussion had taken place on how best to go forward with scrutiny arrangements on jointly run services. The Chief Officer agreed that as scrutiny arrangements were being brought together on a regional basis, it may be useful to sit with other scrutiny panels on an annual basis.

Report Recommendations:

The report requested that the Committee agree the following recommendations:

- To note the change to the method of cost apportionment.
- To endorse officers' approval to the new methodology and the savings to Monmouthshire County Council.

Committee's Conclusion:

Chair's Summing Up:

The Committee were pleased with the progress made with GWICES, and commended the work of officers involved.

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The Committee particularly noted the improved financial situation.

The Committee understood the issue of returning equipment was complex but requested that Members suggestions be put forward.

It was agreed that the Committee would not pursue separate joint scrutiny of GWICES.

6. PERFORMANCE REPORT - SUPPORTING PEOPLE GRANT

Context:

We received a report and presentation from the Lead Commissioner for Social Care and Health, QA and Supporting People. The report provided in depth detail of the actions being taken to address a 6.5% reduction in the Supporting People Programme Grant (SPPG), in advance of the completion of an internal comprehension review of services for 2016/2017.

Key Issues:

- The SPPG allocation for 2015/16 was £2,039,000, a reduction of 6.5%. The challenge would be to continue to provide the range and scope of services within the reduced funding, whilst at the same time introducing new initiatives that reinforce support in key areas of the MCC.
- For 2015/16, instead of funding providers via block contracts, funding for actual support hours provided would be introduced. At the same time, the inconsistencies of funding levels resulting from the previous Supporting People methodologies would be addressed by introducing a funding cap of £36k per support worker.
- The previous Supporting People contracting methodologies differentiated between long and short-term services. Following service reviews, the opportunity had been taken to remodel and rationalise these services so that the service user can move from crisis to longer-term support without the need to change support worker. The resulting reduced number of contracts was more efficient to administer and manage and contract economies have been achieved in 6 such rationalisations.
- The Monmouthshire County Council Supporting People team was continuing its involvement with national initiatives to improve the quality and efficiencies of the data and performance management systems and with the SPPG allocation task group which was considering and developing more equitable SPPG allocation methodologies.

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- The efficiency, remodelling and service development actions result in an overall saving of circa £166,000 - against a reduction in funding of £132,000 in SPPG. The balance, £34k, remains to be allocated.
- Pilot initiative options included the possibilities of funding volunteering coordination (potentially maximising outcomes per £ funded); supporting the community coordination initiative and/or providing support to the integrated SC&H services.

Member Scrutiny:

The Chairman suggested that the programme should be regarded as a work in progress.

Members raised concern with regard to the support workers being capped at £36,000 and requested clarification to whether the cap would result in the number of support workers decreasing, or if there would be an increased workload for less money. The Officer explained that when the methodology had changed it had been requested that evidence was provided on the support hours on a monthly basis. There were actual savings to be made by providers working together. Cutting down the staff turnover would decrease the overheads significantly.

A Member expressed that providing the same support worker from crisis to longer term care was a great service improvement.

Members questioned the pilot initiative option to include volunteering coordination. The Officer explained that a Monmouth organisation, Community Connections provided a befriending service, and it seemed a reasonable idea to provide a similar service through Supporting People.

The Chief Officer explained that the purpose of the presentation was to be considered a 'thinking aloud' process. There would be further reports coming forward to Committee.

Members requested clarification on the Lead, Secondary and Third categories detailed in appendix 1. We heard, for example, that the first issue for support may be based on age, but there could also mental health problem, which would then be the secondary issue, then a disability, which would then be the third. It was hoped that this methodology would be changed to look at the programme in terms of prevention.

A Member noted that with regards to alcohol driving convictions, it was becoming more noticeable that women were falling under the radar. It was suggested that if there were no alcohol tolerance for driving at all it may be an increased support.

Clarification was sought on the difference between the categories of Migrant Workers and People with Refugee Status. It was explained that list table stated that no support had been provided to Migrant Workers or People with Refugee Status, but this was not strictly the case, and was an instance where the methodology had not allowed correct categorisation.

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It was questioned whether the Authority should continue to support the Community Connections befriending service rather than start a new similar service. The Officer explained that there was limited funding to invest, and it was an option to consider. The Chairman suggested that Community Connections be invited to a meeting to inform the Committee of the service provided.

A Member questioned if figures were available to demonstrate if savings had been made through the Community Coordination service. The Chief Officer explained that a report to Cabinet last month had provided a positive picture, but there was further work to be done. It was noted that Community Coordination was on the Work Programme for Adults Select Committee.

In response to a Member query regarding the funding cuts we heard that the Cut for MCC was 6.6%, across Wales was 7.1%.

A Member stated that the increased use of volunteers could be a concern, and asked that the concern be expressed the Welsh Government.

Report recommendations:

The report requested that the Committee agree the following recommendations:

- To consider the range and scope of the actions being proposed – summarised in the report and detailed in the presentation.

Committee's Conclusion:

Chair's Summing Up:

The Committee were pleased with the report and presentation, and acknowledged the contribution made by the Senior Commissioning Officer.

The Committee were grateful for the opportunity to be included in the thinking processes involved in the Supporting People programme. It was noted that they had been provided with insights into the issues that needed to be addressed and resolved.

The Committee agreed that they would welcome further updates and progress reports, where it was hoped that various strands of work would become clearer.

The Committee, therefore agreed to receive and note the content of the report, but were not in a position to reach a firm conclusion.

7. PLANNING DISCUSSION: CONTINUING HEALTH CARE

Item deferred pending meeting with member of public.

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8. ADULTS SELECT COMMITTEE WORK PROGRAMME

The Scrutiny Manager advised that the next meeting scheduled for Adults Select would be Tuesday 30th June 2015 and would include:

- Community Area Coordination
- 'In One Place' – ABUHB to lead

It was agreed that a special meeting would be held on Tuesday 16th June 2015 at 2.00pm, to include:

- Performance Report on Adults Services
- POVA
- Improvement Plan 2104-2017
- Outcome Agreements

Members were reminded that a visit to the Careline Team had been suggested at the previous meeting. The Committee suggested Thursday 18th June 2015 considered as a suitable date.

9. DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING

We noted the next Adults Select Committee Meeting would be held on:

- Tuesday 16th June 2015 at 2.00pm.
- Tuesday 30th June 2015 at 10.00am.

The meeting ended at 11.55am.