

**Minutes of the Adults Select Committee held at County Hall, Usk on
Tuesday 14th April 2015 at 10.00 a.m.**

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

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

ALSO IN ATTENDANCE

County Councillors G. Burrows. M. Powell, J. Prosser and V. Smith.

CO-OPTED MEMBERS:

Mrs. D. Hudson
Mr. D. Hill

OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE:

Mr. I. Bakewell	-	Housing & Communities Manager
Ms. S. Turvey-Barber	-	Careline Co-ordinator
Mr. S. Burch	-	Chief Officer, Social Care and Health
Mrs. J. Boothroyd	-	Head of Adult Services
Mr. T. Stokes	-	Finance Manager
Mrs. D. Hill-Howells	-	Head of Community Led Delivery
Ms. A. Charles	-	Community Learning Manager
Ms. A. Price	-	Area Manager
Mr. W. McLean	-	Head of Policy and Engagement
Mr. M. Gatehouse	-	Policy and Performance Manager
Mr. R. Jones	-	Improvement Support Officer
Ms. C. Hamer	-	Careline Support Assistant
Ms. J. Chiplin	-	Telecare Co-ordinator
Ms. H. Ilett	-	Scrutiny Manager
Mrs. N. Perry	-	Democratic Services Officer

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from County Councillor P. Hobson

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

County Councillor A. Wintle declared a personal, prejudicial interest under the Members' Code of Conduct as a board member of the Monmouthshire Housing Association, and left the meeting during consideration of Item 5 of the agenda.

3. PUBLIC OPEN FORUM

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There were no members of the public present.

4. MINUTES

We received minutes of the Adults Select Committee:

- i. We confirmed and signed the minutes of the Adults Select committee meeting held on 13th January 2015.
- ii. We confirmed and signed the minutes of the Adults Select Committee meeting held on 17th February 2015

The Chairman informed Members that in response to correspondence, Bobby Bolt, the Chief Operating Officer of ABHB had responded to arrange a meeting, provisionally set for 18th May, to discuss matters raised at the last meeting, particularly end of life care.

5. CARELINE PERFORMANCE UPDATE

We received a report from the Housing Communities Manager in order to inform the Committee about the progress being made with regards to the delivery and development of the Careline Service.

The aim of the Careline element of the Housing & Communities project mandate was to optimise the business potential of the Careline Service, essentially through expanding the customer base and to generate an additional £50,000 income over three years. The focus of the project mandate had been to apply a more commercial approach to marketing and to streamline service delivery.

The provision of telecare equipment had been streamlined by reducing the limitless availability of sensors, to a fixed suite of sensors. The new policy had enabled the team to focus on the core function of providing lifelines, thereby eliminating the time that was previously directed to 'promoting' telecare.

The policy review also introduced a new charging framework. Charges now covered the full cost of providing equipment for new clients.

2014/15 had been dedicated to raising awareness and marketing Careline to potential new clients, carers and families. A marketing action plan was established and a range of actions have and continue to be undertaken to encourage new take-up. At 31st March 2014, there were 741 Careline clients. After an unusual increase in clients leaving the service during quarters 1 and 2, (generally due to death and moving home) the net number of clients has increased to 762 at 1st March 2015.

The target number of Careline clients was 800 and although the target was still to be achieved, the 2014/15 year was regarded to have been a positive year.

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The main on-going challenge was the number of clients leaving the service. This related to the average age of clients.

Following the presentation Members were invited to ask questions.

In response to a query we heard that people in receipt of benefits may be able to access funds to cover the full costs.

Members agreed that including case studies in promotional material would be a beneficial advertisement. We were advised that case studies were included on the website.

We heard that a local housing association had approached the Abergavenny Action 50+ and had handed out a detailed questionnaire to determine future needs. It was noted that it was operating in a similar way.

A Member expressed concern at the lack of wardens, and felt that people living on their own would benefit from having organised outings. Officers explained Wardens had been replaced by the Older Persons Housing Service, and that it was under consideration to use a volunteer system to provide a friending service. The Chairman suggested that the training could be provided within the meal delivery service to link with the friending service.

A Member referred to the Raglan project which uses befrienders, organising trips and tea parties. The befrienders held meetings every month to which a speaker would be invited. It was suggested that members of the Careline team could arrange to attend one of the meetings.

It was questioned why the Older Peoples Strategy Coordinator had been moved from position, and why the position was not going to be replaced. It was noted that this would be followed up after the meeting.

We heard that all Local Authorities provided a Careline service at some level.

The Chairman thanked Members for the suggestions and expressed that the Officers had provided an impressive picture and informative update of how the service was responding to change, and as moving forward in line with previous expectations.

It was acknowledged that we needed to find ways forward and the Chairman suggested that Members of Adults Select Committee might benefit from visiting the Careline department to get a more hands on feel of the service.

It was noted that we needed to encourage further investigation on how other services could become involved, particularly in respect of isolation.

The Chairman suggested that a forum be arranged to create further engagement.

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6. COMMUNITY LEARNING UPDATE

We received a report from the Community Learning Manager to provide Members with a performance overview of the service, its current pressures, resources and future strategic direction.

The Committee were recommended to scrutinise the performance and identify any areas considered to require further scrutiny.

We were informed of some significant milestones:

- Relocation of Community Learning in Chepstow from Boverton House to Hanbury House in August 2014, to be shared with the Youth Service from July 2015.
- Relocation of the Community Learning and the Library services into the Community Hub in Usk.
- Establishment of a contact centre in Monmouth. Children's services became based at the Overmonnow Family Learning Centre in August 2014. Proposal for retention of one room purely for Community Learning purposes.
- The handover of Gilwern Community Education Centre and Library to the Community Council had been successfully completed.
- Establishment of a community café and teaching environment in the Abergavenny centre was now complete.
- Further development of non-franchised leisure style courses were proving to be well received.

We were informed that the funding received through the franchise with Coleg Gwent was reduced significantly during 2014/15 and would be reduced further during the 2015/16 academic year. Monmouthshire's offer at present was £150,367.86 for mainstream provision which represented a reduction of over 50%. Welsh offer was expected to be in the region of £50,000.

Following presentation of the report, the Chairman formally thanked officers for the report and invited Members to raise any issues of concern.

In response to a Member questioning if there were any ideas on how to continue to provide the service we heard that officers were looking to deliver provision in rooms already available. We were informed that currently the cost of using a Leisure Centre site was £10,000, which could be reduced if there were different rooms available. Officers were looking into the development of social courses to help offset costs.

We heard that the Old Hereford Road facility was one of the most successful sites, but was expensive to run. A kitchen facility had been established which was intended to feed back into the finances.

The Park Street facility had been visited but was not being considered at the present time.

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The Chairman expressed concern that Members of the Council may be unaware of the situation, and stressed that it was important for local Members to be kept up to date on local issues in a timely manner.

The Head of Community Led Delivery confirmed that the Community Learning had transferred into the Enterprise department last year, and was considered an integral part of the service area. In terms of the buildings, officers had been working with estates, as there was a need to rationalise the cost base since Community Learning were no longer in receipt of funding through the Authority.

It was agreed that the Committee should inform Cabinet of the situation via a letter, including a copy of the report.

In summary the Chairman commended the team on their hard work in seemingly impossible circumstances. The committee appreciated the update and would welcome further updates and open discussions. It was agreed that increase in communication would be beneficial.

7. CAPITAL BUDGET MONITORING 2014/15 MONTH 9 OUTTURN FORECAST STATEMENT

We received a report from the Finance Manager in order to provide Members with information on the capital forecast outturn position of the Authority at the end of month 9 for the 2014/15 financial year.

Members were recommended to consider the position concerning the 3rd quarter capital monitoring with a revised budget of £16.1 million, month 9 spending of £8.2 million and forecast spend of a further £7.7 million in the last 3 months of the financial year, to derive an outturn under spend of £187,000.

Members were also required to consider the slippage levels of £9.1 million and accept slippage proposals totalling £8,159,000 subject to final outturn position being confirmed, and to de-prioritise schemes totalling £771,000 whose funding is of a general nature.

In summarising the Capital position we heard that at month 9 there was an over spend of £1,000. Of the £273,000 revised budget, £200,000 related to the replacement of the social care IT system, SWIFT. £73,000 related to minor electrical and service works at Mardy Park and Severn View care homes.

Following the presentation of the report Members were invited to ask questions.

A Member queried the process of slippage. It was explained that proposals were that managers scrutinised the bids before going ahead, so that amendments could be made accordingly to avoid large amounts of slippage.

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A Member queried the £15,000 identified for cemeteries, as there was no statutory duty to provide cemeteries. The Officer confirmed he would pass the question on to the Assistant Head of Finance.

The Chairman thanked the Officer for the report, noting that the position was pleasing.

8. ANNUAL COUNCIL FRAMEWORK REPORT

We received the draft Annual Report of the Director of Social Services prior to the final report going to full Council. The purpose of the report was to inform local people and partners how well the arrangements for delivering social care were working. The report was part of the Annual Council Reporting Framework for social care in Wales.

Members were required to consider the report and decide if the report was a clear and fair summary, and whether anything crucial had been missed.

Following presentation of the report, Members were invited to ask questions.

A Member questioned that since Heol Hamlin respite care home for disabled children had closed, would the same service be provided elsewhere. The Chief Officer confirmed he would check with the Children's Services Manager and report back with the information required.

Members congratulated the Officer on the readable report. Members agreed that Monmouthshire County Council were empowering people to live a better life.

It was noted that even though the figure of 9 people staying in hospital due to a lack of social care was more than we would like to see, it was a very low figure over the year. It was noted that compared with other authorities, it was one of the lowest figures.

It was questioned if there was a particular reason why 19% of Looked After Children experienced unplanned school moves. We heard that improvements in a full range of placements locally would mean less need to move schools.

A Member expressed that it was pleasing to see the percentage of carers of adults who were offered their own assessment or review had increased annually to 97.3%.

In response to a query regarding the lack of inter-agency sharing in relation to safeguarding of the elderly the Chief Officer explained that in terms of our Monmouthshire County Council's structure in social services, Protection of Vulnerable Adults (POVA) arrangements had been strengthened. There was some concern regarding restructuring within the Police which could affect safeguarding procedures.

The Cabinet Member for Social Care and Health, commended the presentation and style of the report. He added that there we were about to see significant changes to the IT system in Social Services, and wished to pay tribute to the staff who had worked on developing the systems. The investment made to putting the new system in place would be prudent, and all who had tried the system had provided positive

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feedback. The new system would be far easier to use, avoid repetition and provide an improved way to record information.

It was noted that there was recurring themes about our people and the need to recruit and train accordingly. It was recognised that there were very high calibre staff and there had been successful recruitments over the last year. However, the use of agency staff was still being addressed. With regards to training, the Chief Officer felt we were ahead of the curve.

A Member expressed that the number of children on the protection register being down by 50% to 37, was an encouraging figure. We heard that we were not yet where we would like to be with prevention, but making sure that children weren't on the register when not needed to be made a difference to the figures.

In summary the Chairman thanked the Chief Officer, and confirmed that the Committee accepted and noted the report. The Chairman requested that the Chief Officer pass on congratulations and express the support of the committee to all staff involved in the service.

9. STAGE 1 IMPROVEMENT PLAN 2015-2017

We received a report in order to provide Members with the opportunity to scrutinise the Improvement Plan and Improvement Objectives proposed for 2015-17 ahead of a decision by Council on 23rd April 2015.

Members were recommended to scrutinise the five improvement objectives proposed in the Plan and the extent to which the action were likely to achieve the objective and improve outcomes for the community.

The Plan contained five specific objectives, which had been updated from those agreed for 2014-15 to reflect the adoption of a fourth priority as set out in the partnership continuation agreement:

- We will drive improvement at all key stages of education.
- We will safeguard vulnerable people, whether young or old, while reducing people's dependence on social care.
- We will enable our county to thrive.
- We will maintain locally accessible services.
- We want to be an efficient, effective and sustainable organisation.

Following presentation of the report, Members were invited to ask questions.

A Member expressed concern that the percentage of highways and relevant land inspected of a high or acceptable standard of cleanliness did not provide a true reflection. It was suggested that there should be a distinction between rural and urban areas. The issue of litter should be addressed as Monmouthshire is the gateway to Wales. Officers would take the matter up with Waste Management for further discussion.

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It was suggested that the report should contain actual figures as percentages could be misleading, and provide a distorting effect. The Improvement Plan followed guidelines but Officers agreed to consider this point and to provide supplementary information.

A Member expressed that the percentage of adults age 60 or over who held a concessionary bus pass did not reflect how often the bus pass was used. If people were not able to use the buses it may not signify an improvement.

In response to a query relating to the average sickness days per employee, we heard that there had been an issue regarding the accuracy of the figures, which had now been addressed. The Chairman agreed that sickness absence could be an area for further discussion. The figures provided an insight of the health and morale of the organisation.

The Chairman noted that the extended Adults Select Committee resolved to accept the report.

10. ADULTS SELECT COMMITTEE WORK PROGRAMME

The Scrutiny Manager advised that the next meeting would be held on Tuesday 19th May and would include POVA annual report and GWICES.

The Chairman thanked the Scrutiny Manager for her continued hard work and commitment.

11. DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING

We noted the next Adults Select Committee Meeting would be held on Tuesday 19th May 2015 at 10.00 am.

The meeting ended at 1.20pm.