

MONMOUTHSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

Minutes of the Children and Young People Select Committee held in the Council Chamber, County Hall, The Rhadyr, Usk on Thursday 1st May 2014 at 2.00p.m.

PRESENT: County Councillor P. Jones (Vice-Chairman)

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

County Councillor G.C. Burrows attended the meeting by invitation of the Chairman.

ADDED / CO-OPTED MEMBERS:

Mr. K. Plow (Monmouthshire Association of School Governors)
Mrs. D. Hudson

OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE:

Mr. S. Burch	-	Chief Officer, Social Care and Health
Ms. T. Jelfs	-	Head of Children's Services
Ms. S. Randall-Smith	-	Children and Young People Directorate
N. Wellington	-	Finance Manager
Mr. M. Gatehouse	-	Improvement Officer
Ms. H. Illett	-	Scrutiny Manager
Mr. R. Williams	-	Democratic Services Officer

WELCOME

1. The Vice-Chairman welcomed Mr. Keith Plow to the meeting.

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

2.- Apologies for absence were received from County Councillors R.M. Edwards, R.P. Jordan, A.M. Wintle and from Mr. D. Hill and Revd. Dr. S. James.

DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

3.- There were no declarations of interest made by Select Committee Members.

ANNUAL REPORT OF THE CHIEF OFFICER FOR SOCIAL CARE AND HEALTH

4.- We received the annual report by the Chief Officer for Social Care and Housing on the effectiveness of Social Care Services in 2013-14 and the priorities for the coming year.

The Adults Select Committee was invited to attend the meeting to scrutinise the annual report with the Children and Young People Select Committee.

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Select Committee Members were informed that the report and supporting evidence will be examined by Care and Social Services Inspectorate Wales (CSSIW) as part of their annual inspection programme.

The report stated that the service was in a period of intense activity as it strived to innovate and improve while continuing to deliver safe and high quality services. It prioritised six specific areas of focus for 2013-14 which were broadly a continuation of those set for the previous year. A list of actions for each priority was also identified. The six specific areas of focus are:

- A focus on families
- Doing what matters
- Finding integrated solutions
- Strengthening communities
- Building new safeguarding and protection systems
- Developing and supporting our people

Having received the report, the following points were noted:

- In response to a question raised by a Select Committee Member regarding agency staff, the Chief Officer for Social Care and Health stated that the priority was to improve team work and the quality of the work produced. The Authority currently checks itself against other local authorities regarding the use of agency staff. The Authority was recruiting very good students and keeping them.
- New staff were given one year of practice before they were allowed to take part in court proceedings.
- The aim was to achieve a balance of experience and new recruits in order to maintain skill levels across the service.
- Monmouthshire's pay scales were comparable with other local authorities. The Directorate was working with Personnel regarding recruitment of social work staff.
- It was noted that there was a national shortage of social workers. The Directorate was therefore investigating ways of creating more effective recruitment.
- In response to a Select Committee Member's reference to a quote in the report which stated that Monmouthshire prioritised 21% more spending on social care provision than the level set out by the Welsh Government, the Chief Officer for Social Care and Health stated that this was a factual quote from the Local Government Data Unit and he would therefore re-visit the context of this issue.

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- The Raglan Homecare Project has been a success. Staff have been put onto full time salaries for a period. Staff felt valued and motivated with sickness levels being reduced significantly. The Directorate was keen to roll out this approach in other areas.
- It was considered that the JAFF/TAFF required further evaluation and should be included in the report.
- A good relationship existed with partners. However, it was acknowledged that further improvements were needed regarding Children's Services partnerships.
- It was noted that the Adults Select Committee had developed a tool that captured personal outcomes and identified key areas of people's lives which could be fed back to the Select Committee. A similar tool could be developed for the Children and Young People Select Committee.
- A good structure had been established for Looked After Children, allowing social workers to work with the children through play. This approach allowed social workers to engage better with the children.
- It was noted that the number of Children on the Child Protection Register had reduced from 79 to 38 between 2011/12 and 2013/14.
- In response to a question raised by a Select Committee Member, it was noted that a review of need had been undertaken regarding the respite care home at Hoel Hamlin. A recruitment drive had been undertaken for this establishment but no responses had been received. A second, more localised recruitment drive was being undertaken.

We resolved to receive the report and noted its content.

CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES

5.- The minutes of the following meetings of the Children and Young People Select Committee were confirmed and signed by the Vice-Chairman:

- Ordinary Meeting dated 20th March 2014.
- Special Meeting dated 15th April 2014.

PUBLIC OPEN FORUM

6.- There were no members of the public present.

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PERFORMANCE INDICATORS FOR SAFEGUARDING AND CHILD PROTECTION

7.- We received a report, presented by the Improvement Officer, regarding the Authority's performance against the objectives and outcomes for Safeguarding that were set out in the Council's Improvement Plan.

Select Committee Members were informed that over the past 12 months Children's Services has restructured and re-evaluated effective practice in relation to Child Protection work in the service. Key components of this have been consistent auditing and proactive management of children registered for longer periods to decide whether the case should be escalated to Public Law Outline (PLO) procedures. All Child Protection cases were now managed in the Family Support Team, whereas, prior to the restructure, this was managed across two teams with different managers.

The change in the Public Law Outline has resulted in significant changes around front-loading of Social Work tasks prior to Court. These tasks include parenting assessments, viability assessments of potential family carers, drug and alcohol testing, which has resulted in additional workload pressures earlier in the process. Prior to the changes in the PLO this work was undertaken when the case was in Court, with the cost being split between all parties. The onus was now on the Council to finance these costs alone.

Through the audit and review process, themes have emerged where further training has been required. Work was still on-going to improve assessment and analysis of families and their needs. This will form part of a core training programme for Children's Services

Performance against three of the four performance measures in the national framework stands at 100% with the final measure showing a marginal improvement over the past twelve months.

Having received the report, the following points were noted:

- One Manager oversees the work undertaken by the Family Support Team. The team looks at the process from a child's perspective.
- A considerable amount of work has been undertaken over the last 12 months. However, some indicators have fallen short of their targets. However, there has been a significant improvement in the majority of the indicators.
- The Authority's Children's Services Team has a proactive approach to domestic abuse in Monmouthshire. Schools were aware of instances of domestic abuse earlier.
- The Children's Services Team has been proactive in bringing down the average time children spend on the Child Protection Register.

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- Work was on-going in schools regarding personal safety. The Right to be Safe Board was reviewing the effectiveness of work in primary schools.
- In response to a Select Committee Member's question regarding the recording of data, it was noted that officers were looking to have 'Monmouthshire built' software to allow better recording of data.
- In response to a Select Committee Member's question regarding the Local Development Plan, it was noted that discussions would be held with the Planning Department concerning issues relating to health and social care.

We resolved to receive the report and noted its content.

PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT FRAMEWORK REPORT QUARTER 4 2013/14

8.- We received a summary of the progress made by the Children and Young People Directorate against the performance indicators contained within the Planning and Performance Management Framework 2013/14.

Select Committee Members were provided with the following information:

Standards

Indicators where targets have been met or exceeded:

- Performance at the end of Foundation Phase was in line or above for all indicators with the exception of English, Welsh and mathematics at the higher levels.
- At the end of Key Stage 2, outcomes for all indicators except Welsh at the expected and lower levels and maths and science at the higher levels met or exceeded targets.
- Key Stage 3 performance at the expected level +1 was below target for the CSI and all subjects.
- Performance at the end of Key Stage 3 at the higher level (7+) was low, particularly in English and science.
- The gap between pupils eligible for free school meals (e-FSM) and non – FSM has increased by 1% in Foundation Phase, but reduced at both Key Stages 2 and 3.
- The overall performance for e-FSM pupils has increased across all three phases.

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Indicators where targets have not been met and give cause for concern:

- The percentage of schools in the lowest FSM benchmark quartile for the Foundation Phase indicator and the Key Stage 2 and 3 core subject indicators was higher than the target and has placed Monmouthshire 6th, 15th and 19th when compared to Wales as a whole.
- Local Authority targets have not been met for any Key Stage 4 indicators with the exception of capped points which were 0.2% above.
- The percentage of schools in the lowest FSM benchmark quartile for all indicators was higher than the target and, as a result, Monmouthshire was place 19th or below across all indicators when compared to Wales as a whole.
- Performance at the higher levels across all key stages was not in line with targets.
- The performance of e-FSM pupils' meals was significantly lower than for non-FSM pupils across all indicators at the end of Key Stage 4.
- The rate of improvement in outcomes was slower in Monmouthshire than in Wales as a whole for the majority of indicators.

School Performance other indicators

Indicators where targets have been met or exceeded:

- The number of pupils with statements of Special Educational Needs (SEN) has reduced for the third year in succession and at 425 was now below the target for 2013/14.
- The number of statements issued within 26 weeks with exceptions was 100% and in line the Local Authority targets.
- The number of schools in bands 2 and 4 were in line with the Local Authority target. However, the number in band 3 was lower than expected and higher in band 5.
- The number of schools judged to require a sustained, intensive or critical level of intervention was higher than the target.
- The number of schools judged to need sustained, intensive or critical levels of support for leadership was higher than the target.
- All schools were judged to require routine levels of support for safeguarding in line with the target.

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Indicators where targets have not been met and give cause for concern:

- Further reduction in SEN statements.
- Significantly increase the number of statements issued within 26 weeks without exceptions.
- The number of schools requiring intensive or critical support was significantly higher than the target.
- The number of schools requiring specific and routine intervention was lower than expected.
- The number of schools requiring critical intervention has remained constant over the last year.
- The number of schools with agreed intervention plans in place was higher than the target.

Wellbeing

Indicators where targets have been met or exceeded:

- Provisional attendance data indicated that targets have been exceeded for all indicators except the number of half days lost to unauthorised absence.
- Permanent exclusions have been higher than the target for the last year.
- The number of fixed term exclusions was lower than the Local Authority target overall and has resulted in a significant reduction in the number of days lost in both the primary and secondary sector.
- The percentage of 16 year olds continuing in education, employment and training was 0.7% below the Local Authority target of 94.7%.
- At 0%, the percentage of Looked After Children (LAC) pupils leaving education, employment or work based training was at the Local Authority target.

Indicators where targets have not been met and give cause for concern:

- The percentage of all pupils leaving education, employment or work based training was 0.4% and was above the Local Authority target and was an increase compared to performance over the past three years.

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CYP Management

Indicators where targets have been met or exceeded:

- The number of non-RIDOR reportable accidents has remained consistent over the past three years.

Indicators where targets have not been met and give cause for concern:

- The percentage of parents offered their first choice in both primary and secondary schools was lower than the target and performance in previous years.
- The number of RIDOR reportable and incidents of violence and aggression towards staff have increased significantly during 2013/14.

Having received the report, the following points were noted:

- In response to a Select Committee Member's question regarding schools requiring intervention, it was noted that the number of schools targeted should reduce over time. Schools with intervention plans were being monitored closely.
- Concern was expressed that some targets were being missed and it was considered that representatives of the Education Achievement Service (EAS) should be invited to attend a future meeting of the Select Committee to establish what the EAS was doing to support Monmouthshire's schools.

We resolved that the Scrutiny Manager liaises with the Education Achievement Service with a view to inviting representatives to attend the next Children and Young People Select Committee Meeting on 12th June 2014 to establish what the EAS was doing to support Monmouthshire's schools.

CAPITAL PROGRAMME 2013/14 MONTH 10 FORECAST OUTTURN STATEMENT

9.- We received a report by the Head of Finance, presented by the Finance Manager, regarding the forecast outturn position for the current year's capital programme compared to the budget for the year for schemes relating to the Children and Young People Select Committee.

Members were informed that the Month 10 forecast capital outturn position for 2013/14 for schemes relating to the Children and Young People Select Committee was as follows:

- An adjusted revised budget £5,424,000, being based upon £4,777,000 original 2013-14 approval, £531,000 of budget revisions, £2,907,000 of slippage from 2012-13 and £49,000 virements from other Select areas, less provisionally slipping £2,840,000 into 2014/15.

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- Actual expenditure was £3,226,000 (59% of revised budget) at month 10, compared to £4,622,000 (71%) at month 10 of 2012/13
- A forecast net under spend of £153,000 resulting from an under spend of £22,000 on School development schemes, an under spend of £23,000 on property maintenance schemes and an under spend of £108,000 resulting from net surplus finance brought forward from 2012/13, which has remained unallocated.
- A summary of the £2,840,000 provisional slippage forecast into 2014/15 at the end of month 10 principally relates to School Development Schemes, notably Thornwell Primary School (£575,000), 21st Century schools feasibility (£1,542,000) and Asset management schemes (£481,000).
- The approval by the Welsh Government and Council of the full business case for the Future Schools programme and formal allocation of grant funding was forecast for November 2014.
- The Green Lane School scheme under spend has previously been used to bear the salary costs relating to the 21st Century Schools project team. Instead, the project team costs have been reallocated to the 21st Century Schools Budget and a virement of £247,000 proposed to add the under spend on completed Green Lane scheme to 21st Century Schools Budget.

Capital Receipts

- The forecast total Capital receipts balance at 31st March 2014 has increased by £2,542,000 compared to the Medium Term Financial Plan (£1,594,000 at month 8) primarily due to an increase in forecast receipts of £26,000, forecast slippage of capital expenditure of £3,028,000, budgeted set aside of £1,000,000 not going ahead, a forecast under spend of £203,000 in the capital programme which was financed via capital receipts, offset by a lower receipts balance brought forward (£1,184,000) and an increase in expenditure budgets (£530,000).
- Based on 2012/13 outturn, the capital receipts forecast and the capital budgets in place for 2013/17 there will be a balance of available receipts at the end of the Medium Term Financial Plan window of £32,165,000 (£32,557,000 at month 8).

In response to a Select Committee Member's question regarding the forecast slippage of £57,000 in respect of Park Street School Health and Safety Works, the Finance Manager would forward further information to the Member regarding this matter.

We resolved to receive the report and noted its content.

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COORDINATING BOARD

10.- We resolved to receive the minutes of the Coordinating Board Meeting dated 4th March 2014.

WORK PROGRAMME

11.- We resolved to receive the updated version of the Children and Young People Select Committee Work Programme.

In doing so, the Scrutiny Manager informed the Select Committee of the following:

- A special meeting involving all of the County Council's select committees was required to scrutinise the Annual Improvement Review. The Scrutiny Manager will arrange for the meeting to be held during the week commencing 12th May 2014.
- The Post Inspection Action Plan will be presented to the next Children and Young People Select Committee Meeting on 12th June 2014.
- The Scrutiny Manager will invite representatives of the Education Achievement Service to the next Children and Young People Select Committee Meeting on 12th June 2014.

We therefore resolved to receive the report and noted its content.

CABINET FORWARD WORK PLANNER

12.- We resolved to receive and note the Cabinet Forward Work Planner.

NEXT MEETING

13.- The next ordinary meeting of the Children and Young People Select Committee will be held on Thursday 12th June 2014 at 4.00pm at County Hall, Usk.

The meeting ended at 4.18pm.