

MONMOUTHSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

Minutes of the meeting of Joint Select Committee held
at The Council Chamber, County Hall, The Rhadyr, Usk, NP15 1GA on Monday, 11th
July, 2016 at 2.00 pm

PRESENT: County Councillor: S. Jones (Chair)

County Councillors: D. Dovey, D. Evans, R. Harris, P. Jones,
M. Powell, and M Fowler (Parent Governor Representative)

County Councillor E. Hackett Pain attended the meeting by invitation
of the Chairman.

OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE:

Sarah McGuinness	Chief Officer, Children & Young People
Peter Davies	Chief Officer, Resources
Sian Hayward	Digital and Technology Manager
Simon Kneafsey	21 st Century Programme Manager
Mark Howcroft	Assistant Head of Finance
Hazel Ilett	Scrutiny Manager
Richard Williams	Democratic Services Officer

APOLOGIES:

Councillors P. Farley, M. Hickman and S. White.

Mr. K Plow (Association of School Governors)

1. Election of Chair

We elected County Councillor S. Jones as Chair.

2. Appointment of Vice-Chair

We appointed County Councillor P. Jones as Vice-Chair.

3. Declarations of Interest

County Councillor R. Harris declared a personal and prejudicial interest pursuant to the Members' Code of Conduct in respect of minute 6 – 21st Century Schools Programme update, as he is a member of the 21st Century Schools Board. He therefore, left the meeting taking no part in the discussion or voting thereon.

4. Update on the ICT in Schools Investment Programme

Context:

To update Select Committee Members on the progress of the ICT in schools investment programme.

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Key Issues:

The ICT in schools business case was agreed in July 2015. The business case detailed the proposal, which consisted of:

- A comprehensive Service Level Agreement with the Shared Resource Service (SRS) commencing in April 2016.
- A separate programme for the upgrade of the Schools ICT Infrastructure which was due to commence in July 2015, but was delayed until January 2016 whilst further Cabinet and Council approval was sought to proceed with the investment, as not all schools had signed up to the Service Level Agreement (SLA).

Member Scrutiny:

- The investment programme will provide all schools with a 100mb data line which can also be used for voice data. All schools have required an inspection to identify if their current network cabinets are capable of receiving the 100mg service.
- There has been a marked improvement in performance of B.T. in recent weeks.
- There were three schools that did not sign the Service Level Agreement (SLA). Therefore, officers had to revisit the costing of the actual SLA itself to assess whether it was still viable. However, the Authority remained within the financial package to deliver the SLA.
- If the three schools that have not signed up to the SLA decide to join the SLA at a later date then they may do so. However, these schools will not be able to take part in the investment programme.
- Most schools are likely to be using the 100mb line by the end of September 2016. However, some schools might take a little longer before they are using the 100mb line. Officers are unable to affect the schedule of works but it is most likely that all schools will be using the 100mb line by the end of the year.
- A progress update of schools' connections to the 100mb line could be emailed to Members. Members would be included to receive the monthly updates that are despatched to schools.
- Deri View and Castle Park Schools will be connected to the 100mb line imminently, if not already connected.
- After the initial equipment upgrade the schools will be responsible for funding its own replacement programme.

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Chair's Sum up:

The Select Committee discussed:

- Transition arrangements.
- The three schools that have not signed up to the SLA but have an opportunity to join.
- Encourage contractors to commence work over the summer holidays with a view to connecting schools to the 100mb line as soon as possible.
- The Select Committee will receive a monthly communication regarding schools connections to the 100mb line via newsletter.

We resolved to:

- (i) receive the report and noted its content;
- (ii) re-visit this matter when appendix 2 timescales within the report have been completed.

5. Discussion on Schools curriculum - Digital literacy and within the curriculum

Context:

To update Select Committee Members on digital literacy within the schools' curriculum.

Key Issues:

Key Frameworks currently in place within schools. There are two important documents, as follows.

- The ICT Programme of Study is a statutory document that is part of the national curriculum. From September 2016, Estyn will be looking to inspect and report on the quality of ICT.
- The Digital Competence Framework has been put together with input from Digital Pioneer Schools. It's been designed to encapsulate skills that help learners thrive in an increasingly digital world. Its aim is to improve digital competence and imbed digital skills across the curriculum. This framework will commence in September 2016 which is being supported by the Education Achievement Service (EAS).
- The three key priorities for schools from September 2016 are:

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- Strategic Vision for ICT and the Digital Competency Framework.
- Self Evaluation.
- E Safety.

- Input from the Pioneer Network is an ongoing issue.

- Schools and the programme will self-evaluate.

- ICT is now considered equal alongside numeracy and literacy and will be inspected, thus.

- EAS support is crucial.

- There are a raft of projects happening in Monmouthshire's schools.

- We have Pioneer Schools in Monmouthshire that are working closely with Welsh Government on the output of the Donaldson report. The schools are Caldicot and Gilwern, as well as Shirenewton and Trellech.

Member scrutiny:

- Initial teacher training has been addressing the digital need for some time. The Authority needs to be supporting digital competence with all of its workforce.

- Initial teacher training does its job well. However, levels of digital competence differs amongst the workforce.

- There is additional funding via the regional consortia for training.

- Should Estyn look to undertake inspections within September 2016, it was noted that the infrastructure and work taking place in schools will be taken into account by Estyn.

- Monmouthshire was looking to develop links with businesses with a view to recognising the digital skills within schools. The aim being to create a seamless transition for students leaving the school setting to the business environment.

- Monmouthshire is in an excellent position to attract outside collaboration. A great deal of work is being undertaken with external partners. Monmouthshire's students are leaving school well equipped with ICT skills.

Chair's Sum up:

The Select Committee discussed:

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- Teacher training.
- Additional funding for training.
- Infrastructure being in place if Estyn should undertake school inspections during September 2016.
- Private sector engagement with schools and encouragement of schools to embrace this.

We resolved to:

- (i) receive the report and noted its content;
- (ii) receive a further update in due course.

6. 21st Century Schools - to discuss the progress of the 21st Century Schools Programme

As County Councillor R. Harris left the meeting following his personal and prejudicial interest in respect of this item, the meeting had become inquorate. The meeting therefore closed without the Select Committee formally scrutinising this item.

The meeting ended at 2.55 pm