

MONMOUTHSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

Minutes of the meeting of Adults Select Committee held at Council Chamber, County Hall, The Rhadyr, Usk, NP15 1GA on Tuesday, 1st September, 2015 at 10.00 am

PRESENT: County Councillors: R. Chapman, R. Edwards, M. Hickman,
P. Jones, P. Jordan, P. Watts, A. Wintle and D Husdon

OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE:

Ian Bakewell	
Nicola Perry	Democratic Services Officer
Tyrone Stokes	Accountant
Nicola Needle	Changing Lives Lead
Eve Parkinson	Integrated Team Leader
John Parfitt	Housing Renewals and Careline Manager

APOLOGIES:

Councillors D Hill

1. Apologies for absence

2. Declarations of interest

There were no declarations of interests made by Members.

3. Public Open Forum

We welcomed contributions from members of the public, during which time the following issues were raised:

Jenny Barnes, Secretary of CARE, addressed the Committee in order to raise concerns regarding the report on Mardy Park Resource Centre that had been issued to the Area Committee. The report was considered difficult to read and of little content. The main concerns highlighted were:

- Access to and around the building – it was felt that there should be a review of access, to be integrated with developments at Mardy Park.
- The criteria for admittance to the services provided at Mardy Park – there was confusion surrounding the admittance of people with or without Alzheimers, what would happen if the facility was at full capacity and if what people wanted was taken into consideration.
- A clash of social services and health within Mardy Park – areas of concern related to the care of patients including lifting, catheters, turning, GP cover at Mardy Park, and health and social care in general.

Mr. Alan Jones submitted papers to the Chairman and requested that the issues raised were taken into consideration. One significant area of concern related to bed spaces being converted into office areas within Mardy Park.

4. To confirm the minutes of the following meetings:

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The Committee resolved to confirm and sign the minutes of the following meetings of Adults Select committee:

- 16th June 2015
- 30th June 2015
- 8th July 2015
- 20th July 2015
- 31st July 2015

5. Pre-decision Scrutiny of the Review of Mardy Park

Context:

Members received a report in order to seek approval for the strategic direction and re-modelling of site and services at Mardy Park Resource Centre (MPRC).

Members were advised that an addendum had been issued following officers' further consideration of the report.

Key Issues:

The key issues were outlined as:

- All services at MPRC should have proportionate resources in relation to services and outcomes. The current budget was disproportionate to the services provided at the centre.
- The management levels at MPRC were disproportionate to the services and did not support an approach based on integration.
- The wider community were not sufficiently clear on the role and purpose of the centre.
- Limited accommodation had an impact on the well-being of staff and their ability to undertake all necessary duties.
- Too much emphasis surrounded centre based services and opportunities to engage with the local community were not able to be taken.
- A need for additional car parking to be added to the Cabinet report.

Member scrutiny:

Following the presentation of the report Members were invited to comment, during which time the following points were noted:

A Member raised concerns surrounding £171,000 capital expenditure allocated for the car park development, and the fact that the figure had increased, but the car park seemed smaller. It was questioned if the work had gone out to tender or had been an internal contract. In response we heard that the work had gone out to tender following a feasibility study, the car park now being supplied was a result of the feasibility study. There were concerns regarding

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the high figure but the Committee were reassured that Property Services had gone through the correct tender processes.

It was confirmed that planning had been approved.

It was confirmed that the Intermediate Care Fund from Welsh Government had been drawn down, £146,000 of which would fund the additional car parking. The remaining £25,000 would be a contribution from 2015/16 Social Care and Health Revenue Budget.

A Member referred to the comments made during the Public Open Forum regarding access to MPRC and questioned if the issues would be addressed by the new car park. The Finance Manager advised the Committee that further information would be provided at a later date.
(ACTION – TS)

The Cabinet Member expressed, that in accordance with the progress at Mardy Park, the issues surrounding the car park should be addressed to accommodate the greater flow in and out of the building, and would ensure discussions took place with the Team Manager to ensure development of the car park reflected this.

The Chairman confirmed that the Committee would welcome an update regarding the issues surrounding access at Mardy Park.

Following a presentation of the report detailing the re-modelling of the site Members raised the following points:

A Member questioned the strategic direction of Monmouthshire County Council and the overarching purpose of Adults Services in helping people live their own lives, and if the public had full understanding the objectives and outcomes. In response we heard that it was difficult to communicate something so complex and diverse. A key fundamental principle was to provide experience in terms of helping people understand. Officers were looking how to communicate information in line with the Social and Wellbeing Act.

The Chairman agreed that communication was key and public perception could be that the service was being diminished. It was imperative that the alternative, better way of delivering the service should be emphasised. It was suggested that communication via local newspapers, creating promotional features, would be helpful as not all members of the public had access to the internet. Communication via the work of local groups would also be useful. The Chairman stressed that there should be a clear, coherent communication strategy. **(ACTION – NN / CR/ AB)**

The Chairman recommended that the Communications team be invited to visit Mardy Park.

A Member questioned if there were occasions when staff or professionals would visit clients at their home, rather than them having to attend Mardy Park. The Changing Practice, Changing Lives Lead explained that option was being considered under the review, and was part of the way forward.

Concerns were raised regarding the frequent mention of volunteers in terms of people being able to reach the centre, due to its location and the lack of bus service. We were informed that the volunteering aspect centred round the community café and the centre grounds. A volunteer co-ordinator had been appointed in order to recruit, provide support, and to ensure a positive experience for volunteers.

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We heard that officers would be attending Abergavenny Action 50+ to provide a presentation on Mardy Park.

It was recognised that even though we were discussing Mardy Park, there was an extensive list of areas to benefit from volunteers including Social Care, Museums, Hubs, and Citizens Advice, therefore it was essential to provide an attractive service in order to engage people.

We heard that with regards to recommendation 3, item 7.18, appendix 1 of the report stating: *“following the review of people attending, consideration should be given to reducing the days to 6 or 5 days per week. This would support a more flexible staffing model as detailed above”* there were no timescales set but testing would be carried out prior to new models being established.

The Chairman expressed that the new model would need to take the transport issues into consideration, and questioned if there were opportunities to use the Grass Routes service. It was hoped a volunteer driver service would be developed. The Chairman recommended discussions take place with the Transport Unit (**ACTION – NN/CR**)

The Cabinet Member for Social Care and Health explained reasons for changes recommended regarding the staffing structure were that, historically, Mardy Park had been based on a residential care model. Going forward, the management structure would be practitioner led.

Following a question regarding respite beds and end of life care we were informed that the new model aimed to extend the choice and range of service models available. It was confirmed that there had been no instances of insufficient facilities, i.e. people turned away, at Mardy Park. We were informed that the issue would be discussed in further detail at a future meeting with the health board.

Recommendations:

Recommendations outlined in the report required that:

- Members recommend Cabinet approval to the development of the new service models namely:
 1. The development of a new day therapy/rehabilitation unit.
 2. The introduction of new approaches to short term respite.
 3. The consolidation of day services operating six days per week.
 4. The consolidation of residential services to be supported on one wing.
 5. The provision of nurse led ‘hot’ clinics re-sited from Neville Hall Hospital.
 6. The provision of Memory Assessment Services re-sited from Maindiff Court Hospital.
- Members recommend Cabinet approve the revised staffing structure supporting the new models of support at MPRC which supports the delivery of savings within Mandate 34.
- Members note that there may be possible future redundancy costs and once the financial costs are finalised, a further report to be submitted for approval by Cabinet.
- Members endorse Cabinet to recommend to Council inclusion in the capital budget for the expenditure of £171,000 on additional car parking at MPRC to be funded by: £146,000 Intermediate Care Fund grant and £25,000 contribution from the 2015/16 Social Care and Health Revenue Budget.

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Committee's Conclusion:

Chair's Summary:

The Committee acknowledged the change of direction for Mardy Park and made the noted staffing and leadership issues were being addressed.

The Committee wished to see a renewed effort regarding communication.

It was noted issues surrounding the car park and access to the building would be addressed.

The recruitment and retention on volunteers would be followed up, with communication and transport being areas of consideration.

The Committee suggested a mini-board be established, to include volunteers and Members e.g. Friends of Mardy Park. **(ACTION – NN/CR)**

Members resolved to endorse the report, taking into account the recommendations of the Committee.

6. Performance Report on Disabled Facilities Grants

Context:

Members received a report introduced by the Housing and Regeneration Manager and were asked to consider the capital budget provided to support Disabled Facilities grants (DFGs) and Safety at Home grants (SAHs) and the impact in relation to service performance and on Social Care and Health Services.

Key Issues:

Under the provisions of the Housing Grants, Construction and Regeneration Act 1996 and the Regulatory Reform (Housing Assistance) (England and Wales) Order 2002, the Council had a statutory duty to provide DFGs within six months of receiving a valid application. Failure to do so would create the risk of legal challenge. It also had discretion to provide SAHs. Since 2006 a capital budget of £600,000 had been provided annually to fund grants. Broadly, the budget was split into £500,000 to support DFGs and £100,000 to support SAHs. The budget had been affected by the ongoing rate of inflation.

DFGs were available to residents whose need for home adaptations had been assessed by the Council's Occupational Therapy Service. Some DFGs were means tested and all were capped at £36,000. The Council had an option, which it had exercised, to offer fast track DFGs where the applicant was on a statutory benefit and the cost of works was below £5,000. This had been beneficial to clients to help reduce DFG turnaround, thereby, positively, impacting upon the statutory PI.

Extremely positive feedback had been received about adaptations financed by DFG's with high customer satisfaction scores of 95% regularly being achieved.

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SAHs were intended for smaller works such as handrails, half steps and minor alterations often costing less than £500, but would make a dwelling much safer for disabled residents.

Both DFGs and SAHs played a key role in facilitating hospital discharge and in preventing the need for admission as homes would be safer.

In 2014/15 the DFG budget was supplemented by one off additional funding of £100,000 from the Welsh Government's Intermediate Care Fund but that has not been repeated in the current financial year.

Member Scrutiny:

We were advised that the Cabinet Member with responsibility for Environment, Public Services and Housing had expressed apologies for absence.

Members noted that the lack of funding was an issue and suggested arranging a cost benefit analysis as a matter of urgency.

A Member suggested that with planning in mind, houses should be developed to accommodate the needs of people, such as downstairs shower rooms. The Chairman suggested discussions between Planning and Social Care and Health should take place.

A Member suggested that the Authority was failing in its statutory responsibility to provide DFGs. It was questioned if there was a charge back system against the properties benefitting from DFGs. A suggestion was made that the Authority looked at prudential borrowing and allocated those funds to DFGs with the hope of recovering in the future when the person moves on.

We were informed that statutory rules stated that there was no claw-back system for grants for children. With adults, under £5,000 there was no claw-back, over £5,000 could be clawed-back over a period of 5 years. Every grant would be registered with Land Charges in order to be reclaimed.

We heard that the £2.7 million had been the original SEG fund from Welsh Government, reduced to the £600,000 budget decided by Monmouthshire County Council. The Chairman questioned if a forum was in place where the financial issues could be discussed. The Finance Manager explained the Capital Programme would be put to Council for agreement, where alternative ways of financing the scheme could be discussed. Members agreed for the matter to be highlighted to the Head of Finance (**ACTION-TS**).

The Integrated Services Manager added that officers were working with the Health Board and the Neighbourhood Care Network, looking towards a more pooled and integrated service. It was recommended the discussion be added to the agenda when the Health Board attends an Adults Select Committee later in the year.

The Cabinet Member suggested that funding be accessed through the Revenue Budget rather than the Capital Programme.

Recommendations:

The report recommended that the Committee note the contents of the report and the implications for the processing times for both DFG and SAH grants.

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Committee's Conclusion:

Chair's Summary:

The Chairman thanked officers for the report and highlighted the following points:

- The Committee would welcome an exploration of financing options, noting that the Finance Manager would take forward on behalf of the Committee **(ACTION-TS)** Also taking into consideration the suggestion made by the Cabinet Member of using the Revenue Budget.
- Pooling budgets to be an ongoing discussion with the Health Board – to be brought forward as a future agenda item.
- Housing and Regeneration Manager to act as ambassador for the Committee at the Capital Working Group **(ACTION – IB)**

7. Budget Monitoring Report - Period 1

Context:

We received a report to provide Members with information on the forecast revenue outturn position of the Authority at the end of period 1 which represents month 2 financial information for the 2015/16 financial year.

Members Scrutiny:

Members noted that the Committee had not received an update for the end of year position. The Finance Manager would look to reschedule for the next meeting **(ACTION – TS)**.

A request was made to receive a simple update to demonstrate the differences between the current report and the previous year, highlighting any areas of concern.

We were informed that Adult Services showed an underspend of £97,076 after allocating £60,000 to Children's Services.

We noted an underspend in GWICES of £9,000 following a re-negotiation in how the budget was financed, which would come into effect 2016/17. However, we had benefitted from advanced stock purchases in 2014/15 by the Intermediate Care Fund.

Concerns were raised regarding the over and underspends, and where there were underspends were the budgets set too high. The Finance Manager explained that where this was the case, long term reasons would be identified and addressed.

Concerns were raised that three 'red' areas for Adult Services were Mardy Park, Severn View and Monnow Vale, with an explanation of the adverse figure for Monnow Vale being due to the PFI and contribution charges being more than budget. We heard that the impact of PFI in the budget related back to 2005 when Monnow Vale was set up and the budget was not adequately set up to cover the PFI and cash contribution into the running of Monnow Vale. The Finance

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Manager reassured Members that as a member of the board all efforts were made to ensure value for money.

Recommendations:

Members were recommended to:

- Assess whether effective budget monitoring is taking place,
- Monitor the extent to which budgets are spent in accordance with agreed budget and policy framework,
- Challenge the reasonableness of projected over or underspends, and
- Monitor the achievement of predicted efficiency gains or progress in relation to savings proposals.

Committee's Conclusion:

Chair's Summary:

The Chairman expressed the thanks of the Committee for the report.

The Committee resolved to accept the report

8. Work Programming

We noted the Adults Select Committee Work Programme.

9. To confirm the date and time of the next meeting as Tuesday 13th October 2015 at 10.00am.

The meeting ended at 12.50 pm