

MONMOUTHSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

**Minutes of the meeting of Adults Select Committee held
at County Hall, The Rhadyr, Usk, NP15 1GA on Tuesday, 8th March, 2016 at 10.00 am**

PRESENT: County Councillor P. Farley (Chairman)

County Councillors: R. Edwards, P. Jones, P. Jordan, A. Wintle,
D Hill and D Husdon

Also in attendance County Councillor(s): G. Burrows and V. Smith

OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE:

Julie Boothroyd
Nicola Perry

Head of Adult Services
Democratic Services Officer

APOLOGIES:

Councillors R. Harris

1. Declarations of interest

There were no declarations of interest made by Members.

2. Public Open Forum

There were no members of the public present at the meeting.

3. To confirm the minutes of the previous meeting

The minutes of the following meetings were confirmed and signed by the Chairman as an accurate record:

Joint Select Budget – 16th December 2015

Joint Adults and Children and Young People Select – 16th December 2015

Adults Select Committee – 19th January 2016

In doing so the Committee noted that amendments to the minutes of both joint meetings held on 16th December 2015 had been addressed at the meeting of Children and Young People Select on 11th February 2016.

It was noted that there was a typographical error on the minutes of 19th January 2016, in the spelling of Mrs Hudson.

4. To consider the Supporting People Service Plan and proposals for grant spending

Context:

Adults Select Committee received a report from the Lead Commissioner QA (Adult Social Care & Health) & SP Lead Officer, in order to present Members with the proposed developments in the Supporting People Programme Grant funded provision in 2016/17.

Key Issues:

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During 2015 the expectation was that SPPG would be cut by anything up to 25%. Therefore a number of cut-management scenarios were worked through. However, in January 2016, the Minister announced indicative local authority allocations that maintained funding levels at 2015/16 levels - £2,039,175 for Monmouthshire

Included in these cut-management strategies was the assumption that Phase II of our SP pricing strategy would be implemented.

Phase I was implemented in 2015/16 and ensured a consistency across the provision based on the cost per funded support worker. At the same time the principle of only funding support hours delivered was introduced (as opposed to block contracting). The latter implementation generated some clawback opportunities that generated in-year underspends that allowed 2 younger person services to be piloted.

Applying the Phase II strategy, which makes the cost per actual support hour delivered consistent, releases a further £141k for service developments.

Over the last year expectations for SP to link with and/or support other initiatives has increased. There are a range of increased expectations associated with the Social Services and Well-being Act, primarily related to primary prevention and early interventions. Welfare benefit and housing reforms have also increased the incidence of people needing help and support to address their immediate housing issues. The Minister has further called for a closer collaboration between the 3 Tackling Poverty initiatives and SP (Communities First, Families First and Flying Start). There are increased expectations with respect to SP support in domestic abuse and violence situations and in the effective resettlement of prisoners on release. Monmouthshire already has an effective service provision for domestic abuse and further developments in this area and prison release have been organised on a regional basis via the Regional Collaborative Committee.

Member Scrutiny:

A Member questioned the relevance of including 2013 information in the report. We were informed that a weakness of Welsh Government proposals for local commissioning plans in the future were that where there was a three year commissioning plan, at the end of the three years the figures the plan had been based on were four years old.

Members requested examples of external providers and questioned how these bodies were scrutinised. We were informed that Monmouthshire Housing provide support for older people, the service had been reconfigured in 2011/12 to meet the needs at that time. The needs of Monmouthshire's older people had since changed and we had been clawing money back from Monmouthshire Housing as there was not enough demand for the support hours being providers. The age group had now been extended to any age group rather than continuing to claw money back.

County Councillor A. Wintle declared a personal, non-prejudicial interest under the Members' Code of Conduct, as a Director of Monmouthshire Housing.

The Supporting People Lead Officer explained that negotiations were under way and Monmouthshire Housing were very supportive of the approach.

A Member requested further clarification on the figures in the Spend Plan 2016/2017 in Appendix 2 of the report, and questioned if we were spending nearly as much on domestic violence as learning disability, or were they projected figures. In response we heard that the spending plan showed we were spending £217,000 on domestic abuse, and £286,000 on

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learning disability plus access to generic floating support. In terms of equality impact assessment the advantage of a generic floating support would be fair access for everyone.

The Chair noted that the spending plan was a floating situation and where there were zero figures, it demonstrated a snapshot of time rather than the programme not working for people with those issues. In future reporting, further explanation may be helpful. We were advised that in the coming year officers would be able to present what Supporting People had covered and show a much clearer position.

A Member questioned, in terms of mental health issues, how we could encourage GPs to become more involved when assessing housing needs. We were advised that the approach had been piloted with Mind Monmouthshire, where a support worker would go into a GP practice and work with GPs where there were concerns about individual issues.

The Chair suggested there should be a clear identity/logo in order to identify the scheme within the community, and to ensure people know who they are dealing with.

The Head of Adult Services explained that rather than a logo, the scheme was more about the relationships we develop with people. The Lead for Supporting People also explained that in the pilot year there would be a number of people in the community providing support. In time we would look at the system from a service user point of view to understand what is best for them.

Recommendations:

The report recommended that Members consider the main service developments and approve the proposal to complete detailed negotiations with a view to implementing them for 2016/17

Committee Conclusion:

The Chair expressed the thanks of the Committee for the report, noting appreciation for the detail and historical background and data.

The Committee unanimously agreed to support the direction of travel and the main proposals for service development.

The Committee would welcome moving towards a simpler way of representing outcomes and moving forward, a clearer relationship demonstrating what we do and what the outcomes should be.

Lastly, it was noted that we had discussed identity and logo issues, which would be addressed as further progress is made.

5. Evaluation of the Community Coordination pilot initiative

Context:

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Members received a report and video presentation in order to receive detail and an evaluation of the Community Coordination and Small Local Enterprise Learning pilot that is scheduled to run until the end of May 2016.

Key Issues:

The Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014 comes into effect on 6th April 2016 and highlights the role of public services in building on individual and family strengths, helping people to have a stronger voice, choice and more control supporting a meaningful contribution to local community life, the coproduction of person centred services and the achievement of personal outcomes. The Act also creates a duty on local authorities to ensure appropriate services to help prevent, delay and reduce the need for care and support.

Community Coordination is based on establishing local coordinators within communities to work with people who may otherwise require traditional social services. By engaging early on, building on strengths and helping people to build local connections they help people find their own lasting solutions. The development of small local enterprises facilitates the promotion of community enterprises whose aim, in general, is to improve the wellbeing of those involved as well the wider impact of improved community integration.

The work was initially presented as a learning pilot. Cabinet decided that the programme would be monitored throughout and the learning used to adapt the work as it progressed. Consequently Adults Select have received reports over the past eighteen months and will be broadly familiar with the evolving nature of the programme but not the precise nature of it.

The learning pilot produced a number of stories that identified improved outcomes for individuals. While there is not yet enough evidence to aggregate the impact of these studies, in some cases practitioners within the integrated teams were clear that without the intervention individuals on their way towards a care package had been diverted towards a more informal community arrangement.

The most significant conclusions highlight the importance of place and in particular the existence of buildings and facilities where individuals and groups can come together to create a sense of community, friendship, reciprocity and belonging that builds lasting connections.

People have a need to be involved in shaping their own future. Many of those who benefitted from the work wanted to be active participants who co-produced their own solutions not passive recipients of services. It is through contribution and involvement that people achieve a greater sense purpose and identity.

This cannot be viewed in isolation from the system-wide transformation taking place in adult social services and it is difficult to separate out the relative impacts of the different transformation strands. The decision to go ahead with the programme back in 2013 has yielded valuable learning that will position the authority well to implement the Social Services and Well-being Act as well as aligning very clearly with the principles of the Well-being of Future Generations Act.

The programme has facilitated positive outcomes for individuals and enabled the service to be on-budget. There has been no need to make a case for budget increases which could be expected when aligned to the projected rise in demand caused by an ageing population and increased complexity of need.

There is enough evidence of the positive impact that contribution and participation make to consider how these key aspects of well-being can form part of the future model of service

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provision. These can be incorporated into the wider transformation of adult services. It is anticipated that this can be delivered within existing budgets by maximising the potential of external funding streams such as the Intermediate Care Fund. Any future proposals that affect the nature of service delivery will be brought forward in a future report as needed.

Members Scrutiny:

The Chair welcomed comment from the Cabinet Member for Social Care, Safeguarding and Health who added that it had been a wonderful journey and had been great to see what had been achieved to date and what would be achieved going forward. It was acknowledged that these were specific location pilots, in Caldicot and Abergavenny, the learning it would bring would be a consequence of the environment. The next phase and volunteer coordination would be an important step forward, and identify ways we can bring a difference to people.

A Member commended officers on a powerful presentation which provided effective information on what can be done in the community for social isolation. It was requested that for future reporting figures be provided rather than percentages, in order to provide a clearer picture.

It was questioned that as schemes such as Befriending and Community Connections relied on lottery grants, did officers see problems for future funding. The Head of Adult Services explained that in terms of funding it was intended to partly fund the next phase through the intermediate care fund. With the preventative duty through the Social Care and Wellbeing Act it should be difficult for the Gwent Community to not fund, so officers were reasonably confident that the money would be forthcoming. The issue moving forward would be short term funding arrangements.

In response to a query raised we heard that the short term contracts of the coordinators, due to finish in April had been extended.

There were concerns surrounding the evaluation and the following points were made:

- It would have been useful to have received a blank questionnaire in relation to the report.
- It was worrying that the questionnaires had been distributed and collected by the coordinators.
- The results did not clearly show the service sizes which would have had an impact on the data shown.
- The unrealistic nature of the results due to the positive bias of the questions.

The Policy and Performance Manager accepted the concerns and added that it was hoped to make to evaluation as honest and robust as possible. It was agreed that a blank copy and further detail on numbers would be added to the report when presented to Cabinet. In terms of the distribution of the questionnaire it was recognised and mentioned in the report that this needed to be taken into account. It was also added that there was some difficulty with the nature and the smaller sample size. It was noted that the statements in the questionnaire were written in accordance with the wellbeing outcomes.

Members highlighted that isolated people would benefit from added facilities, such as blood pressure checks, in the community hubs. We were informed that there were intentions to add opportunities around health and social care to the hubs. The Rogiet hub saw social workers and police community support officers having breakfast there, which was a great opportunity for people to approach.

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A Member questioned if an unused hut owned by MCC, opposite Fairfield Car Park in Abergavenny would be considered for use as a hub. We were informed that the approach was to use existing establishment and it was not the intention to take over new buildings.

The Chair noted that further along there could be a more external approach to be encouraged eg. including health visitors.

The Chair highlighted that with more work being done in the community with volunteers, we would have to address accountability issues. The Head of Adult Services responded that we were creating opportunities for people to come together as a natural approach. In terms of the volunteering aspect the Programme Lead for Volunteering ensured we were supportive of people in a volunteering role.

Recommendations:

Members were invited to scrutinise the report and the accompanying appendix to ensure that they present a robust and evidence-based evaluation that can be used to inform the future development of services.

Committee Conclusion:

The Chair concluded that the Adults Select Committee welcomed the report and would like to see it go forward to Cabinet with some additions.

The Committee requested that figures/numbers be included in future reporting.

We noted that the questionnaire would be part of the Cabinet report, and could be emailed to Members for reference.

The Committee would encourage further work on research and evaluation issues, with either external help or through internal arrangements.

The Committee would like to encourage the ideas to be spread further, to begin to think about the rural dimension. The Committee would be glad to help where possible.

6. To update Members on the delivery of Disabled Facilities Grant Position at year end

Context:

We received a report from the Housing Renewal Manager in order to provide Members with an update on the capital budget provided to support disabled facilities grants (DFGs) and Safety at Home (SAHs) grants and the impact on overall service performance and on services provided by Social Care and Health.

Key Issues:

The Council has a statutory obligation to provide DFG's within six months of receiving a valid application. Failure to do so it risks legal challenge. It also has discretion to provide SAHs. Since 2006 a capital budget of £600,000 has been provided annually to fund both types of grant. In broad terms the budget is split into £500,000 to support DFGs and £100,000 to support SAHs.

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All DFGs are capped at £36,000 and while the majority are in the region of £4,500, each year a number of larger, complex grants are provided to meet the needs of children with complex disabilities. Increasingly, this also relates to adults who are disabled as a result of trauma or degenerative diseases. Client feedback has confirmed that adaptations significantly impact on the quality of life of both applicants and carers. Also, customer satisfaction scores of 95% are regularly being achieved.

SAHs are intended for smaller works such as handrails, half steps and minor alterations, often costing less than £250 but which make a dwelling safer. They are frequently commissioned to facilitate hospital discharge, or to reduce the risk of falls and injuries which might necessitate hospitalisation. Both grants play a key role in facilitating discharge from hospital and preventing admission.

In addition to the impact upon client of having to wait longer for adaptations to be carried out, the annual shortage of funds and ever earlier full commitment of them has adverse effects on the Council's performance in respect of DFG turnaround which is a KPI that is monitored closely by the Welsh Government and in particular by the Older Persons Commissioner for Wales.

Alternatives to DFGs and SAHs do exist, though none are as attractive as grant aid but nevertheless some potential grant recipients do opt to proceed with the necessary works at their own cost.

The options available to the Council are:

- Continue with the status quo. The advantage of this option is the Council's current capital commitment for disabled adaptations is maintained and there is no additional impact on the wider capital programme. The disadvantages are: the Council will continue to have a backlog of applicants waiting for disabled adaptations and the associated impacts on safety and quality of life for associated individuals; it makes no allowances for the impact of certainly previous inflationary pressures and there will be a continued impact on Social Care & Health services.
- Increasing the annual available capital funding for disabled adaptations. The advantage of this option is this will help to reduce (or eliminate) the number of applicants waiting and ease the pressures on Social Care & Health services. The disadvantage is there will be a knock on impact on the Council's wider capital programme and the Council may need to dis-invest in another priority in order to facilitate any increase.
- One-off additional capital contribution to the current budget. The advantage of this option would be to help temporarily reduce (or eliminate) the number of applicants waiting for adaptations and ease the current pressures for individuals and Social Care and Health services. The disadvantage is that this option only provides a temporary respite and a backlog would quickly build up again.
- Prudential borrowing. This option requires revenue funding. The necessary available revenue is cannot be facilitated because of the on-going commitment to meet financial targets relating to Cabinet mandates. Also, although the addressing of the current backlog may have some revenue benefits for Social Care through reduced care packages, these are regarded to be marginal and would not provide cashable/bankable benefits that could be directed towards funding borrowing repayments.

Member Scrutiny:

Members raised concerns that the issues would increase due to the emphasis on independent living, and the introduction of the Wellbeing Act requesting more preventative measures to be taken. Officers were asked their vision of the future. In response the Housing Renewals Manager explained that the waiting list increased year on year and would continue to do so, which was a major concern.

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A Member stressed that the LDP highlighted the need to build but did not take on board what was actually needed within the house. Houses not only needed to provide space but should include spaces such as a downstairs wetroom and more accessible facilities. It was important for developers and housing associations to recognise the needs of an aging population and to encourage independent living.

We were advised that the builders would say that disabled adaptations were not marketable and private sector landlords may refuse to give permission. However, more and more properties were now being built in accordance with movement issues.

We noted that discussions to improve development did not address current issues. It was agreed that discussions with planning colleagues would be beneficial. It was noted that feedback would be given to Welsh Government, who dictate the conditions of social housing.

The Chair advised that the Committee were less able to make technical recommendations but suggested that continuing with the status quo would not be a recommendation of the committee in light of the new Social Services and Wellbeing Act. The Committee would like to see more monies made available but were not best placed to say how. It was noted that the new Act places new expectations on the Council.

The Committee acknowledged that the Chair of Planning Committee had, for many years, been asking for a new approach with housing development. The Chair suggested that Adults Select Committee request that a task and finish group be coordinated with Planning Committee, to work jointly with officers.

Recommendations:

The report recommended that the Committee note the contents and implications of the report and consider the options itemised in this report and recommend to Cabinet a proposed option for going forward.

Committee Conclusion:

The Committee concluded that there should be an increase in available capital funding but were agnostic on the approach.

The Committee resolved to recommend to Cabinet that there be a piece of joint work with Adults Select and Planning Committee to bring together officers from Planning, Housing and Social Services to discuss a more joined up approach to independent living in Monmouthshire.

The Committee unanimously agreed to support the recommendation.

7. Adults Select Committee Work Programme

The Committee agreed to note the forward work programme.

The Chair wished to report that discussions with the Health Authority regarding End of Life. The Chair had been invited to speak at a local launch of the programme and did so on the back of Select Committee interest. As a result it was clear that ABUHB is lining up to be the first health

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board in Wales to take the initiative forward and would like a Local Authority partner on side from the beginning, being MCC.

In order to identify support it was agreed to hold a special short section at Full Council on 12th May 2016. It was agreed that the Chair would continue discussions.

The meeting ended at 1.00pm