

## MONMOUTHSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

**Minutes of the meeting of Children and Young People Select Committee held at Council Chamber, County Hall, The Rhadyr, Usk, NP15 1GA on Thursday, 14th January, 2016 at 4.00 pm**

**PRESENT:** County Councillor P. Jones (Chairman)  
County Councillor P. Farley (Vice Chairman)

County Councillors: L. Guppy, R. Harris, S. Howarth, D. Jones, M. Powell, M Fowler (Parent Governor Representative) and K Plow (Association of School Governors)

### **OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE:**

Sharon Randall-Smith	Head of Achievement and Attainment
Hazel Ilett	Scrutiny Manager
Matthew Lewis (Countryside)	Countryside Manager
Mike Moran	Community Infrastructure Coordinator
Teresa Norris	Policy & Performance Officer
Ian Saunders	Head of Tourism, Leisure and Culture
Nikki Wellington	Finance Manager
Teresa Crane	Finance Officer
Sarah King	Senior Democratic Services Officer

### **APOLOGIES:**

Councillors P. Clarke, M. Hickman and C Robertshaw (Parent Governor Representative)

#### **1. Declarations of Interest**

County Councillor P. Jones declared a personal non-prejudicial interest pursuant to the Members' Code of Conduct in relation to Item 6, as a governor of the school.

County Councillor L. Guppy declared a personal non-prejudicial interest pursuant to the Members' Code of Conduct in relation to Item 6, as a governor of the school.

County Councillor P. Farley declared a personal non-prejudicial interest pursuant to the Members' Code of Conduct in relation to Item 4, as a Chepstow Town Councillor.

Mr M. Fowler declared a personal non-prejudicial interest pursuant to the Members' Code of Conduct in relation to Item 6, as a parent governor at the school.

#### **2. To confirm the minutes of the previous meeting**

- i) We confirmed and signed the minutes of the Special Children and Young People's Select Committee meeting held on Thursday 2<sup>nd</sup> November 2015.

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- ii) We confirmed and signed the minutes of the Children and Young People's Select Committee meeting held on Thursday 12<sup>th</sup> November 2015, subject to the following amendment:

**Item 8 Performance Report on School Exclusions:** *duplication on Chairs summary:*

**Delete:**

*'Members acknowledged the potential safeguarding issues in relation to unlawful school exclusions - given that young people would be outside of educational provision.*

*Members recognised that historic levels of primary fixed term exclusions in Monmouthshire were too high and that the Local Authority had allocated an additional resource in July 2012 to provide intervention to reduce levels of primary fixed term exclusions.*

*The Committee agreed that every effort was required to ensure interventions were working to ensure school exclusions were kept to a minimum and agreed to monitor this annually.'*

### **3. Play Opportunities Review**

The Committee welcomed Julian Davenne, Play Service Manager, Torfaen Council.

**Context:**

We were presented with the Play Opportunities Review report which provided members with further details on the proposed future delivery model for staffed play provision.

**Key Issues:**

The Children and Young People Select Committee considered the review of our current managed play provision (the summer play scheme) at its meeting on 12 November 2015 and it was agreed that the committee receive a further report setting out the proposed model (option 4 in the report by Torfaen Play Service) and specifically how safeguarding issues will be addressed.

The view is that the current provision is unsustainable on several grounds:

- The changes in the regulatory framework from Welsh Government and the Care and Social Services Inspectorate Wales (CSSIW), including more rigorous staff qualifications and training requirements and changes to the registration of childcare (especially for 8 - 12 year olds) from 1 April 2016
- The equality challenge of the differing treatment of children with disabilities in the current model
- The pressures in place as a result of reduced delivery capacity, including the financial pressures to meet income targets at leisure centres.

Delivery of the new model will depend on the result of current consultations with partners, most notably Town and Community Councils due to the reliance on their funding and the current review of Families First funding used to support the disability elements.

As a maximum, if funding is all secured, it will comprise:

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- full day inclusive sports camps run by Leisure Services at the four leisure centres for a minimum of 4 weeks of summer provision, utilising a well-established model, integrating activities for children with disabilities, where their individual assessment of need allows
- 8 inclusive play scheme sites in community venues across the County for the 4 weeks of summer provision run by Torfaen Play Service utilising the same model as current provision in Torfaen, integrating activities for children with disabilities, where their individual assessment of need allows
- For the higher tier of children with disabilities with complex and challenging needs 4 weeks of summer provision provided by Torfaen Play Service at an inclusive venue, most likely Cwmbran Stadium

If funding is not secured from individual town and community councils the level of community play provision will vary; minimum provision being the inclusive sports camps at leisure centres supported by provision for the higher tier of children with disabilities. In addition there are already other opportunities available to Monmouthshire children including some schools in the county which also offer supervised play sessions in the summer holiday period. Depending on the funding made available the opportunity to work with existing venues to deliver the inclusive play schemes will also be explored.

#### **Member Scrutiny:**

- The report identified that *'as a mechanism of good practice Torfaen Play Service do not let any children under the age of 8 leave the site unless their parents/carer comes to collect them. They adhere to the consent of parents/carers for the children over 8 years which is provided in the registration process.'* Concerns were raised by Members of the committee that 8 years was a young age for a child to leave alone and asked whether this was part of the criteria. Officers reassured the committee that parent/guardian would state who would pick up the child and whether the child was permitted to leave alone. The play provision was for children aged 5 to 12.
- A member asked, in reality, what percentage of 9 year olds would leave site alone. We were informed that approximately 60% may be allowed by parent/guardian to leave the provision without supervision.
- Members requested reassurance on what action would be taken if a child under 8 wished to leave the provision, however, parent/guardian could not be contacted. In response, the policy included age 8 as minimum to leave without a parent/guardian, however, wishes of the parent/guardian would be stipulated and a child of any age may have to be picked up. Parents/guardians would provide several contact numbers and officers would make contact until a response was received (same principle of school).
- Members challenged that engagement with the authority's Safeguarding unit had not been carried out, this was to ensure that the council's accountability for safeguarding children in the play schemes was looked at by this function.
- Clarification was requested regarding whether safeguarding training had been provided. Officers confirmed that staff had been trained at levels one and two.
- The committee were advised that details could not be provided regarding specific schemes, as the consultation process was required.
- In response to a question regarding the model of provision. We were advised that this would be determined by the sports team within Leisure Centres. However, it was intended to design similar to the current play scheme provision, the model would not be registered childcare and would be more expensive than the current play model and would fill the gap for provision.

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- In terms of advertising, statement had been issued early in 2016 to raise awareness that the provision is being considered. It was expected that full proposals would be available in approximately 6-7 weeks, following consultation with town and community councils.
- Members highlighted the importance of involvement and engagement with Town and Community Councils, it was recognised that precepts had already been set. Information was requested regarding other sources of funding that had been pursued. In response, the committee were informed that the issue of funding had been discussed with Town and Community Councils, the timeline was behind and it was anticipated that detail would be available in March 2016. The sports camp were confident that minimum model could be provided and further funding opportunities would be explored.
- Further information was requested by members regarding locations of inclusive play scheme and how they would service the whole County. Officers clarified that there would be 8 play schemes, this model had been established through budget and attendance numbers. Locations and existing venues would be discussed at the next stage.
- In response to a question regarding how disabled children and those with complex needs would be provided for. The committee were informed that a new provision would be required, currently children would attend Cwmbran as it would not be possible for needs to be accommodated within the leisure centres. Due to the nature of the complex needs involved, there was significant work required to ensure that provision was appropriate and all children were catered for.
- The committee reiterated the significant importance of safeguarding.
- In terms of next steps, parents would be consulted and engaged in terms of proposals for the model.

#### **Recommendations:**

The Committee agreed to receive and scrutinise the proposed future delivery model for staffed play provision for 16/17 prior to its consideration by cabinet.

#### **Committee's Conclusion:**

Chair's Summary:

The Committee thanked officers for information presented regarding the new play provision model.

Safeguarding was highlighted as a significant and important issue, officers were urged to maximise opportunities and dialogue with the safeguarding service to ensure that there was appropriate accountability.

Confirmation was required regarding the number and location of play schemes.

We welcomed a progress report in Autumn 2016, where summer schemes could be evaluated. Specifically relating to safeguarding and from a holistic view point.

#### **4. Proposed changes to the funding formula for schools**

#### **Context:**

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We received the proposed changes to the funding formula for schools which provided members with an update on the proposed changes to the school funding formula and provided members with details of any consultation responses received in relation to these proposals.

#### **Paper 1: Threshold funding for Teaching staff, Top up funding for Primary schools and funding for Free School Meals.**

##### **Key Issues:**

The School Budget Forum agreed to review the formula every year and to look at potential changes to ensure the formula remains up to date and to ensure that it continues to distribute funding in the fairest way.

Following the establishment of a working group, with requested representatives from all groups of schools, this consultation document sets out the areas that are to be considered for implementation for the financial year 2016-17.

The areas to be considered are:

- Threshold Funding
- Top Up Funding
- Free Primary School Meals

Threshold funding is for schools with employees on the Upper Pay Scale (UPS). It is currently a large administrative burden to determine the required funding each year as schools are required to provide details of all staff on UPS and determine if they will be eligible to increase in September. Also due to the changes in teachers' pay and conditions, if a teacher applies to increase more than one point and is successful the school currently would not have the funding for that financial year and vice versa, schools who have accelerated teachers and have been funded will reduce funding available to other schools.

Top up funding is for Primary Schools only, it is additional funding to support the funding for a teacher generated by pupil numbers. For example 91 pupils in Key Stage 2, would fund the school for four teachers. We see large differences with the level of funding year on year, for example if a school suddenly has 31 pupils, this would generate funding for 2 teachers, however it is likely that the school will arrange mixed classes and therefore an additional teacher would not be required.

Primary Schools currently receive funding for free school meals, this is an historical factor in the formula and the cost of free school meals is not passed to the school.

##### **Member Scrutiny:**

- A question was raised whether there was a possibility, with Welsh Government guidelines, to increase class size and for an additional staff member be appointed. Officers confirmed that in terms of funding, a class of 40 would have 2 teachers provided, however, one or two additional pupils may be accommodated without an extra teacher. There is a degree of reasonableness and regulations allow exceptions, the expectation is that the class size would be manageable.
- Members were reassured that the main focus is for the best education to be provided to pupils.
- The committee recognised that 9 responses were received to the questionnaire and whether this was an appropriate basis for proposals. The committee were reminded that

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elected members were included and a review was undertaken every year. Responses had been disappointing however, officers concluded that the majority were content.

- Officers assured members that funding was calculated on a small amount per pupil for all pupils and not just FSM, therefore, no schools with large numbers of FSM would be penalised or disadvantaged.
- A question was raised regarding the number of teachers on the upper pay scale and we were informed that the current formula fund teachers on upper pay scale. The majority of teachers would be on the upper pay spine, Schools provided information each October so that the number of teachers on upper pay scale could be identified and this burden would be removed.
- The committee requested reassurance that the formula would not predispose schools of having more experienced teachers and increased numbers of younger teachers on less pay. Officers confirmed that the Monmouthshire County Council personnel policies were in place and were clear that the best teacher would be recruited for the school.

#### **Paper 2: Funding for the residential element for Mounton House Special School**

##### **Key Issues:**

The School Budget Forum agreed to review the formula every year and to look at potential changes to ensure the formula remains up to date and to ensure that it continues to distribute funding in the fairest way.

Following a meeting of the School Budget Funding Forum on 16th November 2015, members agreed to consult on the funding formula for Mounton House Special School.

The current formula provides funding for the residential capacity of the school. The current placement funding is 42. Currently there are 10 residents in the school, but this number will fluctuate slightly from this during the year.

The funding formula for Mounton House was reviewed in 2010 and at this point there were more residential pupils on roll. From 2010 the number of residential pupils have reduced, however the formula has not been adjusted to reflect this decline.

##### **Member scrutiny:**

- A query was raised regarding whether the school had been significantly over funded since 2010. Officers responded that placements had reduced over time and presently at 12, the school had been over funded.
- Meetings had been held with the school and there was a need to bring into line with other schools. In the event that numbers increased, then funding would be increased proportionately. The school would be enabled to deliver provision.
- Members were alarmed by the report, specifically consequences to the school. Further detail was required as to why the school had got into deficit, when they have historically been significantly over funded. It was requested that concerns were addressed regarding pupil welfare, education and vulnerability.
- The committee highlighted the need for additional detail and significance of financial implications. Members were informed that the school had significant staffing costs, the deficit would be scrutinised through the monitoring report and a recovery plan would be put in place.
- Members were guaranteed that the governing body recognised the need to look at levels of staffing in school.

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- The select committee unanimously recognised the substantial serious issues raised through the report. A review of the school had been expected and the select committee had been advised that it was ongoing.
- The committee agreed that this aspect of the report could not be supported.
- Further information was requested regarding why maximum funding had been provided, details of the recovery plan and members questioned the validity, due to lack of consultation responses.

#### **Recommendations:**

The committee scrutinised the proposed changes.

#### **Committee's Conclusion:**

Chair's Summary:

The Committee thanked the finance officer for presenting the report.

Whilst the committee unanimously supported part one of the report, significant concerns were raised regarding Mounon House School and it was resolved that support for this aspect would not be conveyed.

Further information was required regarding the Mounon House aspect of the report and this was subject to a further review.

#### **5. Quarter 2 Performance Report 2015/16: Improvement Objectives, Outcome Agreement and Key National Indicators**

#### **Context:**

The committee were presented with the quarter 2 performance data for the Improvement Objective and Outcome Agreement themes which are under the remit of the Children and Young People Select Committee:

**Improvement Objective 1:** We will improve at all key stages of education

**Outcome Agreement Theme 1:** Improving school attainment

**Outcome Agreement Theme 3:** Poverty and material deprivation

**Outcome Agreement Theme 5:** Improving early years' experiences

The report presented the half year performance against key national performance indicators that are under the committee's remit (Appendix C).

#### **Key Issues:**

Improvement Objectives are set annually by the Council through the Improvement Plan to deliver on council wide priorities. Despite that the objectives focus on the long term, the specific activities are focused on the year ahead.

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Activities on some objectives cut across Select Committee remits and so these will be reported to all relevant committees. Therefore members are asked to target their scrutiny on the activities relevant to this committee.

Improvement Objectives are also evaluated at the end of each year based on the council's self-evaluation framework and are reported retrospectively through the Stage 2 Improvement Plan published in October each year. Performance for 2015/16 will be reported in October 2016.

#### **Member scrutiny:**

- The committee welcomed the clarity and detail within the report.
- Clarification was requested regarding when final data would be available regarding school categorisation, we were informed that new moderation would take place in January and national categorisation had been completed. Wales, region and Monmouthshire County Council data would be presented in the near future.
- Members agreed that an item should be added to the work programme, in relation to Flying Start, in order to gain an understanding of issues.
- Officers were invited to highlight any major concerns leading out of the report. The issues identified particularly were levels of concern and a need to continue the focus on issues raised within the Estyn inspection now that the authority were hopeful of being removed from Special Measures.
- The committee requested that when percentages were presented within a report, the numerical data was also provided.

#### **Recommendations:**

1. Members scrutinised the performance achieved and impact made across these reporting elements.
2. Members challenged any considered underperformance and concerns and sought assurance on future improvement from responsibility holders.

#### **Committee's Conclusion:**

Chair's Summary:

The Committee thanked officers.

It was requested that information within the report was presented in numerical form (as well as percentage).

The committee emphasised risk challenge and the importance of risks being identified. Officers would provide an analysis from the policy and performance unit.

#### **6. Children and Young People forward Work Programme January 2016**



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We received and noted the Children and Young People Select Committee work programme and Cabinet/Council forward plan.

We noted additional items:

- Play scheme provision model
- Flying start
- Mounton House school funding

Items for the next meeting (11<sup>th</sup> February) identified as:

- Estyn feedback
- KS4 outcomes and quality assurance report, objectives of EAS
- Public health wales – childhood obesity
- Mounton house financial information

We were informed that items had been deferred, ALN and Adoption, these would be included on a future agenda, along with social care and well being for children.

The committee agreed that prior to being invited to the select committee, the Chair, Vice Chair and Scrutiny Manager would meet with Mounton House school and feedback to the committee.

#### **7. To confirm the date and time of the next meeting**

We noted the next Children and Young People's Select Committee Meeting would be held on Thursday 11<sup>th</sup> February 2016 at 10.00am.

**The meeting ended at 6.00 pm**