

MONMOUTHSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

Minutes of the meeting of Children and Young People Select Committee held at County Hall, The Rhadyr, Usk, NP15 1GA on Thursday, 17th March, 2016 at 2.00 pm

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

County Councillors: L. Guppy, P. Clarke, R. Harris, S. Howarth,
D. Jones, M. Powell.

M Fowler (Parent Governor Representative) and
K Plow (Association of School Governors)

Also in attendance Councillor V. Smith

OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE:

Hazel Ilett	Scrutiny Manager
Clair Evans	Acorn Project Manager
Sarah King	Senior Democratic Services Officer
Matthew Lewis (Countryside)	Countryside Manager
Mike Moran	Community Infrastructure Coordinator
Beth Watkins	Flying Start Manager

APOLOGIES:

Councillors M. Hickman

1. Declarations of Interest

None

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 11th Feb 2016, subject to the following amendment:

Apologies from K. Plow

- ii) We confirmed and signed the minutes of the Children and Young People's Select Committee meeting held on 22nd February 2016, subject to the following amendment:

**Mr Robertshaw resigned and not noted.
D. Jones apologies**

3. Play Sufficiency report

Context:

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The committee were presented with a report which reported progress on the review of the Play Sufficiency Assessment and preparation of a new action plan for 2016/17.

The first statutory Play Sufficiency Assessment (PSA) was completed in 2013 and requires review after three years. The new PSA must be submitted to Welsh Government by 31 March 2016, having either been approved by cabinet or in a final version timetabled to be so approved. The PSA is programmed for cabinet consideration in April 2016.

Key Issues:

The matters needing to be taken into account in the PSA are set out in the guidance and are broad in their scope, impacting widely across the authority's activities:

Matter A: Population

Matter B: Providing for diverse needs

Matter C: Space Available for Children to Play

- Open Spaces; Outdoor unstaffed designated play spaces; Playing fields

Matter D: Supervised provision

- Play work provision; Structured recreational activities

Matter E: Charges for play provision

Matter F: Access to space/provision & Information; publicity; events

Matter G: Securing & Developing the Play Workforce

Matter H: Community engagement and participation

Matter I: Play within all relevant policy and implementation agendas

- Education/schools; Town & country planning; Traffic & transport; Health & wellbeing; Child poverty; Early years/childcare and family policy and initiatives; Inter-generational policy and initiatives; Community development; Community Safety; Health and safety

Member Scrutiny:

- Members recognised the difficulties which had been highlighted by officers, particularly in relation to resources. The committee appreciated the effort and good will behind the project.
- The committee stressed that increased local knowledge was required, which would require further work with town and community councils.
- Clarification was requested regarding the phrase within the reports, some adults say 'not to play' and some say 'yes play'. It was explained, that in context, some parents had expressed concerns with going out to play and other adults had told people that children could not play (e.g. around streets).
- The committee welcomed the information that had been presented. However, further statistical data was required.
- Officers confirmed that data varied, fixed play provision information was available and a refined approach was required based on the information that had been obtained.
- The concept of sufficiency was difficult to measure, officers were aware of the provision to a degree and the area most lacking was consistency around demand. Officers were committed in going forward, however, there were lack of resources.
- The committee reiterated that further assistance and feedback should be obtained from Town and Community Councils. It was confirmed that this was anticipated however, timescales were difficult due to capacity issues.
- Members requested clarity on validity of data and asked how many questionnaire responses were received. We were informed that 100 had been received completed. Concerns were expressed by members that this was not a representative sample.

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- A member echoed opening remarks, valuable work was being undertaken within constraints. Comparable information was requested regarding play provision in other areas. We were advised that Torfaen were a widespread area, Newport efforts were more concentrated on deprivation and social housing, working in collaboration with other organisations in the sector. Vale of Glamorgan had most similarities to Monmouthshire.
- Officers had sources for information, however, resources were an issue. The aim was for objectives to be considered for the forthcoming year, and for actions to be realistic and limited. Regular dialogue was held with Town and Community Councils.
- The committee concurred that permission to focus on a smaller number of achievable objectives would be a positive way forward, particularly with regard to resource issues.

Recommendations:

The Committee agreed to receive and scrutinise an update of progress on the review of the Play Sufficiency Assessment and preparation of a new action plan for 16/17 prior to its submission to Welsh Government on 31 March 2016.

Committee's Conclusion:

Chair's Summary:

Recommendations had been considered and suggestions had been put forward by the committee. The overriding suggestion, was to limit the number of objectives and actions as the way forward.

Officers were encouraged to look at the youth service and role of Town and Community Councils for contributions and ideas.

The Committee thanked officers for information presented regarding play provision model and appreciated that there was good will, however, recognised the difficulties that had been expressed.

4. Flying Start - Presentation outlining progress and performance to date

The Chair welcomed officers and highlighted that members should have been presented with a report or received a copy of the presentation in advance.

Context:

We received a presentation which highlighted progress and Performance of the Flying Start Project.

Key Issues:

The presentation highlighted the following issues:

- Targeted Services
- Original Flying Start Areas
- Flying Start Expansion Areas
- Entitlements

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- Rates of return to human capital investment
- What can go wrong
- Risk Factors
- Population Outcomes
- Performance Measures
- Schedule of Growing Skills (SogS)
- Infant and Toddler Environmental Scale
- Quality Improvement
- Childcare Attendance
- Accident Prevention
- Advice and Support

Member Scrutiny:

- The committee welcomed the information presented, it was described as enlightening and members recognised the importance of the service.
- Officers were congratulated on the inspiring presentation, however, urged officers to present a report to members.
- It was suggested that further awareness and publication should be made to people.
- A member asked how much funding had been received from Welsh Government and the effect on the service if funding was reduced. We were informed that the basis of funding was £2200 per child, which covered childcare and services were purchased from ABHB health staff. The effect on the service would be dependent on the level of any cuts, the service was dependent on quality staff, therefore, first priority would be to achieve savings from elsewhere, rather than through staff reductions. Budget had been agreed for the forthcoming year.
- 2016/17.
- Officers were commended and it was noted that the same service was not provided in England.
- A query was raised regarding the longitude angle, study of intervention and effect on children going on to further education. In response, the aim was to ensure the ability to track young children, in transitioning into further study.
- Officers were asked to explain the consequences of the service not being provided. We were informed, that there would be a significant effect on childcare provision, at the age of 3 children are entitled to 12.5 hours of funded childcare. The service enabled younger children to attend a setting and families benefited from childcare provision.
- It was suggested that information could be presented at an all members seminar, to raise the profile of the service.
- In terms of performance measures, a member pinpointed low performance in 2015/16. Officers explained that 2016/16 was the first year the service was provided in the South of the County, relationships and engagement was underway with families. Performance margins were significant, figures would change if appointments were not attended and one health visitor represented 20/25% of the workforce, which had a massive impact on performance delivery.
- The committee agreed that issues should be scrutinised by select, particularly in relation to the effect on the service if one staff member was unavailable (e.g due to sickness). The committee were reassured that there were low levels of sickness, however, cover would have to be obtained from other projects.

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Committee's Conclusion:

Chair's Summary:

Presentation to be sent to Democratic Services.

Welcomed attendance at a future meeting and encouraged officers to present a report in advance of the meeting.

Performance data to be presented within future reports annually.

Agreed way forward is to go through future programmes report so that we can carry on scrutinising area and be updated on work undertaken.

5. Monmouthshire Acorn Project - Presentation

Context:

We received a presentation regarding the Acorn Project, which had been established in Monmouthshire, alongside Flying Start.

Key Issues:

Key issues highlighted within the presentation related to:

- Local Priorities
- Families First National Outcomes
- Families First National Indicators
- Acorn Project Activities/Actions
- Evidence Based Parenting Programmes
- Informal Structured Parenting Groups/Workshops
- Bespoke Packages of Care
- Child Development Childcare
- Project staff
- Team Around the Family
- Referrals
- Evaluation
- Key Headlines

Member scrutiny:

- The Chair thanked officers for attending, however, urged that the committee required information in advance of the meeting, in order to ensure effective scrutiny.
- A question was asked regarding attendance at the project. Members were reassured that all people involved in the child's life were welcome, this included parents, grandparents, carers, friends.
- The committee welcomed the clarity and detail within the presentation.
- A member highlighted that a report was to be considered by Cabinet and requested further information regarding the report. We noted that it related to reduced staff.

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- The service would be developed and a new plan was being devised. The age would be extended to 18, the 4-18 age had increased. The risks identified were the reduced funding, the Commissioning Group and LSB would be required to identify priorities. However, evidence was in place to bid for further funding.
- The committee expressed concern regarding possible redundancies within the service.

Committee's Conclusion:

Chair's Summary:

The Chair reiterated that a report should be presented in advance of the meeting, officers were urged to present the purpose and recommendations for select.

Select welcomed annual updates and progress on funding.

The importance of the service was recognised and this should be promoted to full Council.

Information would be requested from the Cabinet Member, regarding proposals for reduced staff and the subsequent impact on the service.

6. Work Programming

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

We noted additional items:

Special Joint with Adults Select:

- Families First
- JAFF/TAFF
- Anti-poverty

Regular meeting 21st April 2016:

- Performance report Children's services

The committee agreed that meetings would not be held at 4.00pm.

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 11th February 2016 at 10.00am.

The meeting ended at 4.45 pm