

# Public Document Pack



Neuadd y Sir  
Y Rhadyr  
Brynbuga  
NP15 1GA

County Hall  
Rhadyr  
Usk  
NP15 1GA

Wednesday, 9 March 2016

## Notice of meeting / Hysbysiad o gyfarfod:

### Children and Young People Select Committee

Thursday, 17th March, 2016 at 2.00 pm,  
Council Chamber, County Hall, The Rhadyr, Usk, NP15 1GA

*Please note that a pre meeting will be held 30 minutes prior to the start of the meeting for members of the committee.*

## AGENDA

Item No	Item	Pages
1.	Apologies for Absence	
2.	Declarations of Interest	
3.	To confirm the minutes of the previous meeting	1 - 24
	i) 11 <sup>th</sup> February 2016	
	ii) 22 <sup>nd</sup> February 2016 – Special Meeting	
4.	Play Sufficiency report	25 - 32
5.	Flying Start - Presentation outlining progress and performance to date	
6.	Monmouthshire Acorn Project - Presentation	
7.	Work Programming	33 - 34
8.	To confirm the date and time of the next meeting	

**Paul Matthews**

**Chief Executive / Prif Weithredwr**

MONMOUTHSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL  
CYNGOR SIR FYNWY

THE CONSTITUTION OF THE COMMITTEE IS AS FOLLOWS:

County Councillors:

P. Jones  
P. Farley  
L. Guppy  
P. Clarke  
R. Harris  
M. Hickman  
S. Howarth  
D. Jones  
M. Powell  
M Fowler (Parent Governor Representative)  
C Robertshaw (Parent Governor Representative)  
Dr S James (Church in Wales Representative)  
K Plow (Association of School Governors)

**Added Members**

**Members voting on Education Issues Only**

**Added Members**

**Non Voting**

Vacancy (NAHT)  
Vacancy (ASCL)  
Vacancy (NUT)  
Vacancy (Free Church Federal Council)  
Vacancy (NASUWT)

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# Aims and Values of Monmouthshire County Council

## Sustainable and Resilient Communities

### Outcomes we are working towards

#### **Nobody Is Left Behind**

- Older people are able to live their good life
- People have access to appropriate and affordable housing
- People have good access and mobility

#### **People Are Confident, Capable and Involved**

- People's lives are not affected by alcohol and drug misuse
- Families are supported
- People feel safe

#### **Our County Thrives**

- Business and enterprise
- People have access to practical and flexible learning
- People protect and enhance the environment

### Our priorities

- Schools
- Protection of vulnerable people
- Supporting Business and Job Creation
- Maintaining locally accessible services

### Our Values

- **Openness:** we aspire to be open and honest to develop trusting relationships.
- **Fairness:** we aspire to provide fair choice, opportunities and experiences and become an organisation built on mutual respect.
- **Flexibility:** we aspire to be flexible in our thinking and action to become an effective and efficient organisation.
- **Teamwork:** we aspire to work together to share our successes and failures by building on our strengths and supporting one another to achieve our goals.

# Nodau a Gwerthoedd Cyngor Sir Fynwy

## Cymunedau Cynaliadwy a Chryf

### Canlyniadau y gweithiwn i'w cyflawni

#### Neb yn cael ei adael ar ôl

- Gall pobl hŷn fyw bywyd da
- Pobl â mynediad i dai addas a fforddiadwy
- Pobl â mynediad a symudedd da

#### Pobl yn hyderus, galluog ac yn cymryd rhan

- Camddefnyddio alcohol a chyffuriau ddim yn effeithio ar fywydau pobl
- Teuluoedd yn cael eu cefnogi
- Pobl yn teimlo'n ddiogel

#### Ein sir yn ffynnu

- Busnes a menter
- Pobl â mynediad i ddysgu ymarferol a hyblyg
- Pobl yn diogelu ac yn cyfoethogi'r amgylchedd

### Ein blaenoriaethau

- Ysgolion
- Diogelu pobl agored i niwed
- Cefnogi busnes a chreu swyddi
- Cynnal gwasanaethau sy'n hygyrch yn lleol

### Ein gwerthoedd

- **Bod yn agored:** anelwn fod yn agored ac onest i ddatblygu perthnasoedd ymddiriedus
- **Tegwch:** anelwn ddarparu dewis teg, cyfleoedd a phrofiadau a dod yn sefydliad a adeiladwyd ar barch un at y llall.
- **Hyblygrwydd:** anelwn fod yn hyblyg yn ein syniadau a'n gweithredoedd i ddod yn sefydliad effeithlon ac effeithiol.
- **Gwaith tîm:** anelwn gydweithio i rannu ein llwyddiannau a'n methiannau drwy adeiladu ar ein cryfderau a chefnogi ein gilydd i gyflawni ein nodau.

# Public Document Pack Agenda Item 3

## 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, 11th February, 2016 at 10.00 am

**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 and M Fowler (Parent Governor Representative)

### **OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE:**

Sarah McGuinness	Chief Officer, Children & Young People
Sharon Randall-Smith	Head of Achievement and Attainment
Hazel Ilett	Scrutiny Manager
Nicola Perry	Democratic Services Officer
Claire Marchant	Chief Officer Social Care, Health & Housing
Teresa Norris	Policy & Performance Officer
Nikki Wellington	Finance Manager

### **APOLOGIES:**

County Councillor M. Hickman and C Robertshaw (Parent Governor Representative)

### **8. Declarations of Interest**

County Councillors L. Guppy, R. Harris, S.G.M. Howarth, D. Jones and M. Powell each declared a personal, non-prejudicial interest under the Members Code of Conduct, as they are school governors.

### **9. Public Open Forum**

There were no members of the public present.

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

The Committee noted the minutes of previous meetings and made the following amendments:

#### **16<sup>th</sup> December 2015 – Joint Budget Scrutiny Meeting**

Mr M Fowler had given apologies for the meeting.

Page 3 – County Councillor P Farley wished to note an amendment to the minutes and noted that the context of the discussion may have made it appear that the Drill Hall may have been liable to be closed. It was stressed that there had not been a question of the closure of the Drill Hall, but rather that it was noted as a good thriving asset and a candidate for transfer.

#### **16<sup>th</sup> December 2015 – Joint Special Meeting – Children and Young People and Adults Select Committees**

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Mr M Fowler had given apologies for the meeting.

It was requested that the heading should state that it was a joint meeting of Adults Select and Children and Young People Select Committees.

#### **14<sup>th</sup> January 2016 – Ordinary Meeting**

Page 27 – The Chair expressed, that with regards to the funding of the residential element of Mounton House School, the Committee were in unanimous agreement that they could not agree the report deciding the funding formula for Mounton House when the future strategic direction of the school remained unclear. There were omissions from the minutes including £250,000 reduction in funding, and the deficit of £136,000.

The Committee had agreed that the Chair and Vice Chair would visit the school and meet with the Executive Head Teacher and the Chair of Governors to discuss the matter further

It was agreed that in noting these changes, the minutes would be confirmed and signed by the Chair.

#### **11. Estyn Feedback - To receive final feedback from the inspection**

We welcomed Estyn Inspectors Gerard Kerslake, Lead Safeguarding Officer and Karen Newby-Jones, Local Authority Link Inspector, who were in attendance to present the outcomes from a recent monitoring visits.

The Inspectors wished to thank the Authority for working with Estyn during the recent monitoring visits, which had helped the inspectors draw some firm conclusions.

We were informed that the visits followed the original inspection in 2012 which had achieved an overall judgement of unsatisfactory, with a consequence of the Authority being placed in special measures.

Following this visit, Estyn has judged that Monmouthshire County Council has made strong progress in addressing two of the six recommendations arising from the inspection of November 2012, and satisfactory progress in addressing the other four.

As a result, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education and Training in Wales considers that the authority is no longer in need of special measures and is removing it from further follow-up activity.

Key messages in the report were highlighted.

Recommendation 1: Ensure that safeguarding procedures are robust and underpinned by a clear policy. The authority has made strong progress in addressing this recommendation.

Recommendation 2: Improve standards of attainment for all groups of pupils, particularly in secondary schools. The authority has made satisfactory progress in addressing this recommendation.

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Recommendation 3: Strengthen the level of challenge to schools and use the full range of powers available to the authority to improve leadership and management in underperforming schools. The authority has made satisfactory progress in addressing this recommendation.

Recommendation 4: Improve corporate planning to strengthen links between the local authority's priorities and service level targets. The authority has made strong progress in addressing this recommendation.

Recommendation 5: Improve self-evaluation across all services and make better use of data to plan services strategically and target resources appropriately. The authority has made satisfactory progress in addressing this recommendation.

Recommendation 6: Ensure that performance management is effective and robust and allows elected members and senior officers to identify and address underperformance. The authority has made satisfactory progress in addressing this recommendation.

Following presentation of the item Members were invited to comment.

A Member commented that as the Authority had been in special measures for three years it was disappointing that no recommendations were in the higher categories. It was evident there was further work to be done and important to tighten scrutiny processes. It was noted that information passed to senior management and the Cabinet Member for education should also be received by the scrutiny committee, in order to address the highlighted issues and to present a timetable of actions to be taken over the coming years.

Mr Kerslake advised the Committee to take heart from the letter that good progress had been made. The Authority was commended for coming out of special measures and it was heard that there were well designed systems and practices in place. However, it was stressed that there was room for continuous improvement and the good evaluation taking place could be improved upon.

A Member referred to the 'next steps' highlighted in the report and the use of the Recovery Board and other external experts. It was requested the Committee be advised of any suggestions or pointers from experiences at other authorities. In response, Mr. Kerslake expressed that the use of external challenge could be highly productive in moving things forward, and noted that in a recent round of monitoring visits to authorities in special measures, external challenge had been productive and should be maintained. It was suggested that a conversation with an authority regarding approaches taken and the groups engaging would be beneficial.

In response to a Members question regarding the EAS, we heard that a number of authorities in the EAS went into special measures, and in terms of criticism of the EAS, it would be worthwhile to wait for the outcome of the inspection of the EAS.

We were informed that the Chair and Vice-Chair were members of the EAS Audit Committee and would be able to take forward the ideas of the Authority.

The Leader of the Council, speaking also on behalf of the Cabinet Member for Education thanked the Inspectors for the way the visits were carried out over the last few months, and noted that it was absolutely important to continue on the journey of continuous improvement. The Leader welcomed the perspective that the Authority had made good progress but there was still more to do. It was noted that Children and Young People Select was a strong scrutiny committee, and the whole organisation had strengthened due to the Estyn inspection. The Chief

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Executive and Leader had met with the Minister to provide information on how we would maintain the continuous improvement, and it was felt important to maintain external challenge. To conclude, the Council welcomed the final letter and acknowledged the key messages.

#### **Committee Conclusion:**

The Chair thanked the Estyn Inspectors and noted that as a Committee we were pleased with the progress. We acknowledged there were areas for improvement and agreed that it was important to maintain scrutiny in all areas. It was important not to become complacent, and to maintain continuous improvement. We noted the need for detailed, accurate reports which should be challenged and held to account.

The Committee were grateful for the advice received and were reassured that contact would be maintained with the Link Inspector.

It was recommended that the Cabinet Member and Chief Officer provide feedback to Committee any information received through meetings with critical friends, and other experts within this field of education, and to advise how other authorities were moving forward.

#### **12. National Categorisation Report - Scrutiny of the report categorising schools**

##### **Context:**

We received a report from the Head of Achievement and Attainment in order to provide Members of the Children and Young People Select Committee with the National Categorisation Summary Report for Monmouthshire Schools 2016.

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

In September 2014, the Welsh Government implemented a national categorisation model for all schools in Wales. The purpose of the national categorisation system is to identify schools that are most in need of support, to ensure that support and resources are directed effectively to secure the improvements necessary so that all schools have the capacity to be self-improving and sustainable.

The categorisation process involves the following three 'Steps'.

1. Performance and Standards.
2. Self-evaluation and capacity to self-improve in relation to leadership and teaching and learning.
3. Categorisation and level of support, challenge and intervention.

The Welsh Government have worked with schools, local authorities, consortia and trades unions to further strengthen the national categorisation model. As a result revisions have been made to all three Steps for 2016.

The proportion of Monmouthshire schools placed in a Green or Yellow support category has improved by 13 percentage points compared to 2015. This means that over 70% of our schools are in now Green or Yellow, closing the gap between Monmouthshire, the region and the rest of Wales.



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Primary and secondary school outcomes for Steps 1 and 2 shows an improving and upward trend.

#### **Member Scrutiny:**

Members expressed that it may be difficult for members of the public and parents to perceive the actual categories due to the high and low elements. It was agreed that there was a need for a further explanation to provide people with further understanding. It was suggested that the press should provide further information to inform that a 'Red' category could mean needing improvement in certain areas. By simply stating the school is in a Red category could give a bad reputation and be demoralising for pupils and teachers. The Head of Achievement and Attainment explained that they had approached a school in that position and were encouraged to hear that the school had taken steps to explain to parents the meaning of the category. The Officer agreed that it was not helpful when a Red school was reported as being not a good school as this was not the case. A Red school is a school that needs more support but unfortunately the press do not report it in that way.

A Member highlighted that the set targets and percentages of free school meals could significantly reduce the percentage, however there may only be one or two pupils. This could be deemed unfair and have a significant detriment on the banding. It was requested that for future reporting numbers, as well as percentages, be included to provide further light. In response officers agreed that it was important to discuss numbers in schools and report on outcomes for free school meal pupils now include numbers. Officers had attended a school to review progress against an Estyn visit and to challenge the school on outcomes for this year and the free school meals pupils were discussed at an individual level. We heard there were 21 free school meal pupils across the secondary school, which was considered a low number and a positive, and something significant could be done for these pupils. The aspirations were the same for all pupils in Monmouthshire.

A Member of the Committee was impressed with 70% of Monmouthshire schools being in the Green or Yellow category, but questioned the 30% in the amber or red category, and what was being done for these schools. The Head of Achievement and Achievement explained that any school not categorised Yellow or Green was a concern. It was noted that all schools had times of change which could cause the need for additional support. Within Monmouthshire the two Red schools were due to a change of leadership and a change of leadership and significant change to the governing body. Officers explained that both schools were receiving intensive support. Red schools received a high level of scrutiny, carried out half termly. Eight schools in the Amber category had support plans in place. Meetings were held with the schools regularly to determine where, and what levels of, progress had been made. Officers reassured Members that some schools were at the threshold of moving from Amber to Yellow.

The Chair directed a question to the Cabinet Member to determine how the data reflected on the EAS, and if Monmouthshire was receiving value for money. The Cabinet Member for Education explained that Monmouthshire did receive value for money from EAS. Cabinet Members from the region would meet and look at what the EAS were doing for the whole region. There were no specific areas of concern, and the one issue being addressed was the finances of one secondary school, but there was confidence in the action plan in place.

In terms of assessing schools, we heard that the criteria was very tight and processes were moderated regionally. Schools were able to disagree with the categorisation, and appeal. National processes were much tougher. The Chief Officer explained that a change of leadership does have an impact on categorisation and reassured Members that where there was a change of leadership, schools would receive more support.

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It was suggested that in future the report should provide historic data, to enable Members to identify changes and trends.

#### **Recommendations:**

The report recommended that Children and Young People Select Committee receive the National Categorisation Summary Report for Monmouthshire Schools 2016 and that Members consider the information contained in the report including the current position of our schools and areas for improvement.

It was also recommended that the Committee use the report to scrutinise the performance of Monmouthshire schools and impact of the Educational Achievement Service and challenge any underperformance.

#### **Committee Conclusion:**

The Chair noted that the evaluation of the progress of each school would play a key part of the scrutiny of the EAS. It was acknowledged that the categorisation was an ongoing process and this time next year, with clarity of reports, we would hope to see even more progress.

The Committee noted the good progress to date, indicating effective support and intervention overall. There were areas of concern, specifically media input.

### **13. Quality Assurance Report EAS - To scrutinise the Quality Assurance Report to ensure an effective service is delivered by the Education Achievement Service (EAS)**

#### **Context:**

We received a report from the Head of Achievement and Attainment in order to provide Members of the Children and Young People Select Committee the Annual Quality Assurance Report 2015 for the commissioned service provided by the Education Achievement Service.

#### **Key Issues:**

In September 2014, a revised process for quality assuring the work and impact of the Education Achievement Service was implemented across the region. This process followed an annual cycle and included monthly reviews and termly evaluations by the Local Authority School Improvement Lead and the Principal Challenge Adviser. At the end of the year the work and impact of the Education Achievement Service was evaluated in detail and presented to the Cabinet Member for further scrutiny and challenge.

The strengths of the service are noted and areas for further improvement identified. Outcomes from this process feeds into the directorate's self-evaluation processes. Included in the report is

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an overview of the work of the Challenge Adviser, the role of the Principal Challenge Adviser and the Quality Assurance process.

#### **Member Scrutiny:**

A Member highlighted that the reported meeting had taken place in August and questioned why it had taken so long to receive the report. It was explained that officers did not have the full raft of information at the time the report was put together because the EAS were unable to provide the reports in a consistent format. Officers had been gathering information and the Estyn inspection may have been cause for delay. EAS had taken on board the issues raised and the bundle of reports were now of a different quality. It was confirmed that next year comprehensive reports would be brought to Committee sooner.

We heard that the acronym BIS stood for Business Intelligence Service. Members reiterated the need for explanations of acronyms within the reports.

Members suggested that the report should highlight concerns from the Senior Officer and Cabinet Member, however we noted that by this time the report is actually a summary. Members were keen to scrutinise reports throughout the year in order to address any issues as they arise.

In response to a question regarding adequate engagement between schools and EAS we were informed that the level of engagement was driven by the support category. Almost all schools would accept that the balance is right.

When asked if there were areas where the EAS was currently letting us down, the Head of Achievement and Attainment explained that the BIS reports were not helpful, yet the challenge advisor reports had become increasingly better over time. The National Categorisation Reports viewed by Estyn had not been through the QA process at the time they were requested and were still at a point of discussion.

A Member questioned if there were any areas where the EAS were letting the Authority down. Officers believed that over the years the Challenge Advisor Team had changed and there was now a strong team providing consistent challenge within schools. The BIS area was developing well and there was a good programme of support.

A Member questioned the Cabinet Member if there was confidence that the reports from EAS were fit for purpose as per the Estyn letter. In response we heard that the EAS had grown into their role and report writing had been an area of development. The EAS had received an inspection and was due another in the near future, and were therefore ensuring all was in order.

A Member requested further clarification on why we believe the EAS provided value for money. The Cabinet Member explained that value for money was important in all aspects of the Council. The EAS had broken the budget down to enable Cabinet Members to see what we were receiving and to identify if schools were progressing accordingly. We were able to identify that targets were being met, and if they were not we would be asking different questions. The targets set in schools were being achieved and standards were going up faster than the all Wales. It was believed that the value for money was greater now than when it first started.

A Member questioned if the EAS were delivering effectively in Welsh education. In response we heard that there the EAS provide two areas of support being Welsh as a first language and Welsh as a second language. Although the Welsh team were one group they both work differently and different support was given. The second language support was very good and

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the schools were doing very well. Where Welsh as a second language had been identified as an area for development progress was swift with a good impact from the EAS team. There were only two schools with Welsh as a first language often with a small cohort. It was noted that many of the pupils who attended the schools were not from Welsh speaking homes and were being judged as they would be judged in all Welsh schools where a greater proportion of pupils were from a home where Welsh was spoken as a first language. With only 2 schools to compare the average would be brought down which would therefore have an impact on the overall position of the Welsh first language schools, putting up 16<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> in Wales. The support for the Welsh first language schools was provided by an experience challenge advisor, and things were developing and improving significantly.

A Member questioned if the reports had been well written would it have reflected a different position. The Head of Achievement and Attainment confirmed that certain impacts identified in schools by officers had not been reflected in the reports. Improvements could be seen that were not appearing in the reports being received. It was not thought that the reports would have changed what was being seen but rather would have confirmed and clarified what had happened.

In terms of a programme we heard that this was dependant on needs, and progress was monitored half termly. The Cabinet Member confirmed that there were plans in place for all red schools and the Head of Governors would be asked if the plan was working and to identify progress being made. Schools would be assessed to monitor the progress of the plan.

The Chair suggested it would be appropriate from a scrutiny point of view to receive reports sooner. We were advised that the regional group were looking at a mechanism to enable even greater scrutiny of Red and Amber schools. Further detail could be provided to Committee as it becomes available.

#### **Recommendations:**

The report recommended that the Children and Young People Select Committee receive the Annual Quality Assurance Report 2015 and that Members consider the current position and areas for improvement for the school improvement service provided by the Education Achievement Service.

It was also recommended that Members use this report to scrutinise the quality and impact of the Educational Achievement Service and challenge any underperformance.

#### **Committee Conclusion:**

The Chair thanked officers for the report and, along with the Cabinet Member, providing detailed answers for the Committee.

The Committee were satisfied that overall the impact of the EAS work was improving, and improving outcomes from schools had been positive. The overall balance between support and intervention was appropriate, and challenge had been welcomed by schools.

The Committee had noted shortcomings, for instance the standard of reports, which were now improving.

Progress would be considered when the next annual report is received.

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The Committee recommended that we receive 6 monthly updates on the progress being made within the Red schools.

We noted that the Chair and Vice Chair would be members of the EAS Audit Committee and would therefore be able to provide greater feedback.

#### **14. Childhood Obesity - To consult the Committee on a Childhood Obesity Strategy for Gwent - Public Health Wales**

We welcomed Dr Sarah Aitken, Consultant in Public Health Medicine from Aneurin Bevan Gwent Local Public Health Team who was in attendance to present a report on the Childhood Obesity Strategy for Gwent.

##### **Context:**

The purpose of the report was to introduce the Gwent Childhood Obesity Strategy to 2025, "Fit for Future Generations" to the Children and Young People Select Committee and to develop understanding of the significant impact of obesity and childhood obesity on people and the public service sector, the benefits of coordinated effective action and the recommended strategic approach to delivery.

The Committee were informed of the response across the Gwent / ABUHB area and heard suggestions that Members could take to support implementation of the strategy in Monmouthshire and to enable the Committee to input at the early stages of development of a Monmouthshire response.

Following a detailed presentation highlighting the key issues of the strategy Members were invited to comment.

##### **Members Scrutiny:**

A Member expressed that in order to develop a programme of obesity prevention there were many areas that would need to be addressed, such as supermarket lay outs, access of leisure centre vending machines, lack of exercise adequate facilities. Also it was thought that there was no indication of children who were obese through illness. Dr Aitken responded by noting that there were choices that families could be made in terms of supermarkets. With regards to the environment it was recognised some aspects were more difficult but there were still things that could be done, such as walking. It was important to focus on what we can do. It was recognised that there are some genetic dispositions but this was a small part of what is recognised about people being obese.

The Cabinet Member for Social Care and Health expressed that this was a fascinating subject in terms of many social issues. It was important to form understanding and to determine what could be done. Education is key, and we need to address the issue in a simple way. Every person who presents obesity issues would do so for individual reasons. In context of the Social Care and Wellbeing Act being introduced in April 2016, was as an Authority we must be more informative to the community on what is available to them and understanding how people can be helped. It was important to consider developing education from an early age to understand the tendencies people have and what can be done to abstain in order to achieve a healthier and happier life.

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A Member observed that many people think that eating healthily could be expensive and that more should be done to educate and develop cooking skills in young mothers. It was suggested that this could be developed in more areas.

Dr Aitken noted that all suggestions were valid but should be part of a joined up plan.

Members expressed that the huge choices of food, low pay and low aspirations were all part of the problem.

It was suggested that Planning and Tourism and Leisure departments should be involved to determine the action plan, in terms of the development of fast food establishments, or to develop free swim programmes. It was recommended that further discussions take place to a wider audience.

A Member suggested that a career line be developed to identify points where the organisation can intervene and make a difference. A suggested starting point would be to address the healthy schools programme.

The Chair suggested that there should be wider membership and this could be addressed at full Council, to ensure maximum involvement.

In terms of what was required of the Committee we noted that a timeline was needed and a meeting should be held as soon as possible to establish an initial action plan.

#### **Recommendations:**

The Committee were asked to provide comment on the draft strategy: "Fit for future generations – a Childhood obesity strategy for Gwent to 2025" particularly noting the public service wide benefits if we tackle childhood obesity effectively.

The Committee were asked to note that Monmouthshire Local Service Board (in future the Public Service Board) have agreed to provide overall governance and accountability for delivery on the Childhood Obesity Strategy. Structures and processes for delivery of the strategy are at the early stages of development, and any input from the Committee at this stage is welcomed.

The Committee are asked to consider the following:

- The role of Elected Members as leaders for this cross-government agenda
- The role of Elected Members in scrutinising services and policies for impact on childhood obesity
- How we can best engage with the population to change attitudes around obesity and the leadership role of Elected Members in facilitating this

#### **Committee Conclusion:**

The Chair thanked Dr Aitken for the report and reiterated that there would be benefits to bringing the report to full Council.

The Committee looked forward to implementing the Fit for Future Generations Act.

It was noted that each Local Authority would be represented on the PSB Audit Committee, where ideas could be brought forward.

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The Committee fully supported adopting the Childhood Obesity Strategy as a Wellbeing Objective.

#### 15. Revenue & Capital Monitoring 2015/16 - Month 9 Outturn Forecast Statement

The Committee agreed to defer the item to the meeting on the 22<sup>nd</sup> February 2016.

#### 16. Children and Young People Select Committee Forward Work Programme

We noted the future Work Programme for the Children and Young People Select Committee. In doing so it was confirmed that there would be a special meeting on Monday 22<sup>nd</sup> February at 10.00am, to include the following items:

- Adoption and Fostering - Scrutiny of the performance of the South East Wales Adoption Service (SEWAS) ~ Annual Report
- Implications of the Social Care and Wellbeing Act
- Flying Start performance report
- Deferred Item – Month 9 Revenue and Capital Monitoring.

It was proposed and agreed to Call In the Cabinet Decision dated 3<sup>rd</sup> February 2016 'Proposed changes to the funding formula for schools'. It was agreed to bring this to the Special Meeting on 22<sup>nd</sup> February 2016.

#### 17. To confirm the date and time of the next meeting

We noted forthcoming meeting dates as:

- 22<sup>nd</sup> February 2016 – Special Meeting
- 17<sup>th</sup> March 2016 – Ordinary Meeting

**The meeting ended at 1.30 pm**

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## MONMOUTHSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

Minutes of the meeting of Children and Young People Select Committee held at County Hall, The Rhadyr, Usk, NP15 1GA on Monday, 22nd February, 2016 at 2.00 pm

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

County Councillors: M. Hickman, S. Howarth, M. Powell, M Fowler (Parent Governor Representative), D. Dovey, V. Smith and E. Hackett Pain

### OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE:

Sarah McGuinness	Chief Officer, Children & Young People
Claire Marchant	Chief Officer Social Care, Health & Housing
Sharon Randall-Smith	Head of Achievement and Attainment
Tracey Jelfs	Head of Childrens Services
Hazel Ilett	Scrutiny Manager
Richard Williams	Democratic Services Officer
Nikki Wellington	Finance Manager
Stephanie Hawkins	Principal Officer ALN, Additional Learning Needs
Tyrone Stokes	Accountant
Andrew Evans	Senior Management Accountant

### APOLOGIES:

Councillors P. Clarke, L. Guppy, R. Harris and C Robertshaw (Parent Governor Representative)

#### 1. Declarations of Interest

County Councillor P. Jones declared a personal, non-prejudicial interest regarding the item in respect of Scrutiny of the performance of the South East Wales Adoption Service (SEWAS). She is a Local Authority Member of the Adoption Panel.

#### 2. To consider a call-in in relation to the Cabinet Decision dated 3rd February 2016 'Proposed changes to the Funding Formula for Schools'. The following papers are attached for Members' consideration:

We received a Call-In request in respect of the decision taken by Cabinet on 3<sup>rd</sup> February 2016 regarding the proposed changes to the Funding Formula for Schools.

The Scrutiny Manager explained the Call-In process to the Select Committee so that the contribution of all participants at the meeting was understood, in order to fulfil the Council's corporate objectives of openness and transparency in decision making. The Children and Young People Select Committee will consider the appropriateness of a decision that has already been taken by the Council's Executive, a decision that has already been 'called in' by Members of the Children and Young People Select Committee. This Select Committee was not able to make a decision upon the Funding

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Formula for Mounton House School, but having followed the Council's Call-In procedure, could do one of three things:

1. Accept the Cabinet's decision.
2. Refer the matter back to Cabinet for re-consideration (with reasons).
3. Refer the matter to Council for consideration (with reasons).

The Call-In process allowed for the Members who requested the decision be called-in to speak first, outlining their reasons for calling-in the decision.

Reason for the Call-In:

In the light of new information brought to the Children and Young People Select Committee on 14<sup>th</sup> January 2016, concerns were raised concerning the size and immediacy of cuts, the effect it will have on the school and the absence of a strategic plan for the school.

The following information was provided by the Members who had called in the Cabinet decision:

- Mounton House School was currently operating in a deficit budget and would be facing a further cut in its budget of £250,000.
- It was considered that the views expressed by the NAHT Trade Union had not been taken sufficiently into account.
- There had been neglect of the school's funding in previous years.
- Additional Learning Needs (ALN) Provision had not yet been completed.
- This matter had been discussed previously at Council and it was considered that the minutes of that meeting had not reflected the discussion in depth.
- Cabinet had not taken on board the concerns that had been raised.

The Cabinet Member for Education outlined the following points:

- There was no representation from the Select Committee at Cabinet in respect of this matter.
- The Schools' Funding Formula was reviewed annually which allows equity across the County.
- All schools and Trade Unions are consulted on this matter.
- The Schools' Funding Formula is then presented to the Budget Forum.
- With regard to residential funding at Mounton House, the teaching element is funded for 42 children. The residential aspect had been based on 42 children but

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there are now only 10 residential children at Mounon House. In future the residential aspect will be funded for 18 children.

- Across the County, Cabinet is looking at only funding what is being used. Therefore the proposal is to fund 18 residential places and for 42 children at Mounon House. Therefore, funding is only being cut for the residential aspect of the school.

The following information was received from Gareth Jones, Chair of the Governing Body at Mounon House and Beverly Randall, Executive Head Teacher for Mounon House School:

The funding of Residential Provision.

- Currently the school has 38 boys on roll, with 10 of those being residential pupils. 4 of the latter are from Monmouthshire. The number of residential pupils has declined drastically from 2010. Why there has been such a dramatic reduction in residential placements is an important question which has yet to be discussed or answered. Unlike mainstream schools, placements at Mounon House are determined by the Local Authority. Knowing the cause of the decline would help in determining how best to manage the future, especially in light of the review of ALN currently underway.
- As our response to the consultation on changes to the funding stated, we recognise and agree that it is appropriate to review and reduce the funding for residential provision, given the significant reduction in the number of residential pupils since 2010. Our concern is not the direction of travel but the timing.
- Currently, the school is forecast to end this financial year with a deficit of some £140,000. This is the consequence of the prompt and positive action which had to be taken by the Governing Body, with support from the Local Authority, to resolve concerns that had been raised by an Estyn Inspection and by the EAS Challenge Advisor.
- The 3 year recovery plan, which has to be agreed with the Local Authority, will involve the school having to reduce its staffing costs by some £50,000 per annum with effect from April 2016.
- For any small school and especially one focused on meeting the needs of boys who present a range of severe behavioral and learning difficulties, achieving that without an impact upon the learning experience of the pupils will be a challenge but is feasible.
- The same cannot be said if the school needed to reduce staffing costs by an additional £250k for 2016-17, which is what the cut in residential funding suggests.
- The loss of a significant number of well qualified and experienced staff in a short time scale would inevitably result in a poorer learning experience for the boys.

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- One option for the Governing Body to the cut in residential funding is to close the residential facility with effect from April 2016. As the consultation response indicated, this could result in greater costs for Monmouthshire than the saving of £250,000.
- Alternative strategies for the school and LA?
  - Phase in the reduction over a 3 year period?
    - Even if the reduction is to be phased in over 3 years, the result is that the Governing Body will have to amend its budget planning so as to reduce staffing costs by some £83,000 per annum in addition to the £50,000 referred to previously. A reduction of over £130,000 per annum, i.e 7% will not be without consequences and it is the impact upon the learning experiences of the boys which is always our main concern. That reduction will involve mapping out the staff skills and experience now and for the future. That is a difficult exercise at the best of times, even more so when we do not know if, or what the future holds for Mounton House, as a result of the review of ALN provision.
  - Phase in over 5 years?
    - If possible within the constraints of regulations regarding school funding, this would require an annual reduction in costs of some £100,000 i.e., over 5% per annum. This would still leave the Governing Body with the challenge of determining a revised staffing structure without knowing what staff expertise will be required as and when the ALN Review is completed.
  - Defer the funding formula change until April 2017?
    - This would enable the Governing Body to resolve the existing forecast budget deficit and for staffing changes resulting from the reduction in residential funding to fit any proposed role for Mounton House in the longer term.
    - It would also give time for the marketing and recruitment drive being prepared by the staff of the school to be implemented. 5 additional residential pupils from out of county would, at present rates, provide the £250,000 that the Local Authority seeks to balance its budget. This would reduce the level of cost cutting required. The positive support of the Local Authority in marketing the school would be helpful.
    - It would also give time for negotiations between the Local Authority and other Local Authority's to establish a realistic charge for a placement at Mounton House to be completed. Is Monmouthshire currently charging the market rate for the services offered by

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Mounton House? Is there a significant difference between the rate charged by Monmouthshire for boys and what it pays for the out of county placement of girls? Is there is a gap between what Monmouthshire receives from other Local Authority's and how much it delegates to the school?

- Ironically, should the ALN review require the issuing of a closure notice for the school, as a result of a proposed change in the focus and role of the school, any budget deficit at that point would become the responsibility of the Local Authority, hence, the £250,000 saving for the Local Authority may not actually be realized.
- Since January 2016, there has been scope for income generation and Mounton house School and the staff team were ready for this.

The following points were made by Officers:

- Mounton House is a school central to the Council's consideration and was pleased that the support of the Local Authority had been recognised.
- Mounton house School was able to reduce the current budget deficit.
- The Funding formula for Mounton House School is funded for staffing ratios but there was an element of protection for Mounton House.
- The Deficit recovery plan for the school was over a three year period. However, the Authority could consider extending it if required.

The Select Committee raised the following points:

- The ALN review would be completed at the end of April 2016 for consultation.
- It was considered that we as an Authority should market Mounton House School with a view to increasing the number of residential places. It was noted that the Head Teacher had been on post only six weeks but it was expected that a marketing scheme in respect of the school would be undertaken.
- In response to a Select Committee Member's question, the Cabinet Member stated that she would be willing to discuss the matter further with the Chair and Vice-Chair of the Select Committee relevant officers and the Chair of the Governing Body and the Executive Headteacher. Concern was expressed that as the ALN stage three review had not been completed, this might affect the type of staffing to be reduced.

The Chiarman advised the Select Committee that it needed to consider the way forward and to advise that they have the opportunity to choose one of the following three courses of action:

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1. Accept the Cabinet's decision; or
2. Refer the matter back to Cabinet for re-consideration (with reasons); or
3. Refer the matter to Council for consideration.

Having considered the options available, we resolved as follows:

**Decision:** To refer the matter back to the Cabinet for re-consideration given the reasons outlined in the call-in request and highlighted by the Select Committee Members at the meeting regarding the immediacy and extent of the funding reduction, whilst the strategic direction of the school remains unclear.

**Recommendation:** The Select Committee unanimously agreed that a meeting should be held to discuss the funding reduction further prior to the decision being reconsidered by the Cabinet. Members agreed that the Chair and Vice-Chair of the Select Committee would meet with the Cabinet Member, relevant Officers, the Chair of the Governing Body and the Executive Head Teacher to discuss this in order to prepare a new report on this for future Cabinet decision.

### **3. Revenue & Capital Monitoring 2015/16 Month 9 Outturn Forecast Statement**

#### Context:

- To provide Select Committee Members with information on the forecast revenue outturn position of the Authority at the end of reporting period 3 which represents month 9 financial information for the 2015/16 financial year.
- The report will also be considered by Select Committees as part of their responsibility 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.

#### Key Issues:

The Select Committee received an update on the revenue and capital monitoring 2015/16 Month 9 outturn forecast statement.

#### Member Scrutiny:

- Concern was expressed that Monmouthshire Youth Service had taken on a difficult mandate by being generator of income and providing its core business which was to provide a Youth Service. Therefore, creating pressure on the service. It was considered that the Select Committee would benefit from receiving an update on its service.

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- In response to a Select Committee Member's question it was noted that professional fees for 21<sup>st</sup> Century Schools provision was funded via capital funding.
- The Finance Manager would provide the Select Committee with a breakdown of costings in respect of professional fees.
- In response to a Select Committee Member's question, the Finance Manager stated that early interventions were put in place to prevent schools going into deficit. With regard to the schools currently in a deficit budget, it was noted that these schools were reducing their budget deficit.
- A budget had been set in the sum of £83M in respect of the new schools at Caldicot and Monmouth. However, tenders received had been in excess of this figure. In order to reduce costs, certain aspects of the tender were being reviewed.
- It was intended to reduce the number of agency staff working in Social Services with the aim of employing a permanent work force. The Social Services Directorate had been avidly recruiting for permanent social workers but had not been successful as there was not a large pool of social workers in the current market. However, the Directorate was looking to appoint newly qualified social workers which would be mentored internally.
- It was noted that demand was increasing within Children's Services.
- The Chief Officer stated that a report regarding recruitment of social workers would be presented to a future meeting of the Select Committee.

#### Recommendations:

We resolved to support the following recommendations proposed to Cabinet:

- That Members consider the position concerning the third period of revenue monitoring in 2015/16 (£162,000 overspend), and seek assurance that Chief Officers will continue to work on delivering the £1.6 million Recovery Plan reported to December 2015 Cabinet.
- That Senior officers follow the requirement of the Protection of Employment Policy which requires that all redundancy and pension costs must be reported to and agreed by Cabinet before final approval.
- Members consider the position concerning period 3 (Month 9) Capital Monitoring 2015/16 of an estimated £23.8million spend against a net budget of £23.9million, after proposed slippage of £37.7 million, notes the improvement in a need for slippage reported by managers (after excluding 21c schools), and the reservation that this necessitates managers incurring £12.5million expense during the last quarter, when collective they only spent £11.3 million in preceding periods this year.

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- Requests the addition of two wholly funded section 106 funded capital schemes to the capital programme, which managers report will be fully utilised by the end of March 2016:
  - A capital budget of £40,000 to allow for the construction of a Puffin crossing in the vicinity of the development at Saw Mill house funded from S106 contributions from the development at Saw Mill house, Little Mill.
  - A capital budget of £6,800 to continue the implementation of the Monmouth Links Connect 2 walking and cycling network funded from Section 106 contributions received from the development at the Almshouses, St James' Square Monmouth.

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

The Select Committee would receive the following update reports at a future meeting:

- Monmouthshire Youth Service.
- Recruitment of Social Workers.

#### **4. Scrutiny of the performance of the South East Wales Adoption Service (SEWAS).**

##### Context:

To scrutinise the progress that had been made by the South East Wales Adoption Service (SEWAS) since it was formed in as part of the National Adoption Service in April 2014.

##### Key Issues:

South East Wales Adoption Service (SEWAS) commenced on the 1<sup>st</sup> April 2014.

- The report from Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council provided the background and context to the service and provided the data from a national perspective. The report also advised a note of caution as the data contained in the report had been collated for the first time. A need for improved data collection had been recognised and put in place.
- The report did not provide specific data regarding Monmouthshire as the requirement from the National Adoption Service was to provide this on a national and regional basis.
- The local experience since SEWAS was formed has been very positive with an increase in focus on older and more complex children having the same opportunity for a 'forever' family.
- There had been an increase in adoptions as shown in the table below. Figures can vary for adoptions as not all children will have a plan for adoption as an outcome from the Care Proceedings in Court.

Year	Placed for adoption	Children with adoption
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		Orders
15/16 (up to Q3)	6	1
14/15	4	10
13/14	2	
12/13	1	

- The psychology support pre and post adoption had been very effective to moving children on to and settling into their adoptive placements. Work to develop this service further continues with SEWAS.

#### Member Scrutiny:

- The Committee expressed support for the report.
- It was noted that good work was being undertaken within SEWAS with regard to older children.
- In response to a Select Committee Member's question regarding governance, it was noted that there were no plans to undertake any changes with regard to adoption legalities.
- In response to a Select Committee Member's question regarding the average time from initial enquiry to approval as adopters and that South East Wales was the lowest in Wales, it was noted that various discussions had been held at regional and National level regarding the data and the differences across Wales. There was a caveat in the report regarding the data and it was noted that investigations were being undertaken as to how the data was being used going forward.

On behalf of the Select Committee the Chairman thanked the Head of Children's Services for the work that she has undertaken for the Authority and wished her the very best in for the future.

#### **Committee's Conclusion / Recommendations:**

The Chair summed up by noting the recommendations as outlined in the report and thanked Head of Children's Services for presenting the report to Select Committee.

#### **5. Progress report regarding the Social Services and Wellbeing (Wales) Act 2014.**

##### Context:

To brief the Children and Young People's Select Committee on the Social Services and Well-Being (Wales) Act 2014, which provides the legislative basis for social services in Wales from April 2016. The report also sets out the implementation actions required at a regional and local level.

##### Key Issues:

In February 2011, the former Deputy Minister for Social Services published, "Sustainable Social Services for Wales – A Framework for Action", the Welsh Government strategy to "renew social

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services and social care for the next decade". Sustainable Social Services made it clear that radical transformation was needed to address the significant challenges to traditional social services as a consequence of the changed social and financial context. Factors such as changes in family structures, demography, expectations about voice and control for service users, more fragmented communities and the impact of issues like substance misuse meant traditional solutions were not sustainable. Social services departments responded positively to this challenge, developing transformation programmes to achieve a paradigm shift in culture, practice and commissioning. These are programmes of continuous and sustained improvements, moving from deficit based, service led practice towards a person centred approach which focuses on strengths and individually agreed outcomes.

The Social Services and Well-Being (Wales) Act 2014 received Royal Assent and became law in May 2014. The Act provides the statutory framework to underpin the changes in culture and practice. It sets out duties for local authorities corporately and partners in the NHS, as well as social services departments. Authorities are required to integrate social services, to support people of all ages with a focus on well-being, prevention, early intervention, and greater voice and control for people. The Act promotes independence and prevention of the need for commissioned services. By integrating and simplifying the law, the Act seeks to deliver greater consistency, promote equality, improved quality and enhanced access arrangements across Wales.

This paper provides:

- A briefing on the 11 parts in the above Act.
- The local and regional position regarding implementation.

#### Member Scrutiny:

- The Select Committee expressed its support for the Act.
- The Select Committee was invited to an 'open afternoon' in which Members could meet with staff in order to understand the changes to the service as a result of the implementation of the Act in April 2016.
- Regular monitoring by the Select Committee would be undertaken.
- Staff were ready for the changes that will occur.

#### **Committee's Conclusion / Recommendations:**

On behalf of the Select Committee, the Chair thanked the Chief Officer for the report and noted the recommendation. A progress report would be presented to a future meeting of the Select Committee.

#### **6. To confirm the date and time of the next meeting as Thursday 17th March 2016.**

**MONMOUTHSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL**

**Minutes of the meeting of Children and Young People Select Committee held at County Hall, The Rhadyr, Usk, NP15 1GA on Monday, 22nd February, 2016 at 2.00 pm**

We resolved that the next Children and Young People Select Committee meeting would be held on Thursday 17<sup>th</sup> March 2015 at 2.00pm.

**The meeting ended at 4.35pm.**

**The meeting ended at Time Not Specified**

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<b>SUBJECT:</b>	<b>PLAY SUFFICIENCY ASSESSMENT</b>
<b>MEETING:</b>	<b>Children and Young People Select</b>
<b>DATE:</b>	<b>17 March 2016</b>
<b>DIVISION/WARDS AFFECTED:</b>	<b>ALL</b>

## 1. PURPOSE:

- 1.1 To consider progress on the review of the Play Sufficiency Assessment and preparation of a new action plan for 16/17.

## 2. RECOMMENDATIONS:

- 2.1 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.

## 3. KEY ISSUES:

### 3.1 Background

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.

### 3.2 Statutory Requirements

[“Wales: A Play Friendly Country”](#) is Statutory Guidance to Local Authorities on assessing and securing sufficient play opportunities for children in their areas. It was published by Welsh Ministers to give detail to the duty on Local Authorities under section 11, Play opportunities, Children and Families (Wales) Measure 2010. This section of the Measure fully came into effect on 1st July 2014.

In summary the statutory requirements are:

- A local authority must assess the sufficiency of play opportunities in its area
- A local authority must secure sufficient play opportunities in its area for children, so far as reasonably practicable, having regard to its assessment

### 3.3 Definition of Play

The following internationally recognised definition of play is noted in the guidance:  
*“Play encompasses children’s behaviour which is freely chosen, personally directed and intrinsically motivated. It is performed for no external goal or reward, and is a fundamental and integral part of healthy development – not only for individual children, but also for the society in which they live”.*

Play is defined for the purposes of the measure as including (but not limited to) “any recreational activity”. This recognises that children enjoy and benefit from taking part in a wide range of activities that are, in the main, organised by adults for children. These can include junior and youth clubs; leisure centre and sporting activities; cultural and arts activities; indoor play centres and events organised for children and their families. These recreational activities may offer a combination of adult led organised activities, and opportunities for freely chosen and child led play.

Welsh Government see the range of play opportunities for children that are covered under the measure as being:

- Freely chosen Play – With or without adult supervision/facilitation.
- Structured recreational activities – in the main led by adults, with predefined rules.

These opportunities can be available in a range of spaces and settings and any setting may afford both opportunities for freely chosen play and structured recreational activities.

### 3.4 Scope of the Measure

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

Criteria for each measure are identified in the [PSA Toolkit](#) developed by Play Wales.

### 3.5 Policy Context

The Monmouthshire Single Integrated Plan contains the following statement and action:

*“We also recognise the importance of play in children’s lives, for both its recreational value and for the important part that it plays in children’s physical and emotional health and well-being and in their personal development. Play provides a platform for children to learn, to have fun and to develop friendships with other children in a variety of settings from the school playground to formal open spaces and the wider physical environment. Play is a common denominator that should be capable of being enjoyed by all children irrespective of their social or cultural background or the ability of their parents to pay for the opportunity to participate.”*

*“To ensure children and young people have access to flexible and appropriate Play opportunities.”*

The 2013 -16 Outcome Agreement with Welsh Government contained reference to play: Theme 1: Improving school attainment includes “To ensure children and young people have access to flexible and appropriate play opportunities” and Theme 5: Improving early years’ experiences - including access to physical activity and play for children and young people; to complete a Monmouthshire Play sufficiency audit and address areas of improvement identified.

### 3.6 Progress

The 2013 PSA / Action Plan contained a large number (20+) actions and progress has been mixed in their delivery; in some areas e.g. improving the provision of fixed play equipment in the main towns, good progress is being made, in others much less so. This reflects both the breadth of the actions proposed and the limitations on delivery.

There is no dedicated play budget or dedicated play coordinator / staff and until 2015 there was no single identified lead officer for play (now part of Tourism Leisure and Culture’s portfolio). Play Opportunities Grant has been made available on occasions by Welsh Government but not consistently and often at the last minute (six weeks prior to year-end in 2014/15). Whilst the grant has been well used to improve play opportunities in the County the timing of the grant has tended to mean that physical provision, rather than play programmes have been supported. There has been no Play Opportunities Grant in 2015/16.

Despite these constraints there is commitment to delivering improved play opportunities and wide engagement within the Play Strategy Group. The SIP implementation group assisted the Play Strategy Group in reviewing its terms of reference and it provides the basis for co-operative work to deliver future plans.

Work on the current play sufficiency assessment is underway with colleagues across the authority and a short presentation will be provided to committee on the current state of progress.

### 3.7 Emerging themes / key actions

One of the changes made to the toolkit between 2013 and 2016 is a simplification of the approach to identifying actions – based on an assessment of the 2013 PSAs and advice shared across the Regional Play Sufficiency Assessment Network, supported by Play Wales, the view is that fewer, focussed and more integrated actions are more likely to achieve progress especially in times of limited resources.

The emerging themes / key actions for the 2016/17 action plan are as follows:

Space for play - The desirability of reviewing our overall approach to fixed play provision and the opportunities for play within open spaces; including fully assessing the condition of and demand for existing provision and identifying new opportunities; the application of play space standards / developer contributions; the potential for multi-use spaces / natural play etc. through integration of a wider “green infrastructure” approach.

Supervised provision – Working with partners to develop the community play framework for open access play provision; including assessing the impact of the changes proposed for staffed play provision in Summer 2016; seeking to develop the model and engage new partner e.g. the environmental sector and “wild play” and exploring the potential for further inclusive community based provision including at other times of the year.

Providing for diverse needs – Adopting a more integrated approach across the authority to join up provision and ensure the needs of children with disabilities and/or families with diverse needs are better supported to access play opportunities.

Policy Integration – Supporting the Play Strategy Group, which now has new terms of reference to develop into the implementation group for the play action plan, involving a wide range of internal and external partners; including identifying better links and integration with the Healthy and Active Monmouthshire programme. The SIP Performance Group will continue to oversee links and clarity around the PSA and action plan delivery.

Engagement and Information – Recognising that the existing information base is inadequate to fully understand the demand for, and sufficiency of, play opportunities and that the level of work required to remedy this is beyond the current PSA process. Tasking the Play Strategy Group to identify a practical and economic way forward to remedy this; including sharing existing data and engaging more widely especially with children and young people to achieve this. This action is central to the foregoing actions - whilst there is significant goodwill about making links to other policy areas, e.g. active travel, the lack of localised data is constraining making these real.



#### **4. REASONS:**

- 4.1 “Wales: A Play Friendly Country” is Statutory Guidance to Local Authorities on assessing for and securing, as far as is reasonably practicable, sufficient play opportunities for children in their area by addressing the defined measures set out in legislation.
- 4.2 The provision of sufficient play opportunities for children contributes to the Single Integrated Plan themes that People are Confident, Capable and Involved and Our County Thrives; supporting families to benefit from positive environments to nurture their children to grow, develop and prosper; and access to flexible and appropriate play opportunities.

#### **5. RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS:**

- 5.1 There are no direct resource implications associated with the PSA. Having an up to date PSA and Action Plan is a pre-requisite for accessing any Play Opportunities Grant, should this be rerun by Welsh Government and positions the authority and its partners to seek external funding for specific initiatives / actions in the plan.

#### **6. SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT AND EQUALITY IMPLICATIONS:**

- 6.1 The statutory matters meant that the PSA will include an assessment of the extent that play opportunities are inclusive and recognises the positive impact that securing sufficient and accessible play opportunities can have on children, families and communities.
- 6.2 The sustainable development and equality implications will be further assessed as the PSA is completed so that they can be incorporated into the final action plan, including review and monitoring.

#### **7. SAFEGUARDING AND CORPORATE PARENTING IMPLICATIONS**

- 7.1 The safeguarding responsibilities of the Authority and partners for children and young people are fully integrated into the identification of appropriate actions and reflected in the PSA and guidance.

#### **8. CONSULTEES:**

Play Strategy Group and relevant services across the authority; external consultees including children and young people (using standard Play Wales questionnaire).

#### **9. BACKGROUND PAPERS:**

Appendix 1: Interim results from questionnaire with children and young people

[Play Sufficiency Assessment Toolkit, Welsh Government and Play Wales 2016](#)

[Wales – A Play Friendly Country. Statutory Guidance Welsh Government July 2014](#)

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## Appendix 1

### “Playing and Hanging out with Friends” (using standard Play Wales questionnaire)

Interim results only (NB selected questions; small sample / analysis not complete)

In order of descending popularity:

How often do you go out to play and hang out with friends?

- Most Days
- Few Days a week
- Hardly ever
- Don't
- Every day in garden

Where is your favourite place to play or hang out when you are not in school?

- Play areas
- Garden
- Streets
- Football field
- Local grassy area
- Community / Leisure centre
- Beach, seaside, river
- Cycle or skate park
- Places with bushes, trees and flowers = Woods
- School playground = Somewhere else
- Friends bedroom

What stops you playing out?

- Raining / cold
- Too dark
- Too busy with Xbox etc
- Too busy /clubs
- Homework = Crossing Roads
- Wet / muddy
- Not allowed (various reasons)
- Bullies
- Dog mess
- Other adults
- Too many motorbikes
- Others

How can we help you come to play and hang out more often?

- Help my parents understand it's OK to play and hang out
- Safer ways to cross roads
- Ask dog owners to pick up mess
- Something else
- Talk to adults who tell us not to play
- Help deal with bullies

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## Monmouthshire's Scrutiny Forward Work Programme 2016

Children and Young People's Select Committee				
Meeting Date	Subject	Purpose of Scrutiny	Responsibility	Type of Scrutiny
17 <sup>th</sup> March 2016	<b>Draft Play Sufficiency Assessment 2016-19 and Action Plan 2016-2017</b>	To consider whether the Action Plan addresses needs accordingly prior to submission to WG on 31 <sup>st</sup> March.	Matthew Lewis	Policy Development
	<b>Flying Start</b>	Standard performance report requested.	Sharon Randall Smith	Performance Monitoring
Provisional Special Meeting  Early April 2016 with Adults Select Committee	<b><u>Partnership Scrutiny:</u></b>  <b>Anti-poverty (Single Integrated Plan Theme 3)</b>  <b>Families First Programme</b>  <b>Joint Assessment Family Framework (JAFF)</b>	Presentation of the Anti-poverty Statement of Intent  Digital Stories: What we are delivering and the impact on families Report on "Families First" (the central WG funded programme of the JAFF (which has 7 family focussed projects in total)	Nicola Bowen and...  Will Mclean (Anti-poverty Champion)  Andrew Kirby  Kirsten Major	Performance Monitoring

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### Standing /Future Items for Scrutiny:

- x **CYP Self-evaluation - continued scrutiny**
- x **Safeguarding Performance**
- x **21<sup>st</sup> Century Schools - progress report**
- x **Mounton House Review**
- x **Home to School Transport - Cross party advisory panel established, recommendations to be considered by select and their feedback incorporated into the consultation process.**

Agenda Item 7

## *Monmouthshire's Scrutiny Forward Work Programme 2016*

- × **Corporate Parenting Report** - Annual scrutiny together with discussion on the issues, actions proposed and strategies in place to manage placements and reduce MCC's dependency upon external agencies.
- × **Healthy School Meals Scheme** - Pre-decision scrutiny.
- × **Review of Collaborative Arrangements** - proposed reduction in spending on 16-17 and 17-18.
- × **ICT in Schools**
- × **Summer Play schemes**
- × **Youth Offending Service Report**