

MONMOUTHSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

Minutes of the meeting of Children and Young People Select Committee held at The Council Chamber, County Hall, The Rhadyr, Usk, NP15 1GA on Thursday, 18th October, 2018 at 10.00 am

PRESENT: County Councillor M. Groucutt (Chairman)
County Councillor L. Jones (Vice Chairman)

County Councillors: L. Brown, D. Jones, M. Lane, M. Powell, T. Thomas, J. Watkins, and S. Woodhouse

M Fowler (Parent Governor Representative)
L. Wakerley
P. Strong (NEU) NUT

County Councillors P. Jones and V. Smith attended the meeting by invitation of the Chair.

Mr. P White, Chair of Audit Committee, attended the meeting by invitation of the Chair.

OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE:

Will McLean	Chief Officer for Children and Young People
Julie Boothroyd	Chief Officer Social Care, Safeguarding and Health
Charlotte Drury	Service Manager - Well-being Family Support & Safeguarding
Diane Corrister	Safeguarding & Quality Assurance Service Manager
Richard Jones	Performance Manager
Non Jenkins	Wales Audit Office
Hazel Ilett	Scrutiny Manager
Richard Williams	Democratic Services Officer

APOLOGIES:

None.

1. Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest made by Members.

2. Public Open Forum

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

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3. Wales Audit Office Whole Authority Review of Children's Safeguarding report and the Council's Management Response

Context:

To scrutinise the Wales Audit Whole Authority Review of Children's Safeguarding report and the Council's Management response.

Key Issues:

The Wales Audit Office had concluded that the children's safeguarding policy and procedures have recently improved, but there are shortcomings in some critical areas of policy and operation.

Proposals for improvement were identified as follows:

Proposal 1

Integrate safeguarding across the Council's policy framework. In particular:

- a. Produce a 'project plan' identifying the underpinning work required and associated timescales to fully incorporate the Council's approach to integrating child and adult safeguarding.
- b. Re-frame the strategic risk register, to enable a smarter approach to measuring impact of actions taken in mitigation of identified risk.
- c. Strengthen safeguarding policy and guidance in the areas identified in the report. Including:
 - data protection arrangements and guidance linked to safeguarding.
 - embed whistleblowing policy arrangements through training and awareness raising.
 - revise taxi licensing arrangements strengthening health and safety requirements.

Proposal 2

Embed all aspects of safe recruitment, induction and training consistently. In particular:

- a. Improve training records on safeguarding to show why the person received that particular level of training, when the training was received, and when it needs to be reviewed.
- b. Ensure all people who have a specific role in safeguarding undertake appropriate training.

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- c. Clarify when enhanced DBS checks are required and ensure these are obtained in line with guidance.

Proposal 3

Ensure control arrangements are consistently applied and improve performance monitoring arrangements around safeguarding to include all areas of service operation to address all gaps in accountability. This should include issuing clear guidance to managers on information on safeguarding that should be included in reports to Members.

Proposal 4

Improve the Council's commissioning and contracting arrangements in relation to safeguarding children by finalising guidance on commissioning, contracting and volunteering from a safeguarding perspective.

The Management response to the Wales Audit Office report was outlined.

Member Scrutiny:

- There is a need for further scrutiny in respect of safeguarding / wellbeing issues of children regarding home to school transport provision with a view to identifying where responsibilities lie and that this matter be added to the Select Committee's forward work programme. Taxi services that transport children to school should also be included to address any potential safeguarding issues.
- There are two areas that could assist in addressing safeguarding issues around home to school transport provision. Firstly, when services are being procured and secondly, the Head of Public Protection can pick up this area of potential risk.
- With reference to the Service Improvement Plans (SIPs), there is going to be a much stronger emphasis in the newer iteration around the safeguarding element of service areas. To enhance this, a system called a 'safe' has been established which is an audit of each of the service areas, carried out with safeguarding in mind. As a safeguarding unit, the lead has been taken to support all directorates in managing their safes.
- As part of the Whole Authority Safeguarding route, the issues around bed and breakfast and the appropriateness of that provision for supporting families with young children and young adults is an area that has been looked at and some of the responsibility for scrutiny around this issue has been tightened.
- It is fundamentally important how the Authority arranges its home to school transport policy and ensures that the children are safely taken to school and are accompanied by appropriate people. It is acknowledged that there are significant

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challenges being faced due to the rural nature of the County. Further information on this matter could be presented to future meetings of the Select Committee via the Whole Authority Safeguarding Group. It was noted that a parent had written to the Authority stating that her 11 year old child had to take two separate bus journeys to school with a 20 minute wait between the two bus services. This matter needed to be investigated further as a part of the safeguarding issues being looked at in respect of home to school transport provision.

- The Chair of the Audit Committee considered that the Audit Committee should look at the implementation of the recommendations of the Wales Audit Officer Whole Authority Review of Children's Safeguarding report with an invitation being extended to the Chief Officer for Social Care Safeguarding and Health being invited to attend the Audit Committee when this matter is scrutinised.
- The Performance Manager stated that the report was sent to the Children and Young People Select Committee due to the report relating to the remit of the Committee to scrutinise children's safeguarding. The Audit Committee has a role in tracking implementation of proposals for improvement from the Wales Audit Office (WAO) and the implementation of the management response to the proposals will form part of the six monthly progress report on all proposals for improvement from the WAO performance audit work that is reported to Audit Committee.
- There are many arrangements for reporting Council performance to select committee scrutiny of Council performance, for example, from arrangements being established to monitor performance against the Council's Corporate Plan to the range of performance reports from services. The Audit Committee has a specific role in assurance on the effectiveness of the Council's performance management arrangements, which clearly support the Council's performance. The Authority can think about how to ensure Audit Committee feels sufficiently sighted on the Council's actual performance in addition to the Council's performance arrangements.

Committee's Conclusion:

- A report outlining a specific examination of Home to School Transport should be presented to a future meeting of the Select Committee.
- On behalf of the Chair of the Audit Committee, we ask that the Wales Audit Office Whole Authority Review of Children's Safeguarding report be referred to a future meeting of the Audit Committee for consideration.

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4. Project 5: Proposal to develop a joint multi-disciplinary intensive therapeutic fostering service for Looked After Children and young people

Context:

To scrutinise the proposal to develop PROJECT 5: A Multi-disciplinary Intensive Therapeutic Fostering Service for Looked After Children and Young People. The project is proposed as a partnership with Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council, under the governance of the Regional Children and Families Partnership Board and initially funded by the Integrated Care Fund (ICF).

Key Issues:

In April 2016, Children's Services established Delivering Excellence a three year improvement plan. Workstream 3 of this programme concerned the development of services to ensure the right service offer is in place for all children and families needing support. A key element of workstream 3 is to increase the number of Monmouthshire foster carers available to provide high quality foster placements for Monmouthshire children. Project 5 supports the delivery of Workstream 3 to support in-house carers to meet the needs of the most complex and troubled children.

Now in year 3 of the overall improvement programme, Children's Services has achieved a stronger position regarding attracting in-house carers and retaining a stable, permanent workforce within children's services. This means that there is a firmer foundation on which to build further, more specialised services including an intensive therapeutic fostering service through Project 5.

Member Scrutiny:

- In response to a Select Committee Member's question, it was noted that this proposal was not a cost cutting exercise. The proposal is about quality outcomes for Monmouthshire's Looked After Children. Evidence suggests that the outcomes that are being achieved for people in high cost situations, often located outside of Monmouthshire, are not good, is not value for money and are not good outcomes for individuals. The proposal is a method of reducing the pressures that exist but also adding significant value and ensuring that there are better outcomes for our Looked After Children.
- The Looked After Children with very specific needs are few in number. However, the Authority will work with schools and other partners to identify how these children are going to be integrated into an appropriate educational setting.
- The type of therapies that Project 5 (MyST: My Support Team) uses are creative and play therapies which is a psychologically informed service. It is about upskilling and supporting therapeutic foster placement. Foster carers are provided with additional training and support so that they understand the impact of trauma and how to provide appropriate support. A key area is the provision of wrap around care to ensure that foster carers never feel that they are

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unsupported and are also able to access appropriate support at any time of the day.

- There is a psychologist and therapists that are a part of this model as well social workers and family support workers.
- The Select Committee agreed to receive a report regarding Team around the family at a future meeting.
- Wrap around care is important as it can help to reduce the number of Looked After Children placements.
- Monmouthshire's special school for children with social and emotional behaviour difficulties is only for boys of secondary school age. This was a part of the Additional Learning Needs (ALN) review. Currently, most girls who present with those needs become located within the independent setting, often located within County. It is necessary to work more closely with schools to ensure that the appropriate provision is identified for these children.
- Torfaen and Caerphilly County Borough Councils have had this service in their care model of delivery for some time. Monmouthshire County Council is in a position where it can learn from these authorities. Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council, like Monmouthshire County Council, did not have this model and are therefore partnering up to deliver such a model. Monmouthshire County Council has a good relationship with other authorities in the Greater Gwent area and regional working is very strong.
- With regard to support to foster carers, sufficient support and respite is essential in order to ensure that this model will work. The model includes built in respite care provision.
- The strategic 'fit' is identified at the regional level whereby, the Authority works in partnership with each of those local authorities. The Authority partners with other local authorities regularly. The evidence for undertaking partnering with regard to this model is sound and an opportunity to tap into the integrated care fund to help take the proposal forward was available. The model is being undertaken via a regional approach but being locally delivered. There is a need for the Authority to bring forward its own foster carers that have the capacity and skill set to support children within the County.

Committee's Conclusion:

- A further report regarding the current work of the Team around the Family be scrutinised by the Select Committee at a future meeting.

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- Going forward, a further report regarding progress in respect of the proposal to develop a joint multi-disciplinary intensive therapeutic fostering service for Looked After Children and young people be presented to a future meeting of the Select Committee which will include details of the support being provided for foster carers.
- The Scrutiny Manager to ensure that officers preparing future Select Committee reports should refrain from putting forward recommendations within the reports. This should fall within the remit of Select Committees to identify appropriate recommendations following sound scrutiny process.

The Select Committee outlined its support for the proposal of developing a multi-disciplinary intensive therapeutic fostering service for Looked After children and young people between Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council and Monmouthshire County Council, including establishing the posts required for the operational delivery of the project.

5. 2018 End of Key Stage Teacher Assessment Outcomes and National Test results - Monmouthshire

Context:

To scrutinise the 2018 end of Key Stage Teacher Assessment Outcomes and National Test results for Monmouthshire.

Key Issues:

All schools are subject to rigorous reporting and monitoring of standards each year, with the principal focus in Key Stages 2 and 3 being on English / Welsh first language, mathematics and science, and the percentage of pupils achieving the expected level in all three core subjects – the core subject indicator (CSI).

In the Foundation Phase schools report on the performance of 7 year olds in language, literacy and communication (English or Welsh language) (LLC), mathematical development (MD), and personal and social development, wellbeing and cultural development (PSDWCD). The foundation phase indicator (FPI) measures the percentage achieving the expected outcome in all three areas of learning.

Member Scrutiny:

- The Foundation Phase, Key Stages 2 and 3 are teacher assessed. Key Stages 4 and 5 are assessed via external examinations.

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- With regard to the Donaldson report and reference to curriculum changes, this is still a work in progress. The Education Achievement Services (EAS) is working on its six areas of learning and experience. Within those six areas there are a number of what matters statements and in these statements there are a number of progress steps. It is not yet known how the Authority will be reported on in respect of these areas. However, for the next two years, we will continue to receive updates in the current format.
- The report indicates that one in two children are more able. The key issues are that if we are placing reliance on teachers' assessments there is a need to ensure that these figures at the end of Key Stage 2 translate much better to the end of Key Stage 4.
- Analysis of the Fischer Family Trust data, which maps children's progress from the end of Key Stage 2 to the end of Key Stage 4, will be presented to a future meeting of the Select Committee.
- Primary school children also sit nationally marked reading, numeracy and procedural tests. These are scored on a standardised basis and the Authority has this data for all of its schools. Historically, the Authority would be able to use this as a guide to correlate schools' performance in national tests. However, from this year onwards, the national reading and writing tests are now adaptive, whereby, children undertake these tests on a computer and the test changes for that individual child as the child answers the questions. Therefore, there is no longer a standardised score that the Authority can work from.
- Welsh Government considers that an upward trend in our PISA outcomes would be highly valued.
- In October 2014 the Foundation Phase Areas of Learning were revised to align them with the National Literacy and Numeracy Framework, as well as making them more demanding. They were introduced on a statutory basis from September 2015. This means that the cohort of children that started Reception in September 2015 were the first children to be formally assessed against the revised outcomes at the end of the Foundation Phase in the summer of 2018.
- In response to a question raised regarding support for children at the Foundation Phase who had not achieved the expected level, it was noted that all of Monmouthshire's schools work across the whole class and support mechanisms are put in place to provide the required support.
- A report outlining vulnerable groups' data will be presented to the Select Committee in the New Year.
- Categorisation has changed. The removal of the data driven element means that the Authority is more focussed around standards of teaching and learning, leadership and schools' capacity to improve. It is hoped that following significant

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intervention in a school, that there is progress being made and therefore change its categorisation colour in a positive way.

Committee's Conclusion:

- The Select Committee to receive a further report at a future meeting.
- Select Committee Members to note the Seminar in respect of outcomes at Key Stages 4 and 5 being held on 23rd October 2018.
- The Select Committee to receive a report at a future meeting regarding Fischer Family Trust data which maps children's progress from the end of Key Stage 2 to the end of Key Stage 4.

6. Confirmation of Minutes

The minutes of the Children and Young People Select Committee meeting dated 6th September 2018 were confirmed and signed by the Chair.

7. Children and Young People Select Committee Forward Work Programme

The Children and Young People Select Committee Work Programme was noted.

In doing so, the following items would be added to the Work Programme:

- Key Stage 4 update.report (29th November 2018 meeting).

Special Meeting in January 2019 to scrutinise:

- Safeguarding arrangements in terms of Home to School Transport.
- Family Support Services.
- Future options for Mounton House.
- In response to a Select Committee Member's question regarding Pioneer schools, it was noted that this matter was in the Work Programme and would be reported to the Select Committee in due course.
- In response to a Select Committee Member's question regarding the draft new curriculum, it was noted that a draft is anticipated to be available in the spring 2019 school term. The whole process has been led through schools with expertise from universities being drawn upon. It is unsure whether there will be a full public consultation on this matter.

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8. Council and Cabinet Business Forward Work Programme

The Cabinet and Council Forward Planner was noted.

9. Next Meeting

The next meeting will be held on Thursday 29th November 2018 at 10.00am.

The meeting ended at 12.13 pm.