

MONMOUTHSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

Minutes of the meeting of Children and Young People Select Committee held in the Council Chamber, County Hall, The Rhadyr, Usk, NP15 1GA on Thursday, 19th May, 2016 at 10.00 am

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

County Councillors: L. Guppy, R. Harris, D. Jones, V. Smith and M Fowler (Parent Governor Representative)

County Councillor V.E. Smith attended the meeting by invitation of the Chairman.

OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE:

Will McLean	Head of Policy & Engagement
Sharran Lloyd	LSB Development Manager
Andrew Kirby	
Kirsten Major	Partnership & Engagement J.A.F.F Co-ordinator, Policy & Partnerships

APOLOGIES:

County Councillors P. Clarke, M. Hickman, S. Howarth, M. Powell and K Plow (Association of School Governors).

1. Appointment of the Chairman

We noted the appointment of County Councillor P. Jones as Chairman of the Children and Young People Select Committee.

2. Appointment of the Vice Chairman

We appointed County Councillor P. Farley as Vice-Chairman of the Children and Young People Select Committee.

3. Declarations of Interest

County Councillor L. Guppy declared a personal, non-prejudicial interest pursuant to the Members' Code of Conduct in respect of minute 5 – Tackling Poverty in Monmouthshire and minute 6 – Scrutiny of Family Support Programmes.

4. Confirmation of minutes

The minutes of the Children and Young People Select Committee dated 17th March 2016 were confirmed and signed by the Chairman.

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5. Tackling Poverty in Monmouthshire

Context:

- To provide an overview of Monmouthshire's Tackling Poverty Programme of Intent.
- To highlight the current activity taking place across Monmouthshire, which contributes towards tackling poverty.
- To provide an overview of the current approach to tackling poverty, which is aligned to the Monmouthshire Single Integrated Plan.

Key Issues:

Overview of Monmouthshire County Council's Tackling Poverty Programme of Intent

Poverty results in poorer educational and health outcomes for individuals, reduces life-chances and prevents people from fulfilling their potential. Poverty also imposes enormous costs on society and increased demands on public services. In Monmouthshire poverty is often hidden or in small pockets. The focus is to identify those who are affected by poverty and provide a coherent range of services which support people to overcome barriers, allowing them to fully participate in society and engage in education, training and employment.

It is intended for this to be done by focusing on the following:

- Preventing Poverty by giving people the best start in life. Breaking the link between socio-economic disadvantage, educational under-achievement and impaired life chances.
- Helping people to improve their skills, enhance the relevance of their qualifications and remove barriers to employment.
- Mitigating the impact of poverty through the provision of a coherent programme of support targeted towards those who are disadvantaged by poverty

Monmouthshire's Single Integrated Plan 2013-17 is viewed as the main vehicle for addressing inequality and tackling poverty. Working in partnership with the community, service providers and employers it is recognised that tackling poverty is a cross-cutting theme where cooperation is critical in the delivery of the Plan to ensure that: **Nobody is left behind, People are Confident, Capable and Involved and Our County Thrives.**

The Strategic Needs Assessment undertaken to inform the production of the Single Integrated Plan recognised the disparity in wealth across the county and in key factors

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such as life expectancy. There are clearly identifiable areas in our towns where people are disadvantaged and this creates a sense of 'pockets of deprivation'.

The nature of poverty in Monmouthshire is also characterised by the rural make-up of the county. The Joseph Rowntree Foundation estimates it costs 10-20% more to achieve a basic adequate standard of living in rural than urban areas mostly due to increased transport and heating costs.

To address poverty we are driven by an ambition to align national and local initiatives to deliver a coherent range of services which are well publicised and accessible.

A number of PSB Partnerships have been identified delivering in the three key areas:

- **Preventing Poverty:** Supported by Flying Start, Families First Programmes, TAF, Early Years Development and Childcare Partnership and Integrated Youth Offer.
- **Helping people into work:** Supported 16+ Employability Group, Integrated Youth Offer, and Families First Programme.
- **Mitigating the Impact of Poverty:** Supported by the Financial, Economic and Digital Inclusion Partnership, Flying Start, Families' First Programme and Integrated Youth Offer.

Partnership Groups, Governance and Accountability

- The Corporate Anti-Poverty Champion and the Elected Member Anti-Poverty Champion are the strategic leads for anti-poverty in Monmouthshire.
- The Corporate Anti-Poverty Champion has oversight of the poverty-related actions and targets for each of the partnership groups, which are tasked with delivering towards the Single Integrated Plan's nine key outcomes.
- Regular updates and reports on progress will be provided to the PSB Programme Board and Public Service Board.

The partnerships under the Monmouthshire Public Service Board (PSB) are instrumental in ensuring that the Authority continues to focus its efforts and resources towards preventing poverty and mitigating the effects of poverty. Our focus moving forward will be to regularly review performance indicators with each partnership to ensure that they are aligned to national initiatives and local needs, whilst ensuring an intelligence-led approach to targeting those in need. Consequently, the performance indicators may be subject to change as we refine our approach.

Moving Forward

The Authority is committed to the following:

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- Establishing an Anti-Poverty Working Group that will oversee the development, integration, alignment and reporting of national and local anti-poverty programmes.
- Developing an Anti-Poverty Action Plan that will bring together the performance indicators of Public Service Board Partnerships; which relate to tackling poverty.
- Undertaking a mapping exercise of provisions which aim to prevent and mitigate the impact of poverty, highlighting gaps in provision to shape future commissioning.
- Raising awareness of services that can help to alleviate poverty by updating and promoting Monmouthshire's Family Information Service (MONFIS).

Member scrutiny:

- We received a presentation and short film which identified ways in which officers are tackling poverty in Monmouthshire.
- On 1st June 2016 workshops were being held regarding tackling poverty.
- Discussions have been held with Monmouthshire Housing Association and Big Lottery in which ideas have been emerging to provide care and to help people get back into work.
- County Councillor P. Hobson is the County Council's Anti-Poverty Champion.
- Monmouthshire's Tackling Poverty Programme has an extensive range of partnerships bringing key parties together.
- Groups are currently focussed on key actions and are currently delivering a good service. However, with the introduction of the Public Service Board, there might be a reduction in the number of partnerships required.
- This summer, a whole Member Seminar will be held in respect of this matter. During the summer / autumn of 2016 officers will spend time visiting schools and village halls. Following this, a public session will be held to establish what it is like to live in Monmouthshire which will involve Elected Members and members of the community.
- It was noted that there was a need to engage with people who were living just above the poverty line. Information would be obtained from the school community, as well as obtaining children's views.
- In response to a Select Committee's question regarding homelessness and large families living in crowded conditions, it was noted that this was a challenge.

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Also, the current cost of housing in Monmouthshire meant that it was difficult for young people to live in Monmouthshire and were forced to live outside of the County and were not living locally to provide care for family members.

- There was a need for more social housing in Monmouthshire and this matter may need to be addressed.
- The Team of officers is committed tackling the issues of poverty in the County. However, addressing the statutory requirements in future might require a review of resources. However, currently, the Authority has a strong link with partnership working.

The Chair concluded that:

- A Member Seminar should be held during the summer / autumn of 2016 to highlight the role of the Council and partners in tackling poverty.
- The Committee should be invited to assist in facilitating the public session on what it is like to live in Monmouthshire, which will be held in the autumn.
- The Monmouthshire Public Service Board (PSB) will need to focus its collective effort and resource in preventing poverty and mitigating the effects of poverty and the new Public Service Board Select Committee will have responsible for holding the PSB to account on this. The PSB Select Committee will refer relevant areas for more detailed scrutiny to the Children and Young People's Select Committee, such as scrutiny of the developing Anti-Poverty Action Plan.

The Committee agreed to review this topic in 9 months' time, by which time the work will have progressed and the working arrangements of the PSB and the PSB Select Committee will have embedded.

We resolved to receive the report and noted its content.

6. Scrutiny of Family Support Programmes

Context:

- To provide an overview of Families First provision in Monmouthshire and relevant performance outcomes.

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- To focus on partnership working to support families in poverty to address their needs.
- Families First is one of the key Welsh Government anti-poverty programmes, linked closely to the Flying Start and Supporting People programmes. Its focus is on early intervention and relies on effective partnership working to engage with families to prevent escalation into crisis or need for social services intervention. In Monmouthshire, we have Team around the Family (TAF) and a range of commissioned projects which work together to provide an appropriate mix of provision to support families to address their needs.
- Team around the Family (TAF) is a Wales wide approach delivered through Welsh Government's Families First programme. TAF aims to support families early to identify needs and provide support to prevent escalation into crisis. TAF aims to support families in Monmouthshire to reduce the level of need they may be experiencing; this is done by tailoring support with a team of professionals who can provide services to support a family. The TAF process enables families and professionals to work together to deliver services built around the needs of a family, and TAF aims to work with families to identify the right support from the right people at the right time.

Families First Outcomes as set by WG for 2015/16:

- People in low income families gain, and progress within employment.
- Children, young people and families achieve their potential.
- Children, young people and families are healthy and enjoy wellbeing.
- Families are confident, nurturing, resilient and safe.

Families First projects contribute to Monmouthshire Single integrated Plan:

- Theme 2: People are Confident, Capable and Involved.
- Outcome 5: Families are Supported.
- Families First also contributes significantly to tackling poverty in Monmouthshire.

Key Issues:

Overview of Families First Programmes

In December 2015 Welsh Government provided notification that the indicative budget for Families First funding in 2016-17 is £651,179, which is a £86,081 reduction from 2015-16. This includes a ring-fenced sum of £50,937 for disability support.

In order to manage the reduction in budget a review of the Families First Programmes and the TAF model was undertaken in January 2016. As a result of the review it was identified that there was a need to increase the number of TAF cases in Monmouthshire. The new Social Services and Wellbeing Act could potentially increase

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in the number of '*Children in Need*' which could be referred to Families First and TAF. In this context, there was the challenge of managing the £86,081 reduction in Families First budget whilst finding additional savings to fund additional TAF worker resource.

Families First Projects and funding allocation are as follows:

Team Around The Family (TAF) 2016-17 Funding: £138,390

With an increased TAF budget for 2016-17, there will be increased capacity within the current TAF team consisting of a TAF Co-ordinator and 3 x TAF Project Officers. To date TAF has relied on a 'volunteer' lead worker model to co-ordinate TAF support for families in Monmouthshire. However, busy professionals, whilst being committed to the multi-agency approach, don't always have the time to pick up lead worker caseloads to the extent which is required. Consequently, the number of families supported by TAF have been relatively low and additional TAF Project Officers will address this issue. The additional TAF Project Officers will also enable the Authority to provide enhanced support to volunteer lead workers whilst increasing capacity to take on more TAF cases. It will also allow the TAF Co-ordinator to focus on the TAF priorities 2016-17, and increase the number of families supported under the TAF model.

Acorn 2016-17 Funding: £239,786

The Acorns projects consists of multi-agency teams delivering parenting support, adult learning and advice, early years support (language and play and speech therapy), health and well-being services. It is co-ordinated from Acorn Centre (Integrated Children's Centre) in Abergavenny, and also delivered in other cluster locations across Monmouthshire.

Inclusive Acorn 2016-17 Funding: £30,900

Inclusive Acorn supports children with disabilities to access the Acorn Project including working with portage workers, paediatricians, parenting programmes and visiting parents at home to assess children, they also provide childcare to enable parents of children with disabilities to access programmes.

Face 2 Face Counselling 2016-17 Funding: £76,560

Provides community based counselling for young people, therapeutic play for children and family system therapy for whole family groups.

Inclusive Play and Leisure 2016-17 Funding: £20,037

Access to local authority summer play provision for children with support needs.

Watch, Wait and Wonder 2016-17 Funding: £17,000

Is an infant Mental Health project focussing on the quality of the relationship between parents and babies. Clinics are held in the north and south of the county and on-going training in infant observation for 0-3yr olds and their parents.

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Young Carers Project

2016-17 Funding: £50,486

Young Carers are supported through targeted intervention (advocacy and support) to reduce gaps between themselves and universal cohorts of young people / and are supported to engage in education, employment or training.

Home Start

2016-17 Funding: £31,000

Works to alleviate the pressures faced by families with low incomes and children under five by placing volunteers who are usually parents themselves to support them.

Families First embraces multi-agency working; it works collaboratively with Social Services, Education, the Youth Service as well as health, housing, the police and a range of third sector partners. The Families First Manager and TAF Co-ordinator link with a wide range of PSB partnership groups to ensure a joined-up approach, whilst the Families First / TAF Management Group has representation from a wide range of partner organisations. Partnership working forms a key part of tackling poverty and supporting families across the county, and it is important that Select Committees have a strong oversight of this work and the actions that are being taken.

Member scrutiny:

- A presentation and DVD was shown to the Select Committee regarding the Families First Programme.
- Funding for the families First Programme will end on 31st March 2017. The team is waiting for the Welsh Government to confirm whether or not this funding will be provided after March 2017.
- The Select Committee stated that they could help support this programme at ward level. The Scrutiny Manager would provide the Partnership and Engagement JAFF Coordinator with the email addresses of the Select Committee.
- In response to a Select Committee Member's question, it was noted that a family questionnaire is provided at the beginning of the programme and then again when a family finishes the programme. This allows officers to measure the family's progress.
- The Families First Programme was highly valued.
- The Programme was about addressing the needs of the families with a view to increasing the employability / skills of individuals so that they might be better placed to join the labour market.
- Percentage figure could be provided alongside numerical figures.

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- The projects are well connected to each other, as well as being connected to Health Boards, the Police, schools and Social Services.

The Chair concluded that:

- The Select Committee should be informed of future funding available for the Families First Programme.
- Elected Members can play a useful role in assisting officers to raise awareness of the Families First Programme, through distributing leaflets in their communities and advising people in their communities of the existence of the programme and explaining how the programme can assist them. The Scrutiny Manager will email the Policies and Partnership contact details for Committee Members so that elected Members can assist in maximising the awareness of the programme.
- Some of the issues that have been discussed today will be discussed at a strategic level at the Public Service Board Select Committee, which will oversee the work of the Public Service Board. The responsibility for more detailed scrutiny of the performance of family support programmes will however remain with the Children and Young People's Select Committee which will review the progress in nine months' time.

We resolved to receive the report and were mindful of the issues identified.

7. Children and Young People Select Committee Work Programme

We received the Children and Young People Select Committee work programme. In doing so, the following points were noted:

- The Business Plan for the Education Achievement Service (EAS) does not require scrutiny but the annex should come before the Select Committee for scrutiny.
- The Work Programme to be updated to meet with the Head Teachers of Monmouthshire's four comprehensive schools.
- The Select Committee should scrutinise schools' policies as and when necessary.
- To receive an update on JEG by the Cabinet Member every two months.

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- A special meeting of the Children and Young People Select Committee will be held on 15th June 2016 at 2.00pm regarding Children's Services Improvement Journey.
- A joint meeting between the Children and Young People Select Committee and the Adults Select Committee will be arranged to scrutinise the Social Services Annual Report and the Safeguarding Report. A provisional date for this meeting was agreed to be held on 20th June 2016 at 2.00pm.
- A joint meeting between the Children and Young People Select Committee and the Economy and Development Select Committee will be held in July 2016.

The Chair thanked the Vice-Chair, the Select Committee and officers for their support in achieving the work that has been undertaken by the Select Committee in 2015/16.

We resolved to receive the Select Committee Work Programme and noted the additional information provided by the Scrutiny Manager.

8. Council and Cabinet Business Forward Plan

We resolved to receive and note the Council and Cabinet Business Forward Plan.