

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, 26th
October, 2017 at 10.00 am

PRESENT: County Councillor M. Groucutt (Chairman)

County Councillors: M. Lane, M. Powell, J. Watkins and
S. Woodhouse.

Also in attendance:

County Councillor R. John (Cabinet Member)
County Councillor J. Higginson - observing
County Councillor R. Harris - observing
County Councillor V. Smith - observing

Added Members:

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

OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE:

Will McLean	Chief Officer for Children and Young People
Sharon Randall-Smith	Head of Achievement and Attainment
Allison Waters	Head Teacher Durand Primary School and Inclusion Implementation Officer
Helen Power	Principal Challenge Adviser for Monmouthshire (EAS)
Nikki Wellington	Finance Manager
David Barnes	Data and Information Systems Officer
Hazel Ilett	Scrutiny Manager
Richard Williams	Democratic Services Officer

APOLOGIES:

County Councillors L. Brown, D. Jones, T. Thomas and Dr. A. Daly

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.

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3. Confirmation of Minutes

The minutes of the Children and Young People Select Committee meeting held on 14th September 2017 were confirmed and signed by the Chair subject to the following amendments:

Minute 6 - Council and Cabinet Business - Forward Plan – second bullet point to be amended as follows:

Review of 21st Century Schools - this matter will be brought to the Children and Young People Select Committee for scrutiny when the pertinent information is available.

Minute 12 - Presentation regarding Key Stages 4 and 5 Outcomes – Page 12 - Bullet point 4 – second sentence to be amended as follows:

Chepstow Comprehensive School had advanced to 68%. King Henry VIII and Caldicot Comprehensive Schools had dropped back slightly.

Minute 13 - 21st Century Schools Programme - Strategic Outline Programme (SOP) Band B Update – Page 14 – Member Scrutiny – first bullet point be amended by deleting the first sentence as follows:

Welsh Stream in King Henry VIII Comprehensive School has been tried in the past but has not been particularly successful.

In doing so, the following point was noted:

- With regard to the White Paper: Services fit for the future – Quality and Governance in health and care in Wales, the Scrutiny Manager would liaise with the Cabinet Member to ascertain whether a response had been made to Welsh Government on behalf of the County, in respect of this matter.

4. School Performance Reporting (Education Achievement Service Overview Report together with Monmouthshire County Council analysis)

Context:

To scrutinise the summary of the performance of pupils at the end of Foundation Phase and Key Stages 2 and 3 for the academic year 2016/17.

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Key Issues:

Foundation Phase

- Performance in the Foundation Phase in 2016/17 improved across all outcome 5+ indicators compared to the previous year and as a result, Monmouthshire is ranked first in Wales for all indicators when compared to other authorities matching the Local Authority's Free School Meals (FSM) ranking of first in Wales based on January 2017 Pupil Level Annual School Census (PLASC) data.
- Monmouthshire's performance at the higher level compares well with other similar authorities and is ranked first in Wales across all indicators in 2016/17.
- The differential in performance between boys and girls has decreased for all indicators in the Foundation Phase at both outcome 5+ and Outcome 6+.

Key Stage 2

- Performance at the end of Key Stage 2 declined across all level 4+ indicators compared to the previous year. However, performance remained above 93% for all indicators apart from Welsh. As a result, Monmouthshire remained first in Wales for English and science with the Key Stage 2 Core Subject Indicator (CSI) and mathematics in second place in 2016/17.
- Performance in Welsh language declined by 8.3 percentage points in 2016/17 and as result, Monmouthshire is ranked twenty-first in Wales for this indicator.
- Performance at level 5+ at the end of Key Stage 2 improved across all key indicators continuing the upward trend of the last four years.
- At the end of Key Stage 2, the differential in performance between boys and girls has decreased for English and science at level 4+ and in mathematics at level 5+. However, there has been an increase in the gap for English at level 5+.

Key Stage 3

- Performance at the end of Key Stage 3 across all Level 5+ indicators continues the improving trend of the last three years with 92.7% of pupils achieving the Key Stage 3 CSI, an improvement of 0.8 percentage points compared to 2015/16.
- Performance at level 6+ at the end of Key Stage 3 has improved in mathematics and science but declined in English compared to the previous year.
- The gender gap at the end of Key Stage 3 has decreased for all indicators at level 5+. However, the gap at level 6+ in mathematics and science has increased compared to 2015/16.

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Member Scrutiny:

- In response to a question raised regarding the decline at the expected level at Key Stage 2, it was noted that at Key Stage 2 this year there were a number of pupils that had been identified within schools on the code of practice and therefore, whilst those pupils did achieve their potential and in some cases exceeded their targets, that reflected in overall results for some of Monmouthshire's schools. Therefore, Monmouthshire's ranking had dropped by 0.4% to the Authority above Monmouthshire. Challenge Advisors going into these schools would be discussing these matters with the head teachers with a view to identifying the support that is being put in place for these pupils with additional learning needs (ALN).
- Pupil targets set by the schools are looked at during this time of the year. Schools are being asked to provide a full account of what the targets are with a view to ensuring that each pupil has the means to achieve his / her very best.
- It was noted that one or two children in a class with ALN can have a real impact with regard to the outcomes of that cohort.
- Key Stage 3 outcomes in English are not at the same level as maths and science. Challenge Advisers are going into the schools providing literacy support with a view to improving levels of teaching to raise standards.

Committee's Conclusion:

On behalf of the Select Committee, the Chair thanked the Chief Officer for presenting the report to the Committee.

5. School Performance Reporting: Looked After Children (2016/17 Performance)

Context:

To scrutinise the outcomes of Monmouthshire Looked After Children (LAC) in 2016/17.

Key Issues:

The achievement at all key stages for LAC pupils fluctuates due to very small cohort numbers and a greater representation of pupils at School Action Plus or with statements of Special Educational Needs (SEN) than the overall population (for example, as of March 31st 2016, there were 76 school aged pupils who were looked after and out of this cohort 11 pupils (14.5%) were statemented compared with approximately 3% of Monmouthshire's population). The distribution of statements reflected that 22.2% of secondary pupils had a statement of ALN (eight pupils out of a secondary population of

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36). Of these eight pupils, 50% were placed in out of County specialist provision, with one placed in specialist provision in County with the other three attending local in County mainstream provision. Of the 7.5% (3/40) of primary aged LAC pupils who were statemented LAC pupils, one was educated within out of County specialist provision, whilst two other children were educated within mainstream provision, one within Monmouthshire and the other child in a neighbouring South East Wales Consortia (SEWC) Local Authority. This, associated with underlying issues for pupils being accommodated, presents schools and local Authority officers with significant challenges in engaging and maintaining engagement, resulting in positive outcomes for this cohort of very vulnerable young people.

The Welsh Government has launched its strategy and action plan for raising the ambitions and educational attainment of children who are looked after in Wales and funding for raising the attainment of LAC pupils is now distributed on a consortia basis. Funding is allocated on the basis of the numbers of Welsh LAC pupils in each cluster across the region. Monmouthshire's LAC pupils placed in England have been raised as an issue and to ensure that they have access to support it has been agreed that a sum of money is allocated to each pupil that their school can bid for.

Monmouthshire's academic year 2016-17 indicates that all LAC pupils in the Foundation Phase achieved the Core Subject Indicator (CSI) together with improved three year rolling averages in attainment at the end of Key Stages 2 and 3. The outcomes at Key Stage 4 will require detailed explanation.

The local Authority monitors the progress of this cohort of pupils using targets set by the schools which have been submitted to the EAS. The performance of LAC pupils across all key stages is favourable in comparison with other Welsh local authorities.

Member Scrutiny:

- Monmouthshire has taken the lead with Welsh Government this year on how outcomes are reported. Previously, the Authority reported on all LAC pupils in one document, regardless of what education setting the children were in. The Authority is now far more analytical in how it reports on LAC pupils.
- Funding to support LAC pupils has changed. Previously, funding came to the local Authority and individual LAC pupils could be targeted. However, funding is now distributed via a regional grant by the Education Achievement Services (EAS) which is distributed to clusters. Monmouthshire's clusters submit bids and submissions as to how they intend to spend the funding to support the LAC pupils in their clusters.
- It was reassuring to see that officers understood the LAC pupils as young people rather than just statistics going through education.
- It was noted that this matter had been scrutinised in great detail at the Corporate Parenting Panel.

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Committee's Conclusion:

On behalf of the Select Committee, the Chair thanked officers for explaining and presenting a positive report to the Committee.

6. Presentation regarding Additional Learning Needs Review

Before the Select Committee received the presentation regarding the Additional Learning Needs review, the Chair allowed a Select Committee Member to raise an issue with the Cabinet Member in respect of Additional Learning Needs (ALN) provision in Caldicot Comprehensive School.

The Select Committee Member had expressed concern that there will be a reduction in the provision of ALN in Caldicot School for the academic year 2018. Caldicot Comprehensive School has a Special Educational Needs referral unit and for some years has run the 'buffer' class which is a class comprising of about 20 children who have an average range academically but have complex and comorbid conditions. These children have been supported extremely well in the 'buffer' class by the teacher and teaching assistant. Parents, children and staff all believe this is the best way for these children to be educated in order to achieve their academic potential. It is believed that due to funding cuts, the 'buffer' class will not be run from 2018 onwards.

The Cabinet Member stated that there have been some changes to the way in which ALN provision is provided in Caldicot Comprehensive School. In the new building of Caldicot Comprehensive School, the Authority has provided additional ALN provision which does provide a reduction in Caldicot School as additional support is being provided in Monmouth Comprehensive School. As there has been a reduction in provision at Caldicot Comprehensive School there has been a change in the way the provision is being funded. The changes are being brought in over the next two years. There is a capacity of 55 places in the new unit in Caldicot Comprehensive School and there are currently 42 students being educated within this unit. The decision to allocate funding for students with more moderate needs is made by the school which equates to a sum in the region of £195,000. The Cabinet Member stated that he would be content to meet with the Select Committee Member and / or with the school to discuss this matter further.

The Head of Achievement and Attainment informed the Select Committee that the new Caldicot Comprehensive School has a Special Needs Resource Base (SNRB) of 55 places. Last year, 75 places were identified within Caldicot. With the new build, there is a reduction in the numbers in the Caldicot area. However, overall in Monmouthshire, the number of SNRB places are being increased to 110.

The unit funding for Caldicot Comprehensive School, for this year, has been £275,000 for the unit itself and for the children that the Authority knows have the appropriate diagnosis and the appropriate statements to facilitate access to that provision. In

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addition, there is an additional amount of band funding which will either be an extra 100% support for a teaching assistant or 75% support for a teaching assistant. This current year, the figure equates to in the region of £195,000. In year adjustments have been made in the region of £20,000, providing the school with £215,000 to organise as it wishes.

In addition to the £215,000 funding, there is an additional £48,000 that is allocated to Caldicot Comprehensive School, which is the school's delegated lump sum. Caldicot Comprehensive School has access to a lot of funding in order to meet the needs of its students. The school has the funding within its budget to continue providing its 'buffer' class.

The Chair thanked the Cabinet Member and Officers for responding to the question raised in respect of ALN provision in Caldicot Comprehensive School.

Context:

To scrutinise the progress made to date in respect of the Inclusion review and to receive a presentation in respect of this matter.

Key Issues:

- Aims for the future:
 - To secure equality of access to education.
 - To deliver high quality and inclusive curriculum for all learners.
 - To educate Monmouthshire's young people in their local communities where possible.
 - To support learners and their families across the county.
 - To provide opportunities for young people to access support when they need it and return to their community school.
 - To meet the need of current and changing needs.
- The proposed changes to the current model will ensure that the key principles for the future generation act will be met.
- Meet the rights of the child under the UN convention on the rights of the child.
- Address the ten aims of the new Additional Learning Needs act.

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- Next steps:
 - Develop costs for all models.
 - The Children and Young People Select Committee will play an important part in deciding the final model and will be a key partner for consultation.
 - Consultation will take place on a number of proposals with a wide audience which will include elected Members, parents, schools, governors, the Health Board and advocacy groups.

Member Scrutiny:

- With regard to the placement of the additional units for ALN, it was noted that it was currently too early to identify where these units will be accommodated. However, the Authority needs to look at its estate within education and also broadly across the Council to ensure value is maximised.
- The Central Team, comprising of Educational Psychologists, Advisory / Assessment Teacher, Speech and Language Therapist, CAMHS Worker, Social Worker and Nurse, can be called into schools by Head Teachers when required.
- The ALN Inclusion review will mitigate the very high cost placements that exist out of County. This will enable the Authority to keep Monmouthshire's children within County and therefore making budget savings from having fewer Monmouthshire children having to go out of County. It is anticipated that the service will be managed within existing budget provision.
- With regard to the model of having short term placements, there will be an expectation for schools to be able to send another member of staff with the pupil over the period of time in order for capacity to be built within schools. The new Model will enable the Authority to do this effectively.
- A clear timeline for the implementation for the review will be presented to the Select Committee in due course.
- When the new Model is implemented, the Authority is duty bound to work across multi agencies which will involve the wider range of professionals. The new Model is set up to look at identifying need collectively to work together in the best interest of the child.
- The Authority is very good at allocating statements of special educational needs on time. However, the Authority ensures that statements issued are appropriate containing all information received, even if it means waiting a little longer before issuing. Officers work closely with parents regarding this matter.
- Currently, the Authority has 26 weeks to issue a statement of special educational needs. Under the new model individual development plans will be looked at.

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The turn-around time for one of these plans is 10 weeks. Therefore, there is a need to have robust measures in place to ensure this service works effectively.

Committee's Conclusion:

On behalf of the Select Committee, the Chair thanked the officers for providing the presentation and outlining the current position with regard to the new ALN Model.

7. Actions arising from the previous meeting

We received the list of actions that had been completed arising from the Children and Young People Select Committee meeting held on 14th September 2017.

8. Children and Young People Select Committee Work Programme

We received the Select Committee's forward work plan. In doing so the Scrutiny Manager updated the Select Committee, as follows:

- A special meeting of the Children and Young People Select Committee will be held on 13th November 2017 where a report will be scrutinised entitled 'Delivering Excellence in Children's Services' Programme.
- The ordinary meeting of the Children and Young People Select Committee on 7th December 2017 will scrutinise the following matters:
 - Budget proposals relating to the Committee's remit for 2018-2019.
 - Performance Indicators - Cabinet Members will be invited to attend.
 - The Schools Funding Formula.
 - Key Stage 4 Outcomes.
- A report by Leisure Services for Young People regarding physical literacy, leadership and ambassador schemes will be presented to the Select Committee at the February 2018 meeting.
- Members of the Select Committee with the Chair, Cabinet Member, Chief Officer for Children and Young People and the Scrutiny Manager have been invited to attend one of the Youth Council's meetings where the Youth Council (Engage to Change) will present its forthcoming priorities. The meeting is likely to be held in early December 2017 at County Hall, Usk. Invitations will be dispatched in due course.

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- The Local Democracy Day will be held in November 2017. Engage to Change will be invited to this event with a view to engaging in a question and answer session with elected Members.

9. Cabinet and Council Forward Planner

We received the Cabinet and Council Forward Planner.

10. Next meeting

The next meeting of the Children and Young People Select Committee will be held on Thursday 7th December 2017 at 10.00am.

The meeting ended at 11.52 am.