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MONMOUTHSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

**Minutes of the meeting of Adults Select Committee held
at The Council Chamber, County Hall, The Rhadyr, Usk, NP15 1GA on Tuesday, 19th
June, 2018 at 2.00 pm**

PRESENT: County Councillor S. Howarth (Chairman)

County Councillors: L. Brown, M. Groucutt, S. Howarth, J. Pratt and
R. Edwards

Also in attendance: County Councillors: D. Blakebrough and V.
Smith

OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE:

Julie Boothroyd	Head of Adult Services
Chris Robinson	Lead Commissioner - Quality Assurance
Stephen Griffiths	Strategy & Policy Officer
Hazel Ilett	Scrutiny Manager
Richard Williams	Democratic Services Officer

INVITED GUESTS:

County Councillors A. Williams and J. Charlton (Powys County Council)

APOLOGIES:

County Councillors: L. Dymock, P. Pavia and S. Woodhouse

1. Appointment of County Councillor S. Howarth as Chair for today's meeting

We noted County Councillor S. Howarth as Chair for today's meeting.

2. Declarations of interest

County Councillor L. Brown declared a personal, non-prejudicial interest pursuant to the Members' Code of Conduct in respect of agenda item 10, in relation to data access to social care records.

3. Confirmation of Minutes

The minutes of the Joint Select Committee Meeting (Adults and Children and Young People) dated 20th March 2018 were confirmed and signed by the Chair.

4. Discussion on health scrutiny topics

Context:

To identify areas for future scrutiny with Aneurin Bevan University Health Board.

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Key Issues:

- Older Adults Mental Health Services.
- Care closer to home and how this sits within Monmouthshire Integrated Services.
- A file was sent to the Adults Select Committee Chair from a Monmouthshire constituent regarding the decision that had been made in respect of care provision in St. Pierre. The Chair will contact the constituent explaining that the matter had been drawn to the attention of the Select Committee and that the constituent could raise this matter further at a future Select Committee meeting, should he / she decide to do so.
- The Chair had also received an email from a constituent and also a former employee of the Authority regarding an issue relating to information. This matter had been resolved. However, some valid points had been raised which had been considered. The Chair had responded to the constituent.

Member Scrutiny:

Concern was expressed regarding the lack of data security in respect of access to records of people aged over 18 in adult care. It was noted that this matter was being addressed. However, the Select Committee had not received any information regarding this matter.

The Head of Adult Services informed the Select Committee that the Directorate had been subject to a number of enquiries regarding this matter which has allowed the Directorate to reflect and review its position in respect of this issue. Two Members of the Select Committee would work with the Head of Adult Services with a view to looking at the data security system and that the Members would report back to the Select Committee regarding this matter.

Committee's Conclusion:

We resolved that County Councillors L. Brown and J. Pratt would work with the Head of Adult Services with a view to looking at the data security system regarding access to records of people aged over 18 in adult care and that the Members would report back to the Select Committee regarding this matter.

5. Adults Select Committee Forward Work Programme

We received the Adults Select Committee Forward Work Programme. In doing so, the following points were noted:

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- A special meeting of the Adults Select Committee will be required to be held in July 2018 to discuss with Aneurin Bevan University Health Board, the following topics:
 - Older Adults Mental Health Services.
 - Care closer to home and how this sits within Monmouthshire Integrated Services.

We noted the report.

6. List of actions arising from the Joint Select Committee Meeting (Adults and Children and Young People) dated 20th March 2018

We noted the actions arising from the Joint Select Committee Meeting (Adults and Children and Young People) dated 20th March 2018.

7. Supporting People Programme Grant - Service Update

Context:

To scrutinise the outcomes being delivered by the Supporting People Programme Grant (SPPG), as requested by Committee on 8th March 2016 and to receive an update on the potential changes around the future funding of Supporting People (SP) with respect to regionalisation, the piloted Early Intervention, Prevention and Support Funding (EIPS), Welsh Government's commitment to extended childcare in the future and the new arrangements from the Supported Accommodation Review (SAR).

Key Issues:

Supporting People is a service providing housing-based support to people in Monmouthshire. The purpose of the support is to help vulnerable people to either live independently or to achieve the greatest degree of independence that their personal challenges will allow, with a significant focus on the prevention of homelessness.

In 2017, the services supported 2,550 people and contributed to the costs of around 2,000 community based alarms (as in sheltered housing). SP services are defined in terms of whether being delivered as part of a tenancy expectation or via floating support and whether the expectation for the service duration is "short", either 6 months or under 24 months or long-term, as in some learning disability or mental health cases.

Whilst the funding for Monmouthshire's SP services represents approximately only 10% of the Gwent regional provision (£2.04m of £21m), Welsh Government has identified that, overall, it delivers services to a greater proportion of the supported regional cohort. This, to a greater extent, is due to the Authority's SP services' development that is based on service user need and not either their accommodation / tenure type or age which were features of the legacy based services incorporated in 2003 and to some extent continued in the reconfigured 2012 services. The SP service also has two best

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practice elements – a Gateway brokerage service and services delivered within the Authority's place-based delivery model.

The Authority's service funding is approximately broken down into 14% accommodation based services, 10% Gateway assessment and brokerage service and 76% floating support.

The County Council's SP programme comprises 33 contracts and / or service level agreements with 12 providers. These contracts are due for renewal and / or extension on 1st April 2019, with the exception of three small contracts with a total value in the region of £70,000. Of these contracts, three are regional contracts managed by other Authorities on behalf of Monmouthshire County Council and two are regionally managed by Monmouthshire County Council on behalf of other Gwent Authorities.

SP outcomes are measured across a range of 11 outcomes, each of which can be assessed as relevant to the individual and assessed on a scale of 1-5 where 5 means the individual has achieved their potential for independence in this outcome.

People receiving support make progress that is assessed and recorded on a five step model. On average, over a year, individuals make five positive steps of progress or the equivalent of achieving one outcome to full independence. The average cost of achieving this progress is in the region of £1,500, or £300 per positive step. The £1,500 is equivalent to 1.54 hours of weekly support. Unfortunately other local authorities have not, or have not published, these value for money figures. The Authority has to rely on Welsh Government's overview that suggests that the majority of our services offer good value for money.

SP provides support across the full range of outcomes. However, incidence of support relating to mental health demonstrates the complex nature of the vulnerabilities supported (44% of service users achieve positive progress in this area). Of the support issues that are traditionally considered housing support issues, 36% of service users achieve positive progress in respect of managing their money, 34% in respect of managing their accommodation and 30% in feeling safer.

In terms of basic demographics, 12.8% of those supported are "Younger" (<25years), 36.4% are "Older" (>55 years.), 47% (between 25 and 55 years) and 3.8% not recorded. 58.2% are women, 41.3% are men and 0.5% not recorded.

SP has historically been an annually funded grant, even though authorities, and Welsh Government in the past, distribute this by contract. Over recent years there has been pressure on the SP fund but despite this, services within Monmouthshire have been maintained as value for money assessments and savings have been implemented.

During 2017, fears of further reductions in SPPG funding were alleviated when there were agreements made between political parties that assured SP that funding would be maintained at current levels for 2018/19 and 2019/20, with permission being granted to allow authorities to apply flexible funding principles across SP, Flying Start, and Families First to a maximum of 15% (in Monmouthshire's case).

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Following these assurances, the funding environment has been made less certain. For 2018/19, Welsh Government has implemented piloted funding arrangements with seven local authorities (Pathfinders) that enable the authorities to vary funding between 10 funding streams which include the current three flexible funds, plus Communities for Work Plus, Promoting Positive Engagement for Young People, Childcare & Play, Homelessness Prevention, Rent Smart Wales, St David's Day fund and Legacy Funding. This flexible fund has been called the Early, Intervention, Prevention and Support fund (EIPS).

Monmouthshire's potential fund totals nearly £4.925m should Welsh Government implement the proposals in 2019/20 with the current levels of funding.

At this time, evaluations are being undertaken to assess the impacts achieved by the Pathfinder organisations. Welsh Government has stressed that no decisions have been made as to whether this degree of flexibility will be rolled out to the other authorities and they have suggested that announcements will be made towards the end of 2018.

There are further uncertainties in that the total EIPS may itself be subjected to budgetary pressure and increased provisions have to be made to meet the requirements of the increased childcare provisions that are also being piloted at the moment (circa £20m).

A further complication has resulted from the Public Accounts Committee's review of SP following the Welsh Audit Office's review of SP. In its report, the committee challenges the robustness and inappropriate speed of the decision making processes associated with EIPS and challenges whether SP's basic purpose is supported by the flexible arrangements as piloted.

At a recent workshop reviewing the progress of the Pathfinder organisations in respect of EIPS and the other authorities with respect to the 15% flexibility provision, it was clear that the Pathfinders progress is inconsistent. From struggling to achieve accountability and governance through to making strides towards a "one-stop" approach to support services which will greatly benefit the service user. Of the other authorities, some have been able to use the flexibility to reinforce their objectives, whilst others, as in this Authority, have yet to be able to agree and implement any flexible changes, apart from an agreement being currently developed between housing and SP. In this, Housing will be using some of its flexibility funding to fund via SP a pilot scheme to improve our Supported Lodging services.

Where authorities have not made use of the flexibility provision, the common reasons appear to be that they do not yet have the appropriate accountability and governance structures in place and / or still suffer from a "silo mentality" between the funding streams.

Also, yet to be resolved is a fundamental difference between SP and the other EIPS funding streams. In 2003 when SP was introduced, Welsh Government included in Authorities' Revenue Grant an allowance for the administration and management of SP. These on-going costs are ineligible for SP funding that is distributed annually. With the other EIPS funds the administration and management costs associated with those funds

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are eligible for payment from the fund's allocation. Being able to determine potential business efficiencies is challenging until Welsh Government clarifies the situation.

Whilst Welsh Government has implemented the Pathfinder pilots, and the National Audit Committee has been raising its concerns, the Regional Partnership Board has commissioned an option appraisal into the opportunities associated with the possibility of a more regionalised approach to SP delivery. The outcome of which has yet to be reported back to the Board.

Member Scrutiny:

- In response to a question raised, it was noted that Supporting People (SP) is currently not enabled to be a part of the care package. The Flexible Super Grant has officer support, as it puts the individual at the centre of the services that a person requires. For example, the Gateway Brokerage system ensures that individuals' needs are assessed and prioritised and forwarded to an appropriate support provider. It would be beneficial to widen what the Gateway Brokerage system could refer to, to all of the community assets in that area. There is a need to identify what the individuals' needs are and to move away from operating in silos.
- The five step model was regarded as a positive feature.
- There is a need to identify where future funding for Supporting People will come from as soon as possible.
- It was identified that the report made references to Children and Young People. The report could also be presented to the Children and Young People Select Committee.
- It had been identified that Health and Housing services were working in different ways to support people to live independent lives in their own homes. The Public Service Board could look at ways of bringing these services together to discuss mutual ways of working to better support people.
- Supporting People is unable to support children directly but it can support families with children. However, recently, there has been an initiative where there is some flexibility in which 15% of flexible Housing funding is being moved into Supporting People in order for support to be provided for supported lodgings. The Housing and Communities Manager is also liaising with Children's Services regarding this matter.
- The Head of Integrated Services informed the Select Committee that joint working between Directorates does occur with much more joined up working already occurring. The individual is at the centre with the required support provided in an integrated way.

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- Supporting People supports more people than Families First and Flying Start. Supporting People is the only programme that covers all vulnerabilities.
- If the Super Grant option was adopted, there could be between £300,000 and £400,000 of funding that is either being duplicated or could be used better. It is anticipated that 10% more support could be obtained from what the Authority has if things are done differently.
- In response to a Member's question, it was noted that the Supporting People funding allocation from Welsh Government is completed via a distribution formula. The distribution formula is unfairly allocated as Monmouthshire receives less funding than the other local authorities within Greater Gwent. The distribution formula has been under review for some time but has not come to any conclusions. Welsh Government has guaranteed SP funding for Monmouthshire for 2019 at 2018 levels. For 2020, the SP element will be identified by a new allocation formula.
- Multiple Index deprivation – Monmouthshire, in relation to other local authorities is regarded as being not so deprived and also regarded as being more affluent than other authorities.
- Regionalisation – The main risk is that Monmouthshire is the smallest Authority and there is a risk that the Authority could get 'swallowed up'. There is a concern that regionalisation and the Super Grant might not work well together and therefore, nothing will change.
- Domestic abuse – SP underspend has been used as capital grant. An expression of interest has been submitted and SP has been offered the opportunity to go to the next stage with a view to providing a further domestic abuse resource in the south of the County and also one that would enable children to stay in the refuge also.
- Super Grant risks – Tend to be around inaction. Working collaboratively might be difficult to achieve which could lead to nothing changing, which would be a big loss.
- Supporting People does receive a number of audits throughout the year, which can be restrictive when providing the service.
- Concern was expressed that regionalisation and the Super Grant could erect barriers in responding quickly to people's needs, resulting in the Authority potentially being less responsive and less needs led if these options are put in place.
- It was considered that the recommendations should also include reference to integrated and flexible working to benefit from the various types of funding being received by the Directorates. Break clauses could also be considered within contracts. It was noted that flexibility is already built into the funding system.

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The recommendation could be amended to extend the contracts up to the value of the grant being awarded by Welsh Government.

- Standard Welsh Government approved contracts are for the duration of the period whilst Welsh Government is providing the grant funding.

Committee's Conclusion:

- Ensure that the Cabinet Member for Social Care, Safeguarding and Health is made aware that the Select Committee has some concerns regarding the document.
- With officers, do everything possible to ensure that Monmouthshire has the correct funding formula in place from 2020 onwards.
- The Select Committee continues to monitor this issue and that if any issues arise regarding shortfalls in funding, they be reported back to the Cabinet Member and the Select Committee for further scrutiny.

8. Private Sector Housing Loan Schemes - Change of Terms

Context:

To scrutinise the changes to the criteria and terms and conditions of the delivery of the Welsh Government's Private Sector Housing Loan schemes.

Key Issues:

Welsh Government has provided local authorities in Wales with mixed funding to improve the standard of housing and help return empty properties back in to use in the private sector. This has taken the form of two types of funding streams: grant funding of £604,749.00, with the launch of the Houses into Homes scheme and a repayable loan funding stream of £620,855.69, known as the Home Improvement Loan Scheme. Both schemes are recyclable and offer loans to applicants on an interest free basis with a fee charged to the applicant for the administration process.

The Houses into Homes funding stream grant is offered to the Council in perpetuity so long as it is being utilised and recycled as loans to applicants. The Home Improvement Loan funding scheme in contrast has to be re-paid to Welsh Government by 2030.

If the funding repayable is less than the award (from loan default) then Welsh Government will share 50% of the shortfall to a maximum amount of 2.5% of the funding awarded.

On the 25th March 2015, Individual Cabinet Member approval was acquired for the Council's participation in the Welsh Government Home Improvement Loan Scheme.

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Local authorities have found varying degrees of success in delivering both schemes. It is thought that the criteria of both schemes was too rigid and not flexible enough to respond to local factors that probably contributed to their being unsuccessful in a number of local authority areas. To address this the Welsh Government has proposed changes to the criteria and terms and conditions.

The following summarises the main changes to the schemes:

- Removal of the 50/50 funding allocation criteria between both Houses into Homes and Home Improvement Loan schemes to allow each Authority to spend the loan funding according to demand in their areas.
- There is an expectation that the loans are prioritised towards bringing back into use empty properties and providing loans to applicants considered to be more 'risky', that is, they would fail affordability assessments.
- The introduction of three distinct loan schemes
 - Owner/Occupier Loans.
 - Property Appreciation Loans - available to those applicants considered 'risky'.
 - Landlord Loan (to be marketed in Monmouthshire as Landlord / Property Developer Loans
- Administration Fees – These are allowed under the new criteria but are capped depending on the loan scheme. For the Owner Occupier and the Property Appreciation Loans any shortfall between the cap and the actual costs associated with administering the loan application can be recouped from the Grant Funding Stream. The total fee and recouped shortfall will not exceed the actual costs.
 - Owner / Occupier Loans: Monmouthshire will charge 50% of the total cost for administering the application to the client with the remaining shortfall costs up to £500 being funded out of the grant funding stream.
 - Property Appreciation Loans: The fee chargeable to the applicant will be capped at £250 the remaining shortfall costs up to £250 being funded out of the grant funding stream.
 - Landlord / Property Developer Loans: A one off fee can be charged and will be capped as no greater than the market rate of APR for loans of the same amount and term.

OPTIONS APPRAISAL:

- Option 1: Not to approve the changes would mean the Council would not be able to access these funding streams and in the absence of alternative methods of

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funding, many owner occupiers and empty property owners will not be able to improve the sub-standard condition of their properties.

- Option 2: The recommended option. Approving the changes will allow the Council to maximise the options available to improve the quality of the private sector housing and help bring back into use empty properties within the County.

Member Scrutiny:

- Loans distributed equated to, on average, £10,000 across Wales. This is an indicative figure based on anecdotal evidence. Therefore, around 60 homes across Monmouthshire could be brought back into use over the five year loan period, based on these figures.
- The £10,000 is an average borrowing figure. For empty properties, owners can borrow up to £25,000.
- With regard to flats above empty shops, loans are also being targeted towards developers encouraging them to purchase and develop them. Up to £150,000 can be borrowed in these circumstances.
- Press releases and letter drops to landowners of empty properties are undertaken twice a year advertising the loans on offer.
- Information will also be available on the County Council's website in due course.
- All loans available are interest free with an administration fee attached. There is an eligibility criteria that has to be adhered to around affordability of the applicant, i.e., around the current value of the property, how much the applicant would like to borrow and then establishing what the forecasted rise in its appreciation might be over the length of the loan.
- The identification of empty properties in Monmouthshire is now available via GIS. A targeted approach can be undertaken to identify where the more affordable properties are which could eventually be offered up for sale or for rental purposes.
- The take up of loans to develop empty homes is currently low. This could be because owners are risk averse and / or that there is a charge involved. For those people who live in homes that require home improvements in Monmouthshire, there is a similar issue regarding the lack of take up in respect of the loans available.
- The empty property loan will not increase. The applicant will pay back what they have borrowed.
- A property Appreciation Loan (PAL) will incur an element of appreciation.

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- Regional working regarding this matter has been undertaken previously with the five South East Wales Local Authorities and all five authorities tended to operate in a similar way. Working with local authorities outside of the five South East Wales local Authorities could be looked at.
- A representative from Powys County Council informed the Committee that the Authority holds business breakfast meetings in which plumbers, electricians, builders and homeowners are invited to attend, as these groups are likely to know which houses require work. Leaflets have also been left in solicitors' offices.

Committee's Conclusion:

We endorsed the implications of the introduction of new criteria; terms and conditions for the delivery of private sector loans in Monmouthshire and recommended to the Cabinet accordingly.

We also recommended that we work more collaboratively with other local authorities and agencies within Wales and look at ways of extending and having more influence on the take up of the loan schemes (Powys County Council plus other authorities).

9. Council and Cabinet Business Forward Work Programme

We received the Cabinet and Council Forward Planner. In doing so, the Committee agreed that:

- Crick Road Business Case to come back to the Select Committee for further scrutiny.
- A special meeting of Adults Select Committee to be held in July 2018 to meet with representatives of Aneurin Bevan University Health Board.
- The Select Committee to remain focussed on domiciliary care (Turning the World Upside Down).
- County Councillors L. Brown and J. Pratt would work with the Head of Integrated Services with a view to looking at the data security system regarding access to records of people aged over 18 in adult care before a report is presented back to the Select Committee.

We noted the report.

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10. Next meeting

The next ordinary meeting of Adults Select Committee will be held on Tuesday 10th July 2018 at 10.00am.

A special meeting of Adults Select Committee will also be held in July 2018. Date and time to be confirmed.

The meeting ended at 4.15 pm.