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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, 6th September, 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,
J.Watkins, S. Woodhouse,
M Fowler (Parent Governor Representative) and R. Harris

OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE:

Will McLean	Chief Officer for Children and Young People
Mark Howcroft	Assistant Head of Finance
Nikki Wellington	Finance Manager
Paula Harris	Acting Scrutiny Officer
Wendy Barnard	Democratic Services Officer
Chris Robinson	Lead Commissioner - Quality Assurance
Julie Boothroyd	Chief Officer Social Care, Safeguarding and Health

ALSO IN ATTENDANCE:

Ed Pryce	Interim Strategic and Policy Lead, EAS
Helen Power	Principal Challenge Adviser (Monmouthshire), EAS

APOLOGIES:

County Councillor T.Thomas

1. Declarations of Interest

No declarations of interest were made.

2. Public Open Forum

No members of the public were present.

3. Confirmation of Minutes

The minutes of the previous meeting held on the 28th June 2018 were confirmed and signed as a true record.

The Committee recognised the contribution of Mr. K. Plow who had resigned as representative of the Monmouthshire Association of School Governors. Members requested that a letter of thanks is sent and look forward to welcoming his successor, Mrs. Leanne Wakerley.

4. Supporting People Programme Grant - Service Update

Purpose:

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Whilst the Supporting People (SP) programme is predominately focused on adults, a significant number of younger people (16-25) are also supported. For consideration are:

1. The proposal to extend Supporting People contracts for a year from 1 April 2019 whilst whatever future funding arrangements Welsh Government makes are implemented.
2. Whether sufficient positive action is being taken in consideration of this protected characteristic (young age) through the age-specific services.

Recommendations:

1. To approve the proposal to extend contracts due for renewal on 1 April 2019 for a year whilst the implications of Welsh Government's decisions on future funding, to be made later in this financial year, are worked through and implemented.
2. To agree that the positive action in terms of funding and people supported reflects the Authority's objectives sufficiently.

Key Issues:

Current Programme

SP 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 circa 2,000 community based alarms (as in sheltered housing).

Monmouthshire's SP funding is £2.039m per annum, approximately 10% of the Gwent provision of £21m. Our service funding is approximately broken down into 14% accommodation based services (e.g. refuge, hostels and alarms), 10% Gateway assessment, intervention and brokerage service and 76% floating support.

The SP programme comprises 33 contracts and/or service level agreements with 12 providers. These contracts are due for renewal and/or extension on 1 April 2019, with the exception of 3 small contracts with a total value of circa £70k. Of these contracts, 3 are regional contracts managed by other Authorities on behalf of MCC and 2 are regional managed by MCC 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 and recorded on a 5 step model. On average, over a year individuals make 5 positive steps of progress or the equivalent of achieving one outcome to full independence. The average cost of achieving this progress is circa £1,500, or £300 per positive step. The £1,500 is equivalent to 1.54 hours of weekly support. Welsh Government feedback confirms this to be a value for money provision, with at least two examples of best practice – the Gateway intervention, assessment and brokerage service and the place-based service delivery model.

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

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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” (<25yrs), 36.4% are “Older” (>55 yrs.), 47% (between 25 and 55yrs) and 3.8% not recorded. 58.2% are women, 41.3% are men and 0.5% not recorded.

The age specific services for younger people, including the hostels, the CHYPS and Emphasis programmes, Young Person’s accommodation officer and the Youth Transition worker and account for £280,000 of the £2.04m SPPG funding i.e. 13.7%.

Thus the effective positive action in respect of this client group is +32% based on population (16-24 yr olds are 9.7% of Monmouthshire population) and +41% based on the funding allocation.

Member Scrutiny

The Lead Commissioner Quality Assurance & Supporting People Lead, provided a presentation, and the Chief Officer, Social Care, Safeguarding and Health provided an overview. Members were invited to ask questions as follows:

- **Adolescent Mental Health:** The Chair queried how to make the best use of resources working in partnership with the Health Board. It was explained that the relationship with the Health Board is strong. Recently an Adult Service Manager has been working across Children’s Services, and recently a Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) worker has been based in Children Services: a great addition linked to supporting people and an opportunity to join these services.
- **Grants criteria:** A Member asked for clarification of outcomes, information about alarms and expressed the view that grants should be based on need not separated for adults or young person. In view of the reduction in grants to over 55s, it was queried if there were other grants available to support this age group.

The move to a generic worker to cover all aspects of support was welcomed. It was advised that the outcomes covered areas such as feeling safe at home and in the community, having appropriate accommodation, ability to manage money, maintaining physical and mental health, providing help for employment and training and tackling loneliness. Help to maintain mental health and the impact on accommodation are identified as the main areas of support.

In terms of alarm calls, 92% have no connection with housing support and there is no need for a support worker to attend, consequently many providers have withdrawn. The view was expressed that there are better ways to support a young person.

It was confirmed that services are moving forward based more on need and that are often provided in accommodation and refuges. If specific support is required a referral is made to floating support providers. There is a move away from funding specific groups to more generic support based on need.

- **Accommodation:** A Member asked if some young people are unwilling to accept support from family members and also support to target those young people at risk of suicide. It was responded that, with partners in the housing team, mediation is being provided for 9 or 10 young people between them and their family. There is also a separate mediation service funded by Welsh Government. There is no specific aspect in

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this programme in relation to suicide as it is not a housing issue, but services would be provided by Health. Select Committee Members were reminded that supporting people is about housing related support. Loneliness is covered by a social inclusion worker for young and elderly people.

- **Funding:** A Select Committee Member questioned why Monmouthshire receives only 10% of the Gwent funding. It was responded that there is a funding allocation formula that has been challenged under the Equalities Act and Welsh Government has been asked to reconsider. Monmouthshire appears affluent in comparison with other areas in the region and total support needs aren't well represented. Monmouthshire has a higher amount of older people but not single older people and this is having a fundamental impact on funding allocation. It was reported that the Public Accounts Committee and Wales Audit Office have been asked to relook at the formula.
- **Extension of contracts:** It was commented that this should not cause progress to be slowed down and reassurance was sought on this point. The proposal to use one-stop support workers was commended. With regard to extension to contracts, the move to a one stop support worker will be in incremental steps. All services to young people are being reviewed to combine posts and alter some roles next year to work better together.
- **Measures:** A Member questioned if there was a significant difference in cohorts between 2012 and 2018. It was responded that the number of people being supported by the programme is constant with approximately 1200 being supported with an additional community alarms for approximately 1800 people.

Committee Conclusion

The Chair praised the work carried out in communities in challenging circumstances. He acknowledged the difficulties in the provision of effective services. He recognised the relationships between local authority services and how they relate to housing, health and other agencies that also support this group of people.

The Officer was invited to return to the Children and Young People Select Committee and the Chair referred to the high quality of questioning and responses provided.

The Select Committee Members expressed the wish to be involved in the future provision of services acknowledging that the increased complexity of the work combined with reducing resources was a political issue indicating a greater role for politicians to help frame the way the service operates in future.

The Committee noted that the authority is responsible for how the money should be used, and welcomed a larger role in improving links between organisations.

The recommendations as follows were agreed:

1. To approve the proposal to extend contracts due for renewal on 1 April 2019 for a year whilst the implications of Welsh Government's decisions on future funding, to be made later in this financial year, are worked through and implemented.
2. To agree that the positive action in terms of funding and people supported reflects the Authority's objectives sufficiently.

5. EAS: Briefing on Changes to Accountability and Curriculum Reform

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Context:

The Select Committee received a presentation explaining changes to the education accountability framework from Helen Power, Principal Challenge Adviser (Monmouthshire) and Ed Pryce, Challenge Adviser and Interim Service Strategic and Policy Lead, SE Wales Education Achievement Service (EAS).

Key Issues:

To receive information regarding Curriculum Reform and the EAS Support Programmes.

Member Scrutiny:

Following the presentation, Select Committee Members asked questions:

- In response to a question, it was confirmed that Part 1 and Part 2 of the education reform support programme will be starting in the Autumn through to Spring. Schools not engaging will be encouraged to do so and the relevant authority also advised.
- A Member referred to a decline in numbers of students choosing Modern Foreign Languages (MFL). It was responded that MFL are included in the Language, Literacy and Communication section of the curriculum.
- It was not known if there will be a formal consultation to allow parents and others to comment on the draft curriculum in April 2019. More information will be sought.
- A Member referred to "What Matters" statements and an Estyn report in relation to Religious Education. It was mentioned that Welsh Government sponsored international research found for RE being separate from humanities. Concern was expressed about proposed secularisation of RE and the Member asked if the curriculum would follow the international research instead. It was noted that the EAS has no influence on curriculum content which is being considered by separate groups.
- In terms of data, it was commented that the move to divide schools into thirds will be helpful when looking at outcomes. It is recognised that often the better performing pupils do very well but it is not necessarily the same for Free School Meal (FSM) pupils so this change will assist effective scrutiny in the future. The Chief Officer for Children and Young People referred to this period as one of constant change; it will be a challenge when reporting on outcomes without comparative data. The change to the assessment of teaching and learning aligned to the new professional standards, and how judgements are made, will be very important. That FSM pupils appear not to do well does not reflect that they often do well according to their own potential. There is a need to better explain such achievement and progress to the Committee.
- A Member referred to the new GCSEs and to curriculum change. It was confirmed that there will be a new range of GCSEs by 2025 for children following the new curriculum.
- A Member queried the KS4 measures and the capped point score equating to core subjects, and asked if the EAS had any influence to have a wider based curriculum and measure as there is a risk of the Baccalaureate being devalued. It was confirmed that the capped point score can be a range of other subjects but that the Welsh Government proposals are that there will be only three restricted subjects (literacy, numeracy and science) and six other open subjects.
- A Committee Member expressed concern that one of the main means of checking progress is categorisation for Foundation Phase, Key Stages 2 and 3 and asked if the EAS will be investing more Challenge Adviser's time in schools. It was responded that there will be more structured and intense peer reviews to look closely at children's work. There will be a group of headteachers and two challenge advisers looking at samples of work and undertaking a comprehensive learning walk. Categorisations may change due to this more rigorous monitoring. Reports will be prepared for governing bodies to

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consider. Additionally, the way support plans are written are changing to add support directly to the school development plan for all categories of schools.

- A Member was concerned that whereas governors will be aided by the process of peer assessment, the LA will find it difficult to have a role in monitoring performance due to non-publication of 11-14 data. Information was also requested about the review of the role of Estyn. It was confirmed that whilst KS3 data is not being published, the data profile will still be available for GBs and LAs. Regarding the review of Estyn, it was noted that there is no information available currently.
- The Chief Officer, Children and Young People noted that the divergence from the system in England will present challenges such as moving away from transparency of publication and GCSE outcome differences so it will be important for the authority and EAS to keep members abreast of standards.

Committee Conclusions:

The Chair emphasised the importance of the need for all Committee Members to fully understand the new approaches to accountability to enable effective scrutiny.

The Chair implored all Members who are Governors to ensure that they are able to provide interpretation and understanding at Governing Body meetings, and recommended that Committee Members read the information provided by the EAS.

The representatives of the EAS were thanked for their input to the meeting.

6. Revenue and Capital Monitoring 2018/19: Outturn Statement

Purpose

The purpose of this report is to provide Members with information on the revenue and capital outturn position of the Authority at the end of reporting period 1 which represents the financial outturn position for the 2018/19 financial year based on May inclusive activities.

This 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.

Recommendations proposed to Cabinet:

1. That Members consider a net revenue forecast of £471,000 overspend.
2. Members consider a capital outturn spend of £35.7m, which accords with budget provision for the year, after proposed slippage of £75,000. This describes a breakeven position not uncommon for this early in the year, although there is a potential for additional 21c schools costs in respect of additional asbestos removal and treatment costs not anticipated, which colleagues indicate could be the order of £350,000.
3. Considers the use of reserves proposed in para 3.8.1,
4. Members note that the low level of earmarked reserves will notably reduce the flexibility the Council has in meeting the challenges of scarce resources going forward.

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5. Members note the extent of movements in individual budgeted draws on school balances, and acknowledge a reported net forecast deficit of £622k resulting, and support the amendments to MCC's Fairer Funding Regulations as described in para 3.8.13 for onward engagement with schools forum and governing bodies

Member Scrutiny

The Assistant Head of Finance/Section 151 Officer and the CYP Finance Manager introduced the report. Select Committee Members took the opportunity to ask questions, as follows:

- **ALN Review:** A Member referred to the deficit projected for Mounton House School and the income from other authorities and asked if the status quo could be maintained to attract more pupils external to Monmouthshire to ensure that the income source continues. The Chief Officer explained that following the publication of the proposals earlier in the year, there has been no reduction in pupils at the school. Cabinet was advised that the proposal for change will not proceed but the authority will work with the school and others to understand the need for that type of provision in Monmouthshire. The capacity is for 55 pupils, currently there are 28 on roll. Next year there will only be 1 Monmouthshire pupil on roll. The Chair looked forward to updates regarding proposals.
- **Funding Formula:** The Chair referred to the funding formula noting that 3 of the 4 secondary schools are in deficit, with the fourth in surplus but being closely monitored. With 17 schools forecasting deficits, it was questioned if the authority had the resources to monitor individual schools and commented that some schools are finding it very difficult. It was questioned if there is a need to fundamentally review the funding formula. The Committee were reminded that last year the authority invested in secondary schools in terms of exam fees. It was added that the formula is not the issue, but the reducing amount of funding available. Committee Members were advised that there is discussion about a Gwent wide formula.

Committee Conclusion:

The Chair thanked the officers for the report and for their attendance at the meeting.

7. Action arising from previous meeting

Eligibility Criteria for Free School Meals (FSM)

With the Chair's permission, an urgent addition was made to the agenda: Consultation on changes to the eligibility criteria for FSM, arising from the roll out of Universal Credit.

The CYP Finance Manager provided a verbal report and requested that Committee Members provide responses to the consultation document. The Clerk was asked to circulate the e mail containing the consultation document to Committee Members requesting responses by the 14th September 2018.

Actions arising from the previous meeting:

- Apprenticeships within the authority: This is being encouraged and progressed.
- ALN Review: A one month extension to the ALN review has been agreed. In response to a query, it was confirmed that the most recent Cabinet paper updates the current position clearly identifying the changes to the original proposals and identifying aspects that will be subject to further consultation. Such consultation will take place in the

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Autumn term. The report will be distributed to parents at the schools concerned. The matter will be returned to this Committee and then to Cabinet in December 2018.

8. Children and Young People Select Committee Work Programme

The work programme was noted.

A Member mentioned that there were some suggestions for topics in the last minutes. It was also suggested that Pioneer schools could be invited to a future meeting to give their impression of curriculum reform and development. The Chair will follow this matter up with the Scrutiny Manager.

9. Cabinet and Council Forward Planner

The Cabinet and Council Forward Planner was noted.

10. To confirm the date and time of the next meeting

The meeting ended at 12.30 pm