

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 Monday, 2nd November, 2015 at 2.00 pm

I

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

County Councillors: R. Harris, S. Howarth, M. Powell,
M Fowler (Parent Governor Representative) and
K Plough (Association of School Governors)

OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE:

Sharon Randall-Smith	Head of Achievement and Attainment
Tracey Jelfs	Head of Childrens Services
Hazel Ilett	Scrutiny Manager
Nicola Perry	Democratic Services Officer
Jane Rodgers	Safeguarding Service Manager
Nicola Bowen	Strategic Partnership Manager
Matthew Lloyd	Senior Officer
Tracey Thomas	Youth & Community Manager, Youth Service
Claire Marchant	Chief Officer Social Care, Health & Housing

APOLOGIES:

Councillors P. Clarke, M. Hickman and D. Jones

1. Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from County Councillors P. Clarke, M. Hickman, D.W.H. Jones, Co-opted Member Mr. C. Robertshaw and Chief Officer for Children and Young People S. McGuinness.

2. Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

3. Performance reporting on Pupil Results 2015

Context:

We received the report from the Data Analyst, Policy and Performance in order to provide Members with the latest data showing educational attainment information they need to hold services to account.

Key Issues:

Some data, such as key stage 4 and 5 results were still provisional and were included at this early stage to ensure that Members had access to timely information at the earliest possible opportunity but the information may be subject to change.

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 Monday, 2nd November, 2015 at 2.00 pm

The dashboard shown at appendix one brought together key indicators for attendance, exclusion, attainment and use of resources. This would enable Members to see, at a glance, the progress being made towards improving educational attainment, one of the Council's four stated priorities. Dashboards for all directorates available to elected members throughout the year via The Hub.

The reports contained a wealth of information enabling Members to drill down from authority level data to figures for specific learner groups such as those with additional learning needs and those eligible for free school meals.

The summary report made comparisons back to 2011/12 which was the academic year just prior to the last full Estyn inspection. Data for the intervening years is included within the appendices. Over the last four years, there had been a notable improvement in headline indicators. For example more than 90% of pupils now gain the expected level or better across the core areas of learning in Foundation Phase and English/Welsh, mathematics and science in Key Stages 2 and 3.

The value of this report is that it enables members to look beyond those high level measures to some of the detail that sits underneath. The key messages from those reports were summarised to Members.

Member Scrutiny:

Members were keen to note the considerable achievement demonstrated by the figures, showing the fruits of the hard work of pupils, teachers and all associated with our schools.

There were concerns that performance at Key Stage 5 was disappointing and questions were raised if there were problems identified at this stage. In response the Challenge Advisor, EAS agreed with the point and explained that appendix b highlighted helpful points. It was thought that the reduction of pass rate was in relation to a reduction in the size of cohort and entry policies rather than a significant decline. The pass rate had actually increased from 1.99% A Levels achieved last year to 2.29% this year.

We heard from the Cabinet Member that a meeting was due to be held that week with Head Teachers and Chairs of Governors to discuss outcomes with schools and feedback would be provided to the Committee.

A Member suggested that a separate chart for vocational courses could avoid reducing figures. We were informed that the level 3 threshold currently included both and the measure was under review with Welsh Government, with a broader basket of measures coming in. EAS were investigating the setting up of a system for schools to set targets for their pupils, to ensure pupils were in the right provision and A-Level balance.

With regards to vocational courses, there was an EAS post-16 team who would provide advice to schools about policy changes, and training and support on new qualifications.

The average point score was lower than the Wales average, and could be contributed to schools entry policies, which needed to meet the needs of the community.

Members questioned if there were any areas of concern not apparent from the report. In response the Head of Achievement and Attainment explained that the results were positive and therefore trends were pleasing. There was a small concern with the foundation phase, as other

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 Monday, 2nd November, 2015 at 2.00 pm

authorities were catching up with MCC and therefore needed to move on further. Performance at Key Stages 2 and 3 was relatively strong. Key Stage 4 was definitely moving in the right direction. Welsh as a second language was variable from year to year and important to ensure all schools were performing equally. Reasoning results were an area of concern and we needed to be able to work with schools to develop further.

Members would like to see further information providing explanations as to why we hadn't achieved the results expected. The Challenge Advisor, EAS explained that reports of that nature had been provided but Estyn had suggested authorities were being defensive. Provision of a separate report was considered appropriate

We were informed there were no indicators that children were disadvantaged by pupils starting schools following their 4th birthday rather than before. Monmouthshire were ranked 2nd in Wales in the foundation phase.

A Member raised a question regarding the gender gap being narrowed and we heard that both boys and girls were performing above the all Wales average.

We heard that Monmouthshire were seeing gains at expected level +1, and there was already a high performance level at that target. Compared to other Authorities we were in line or above average.

Recommendations:

Members were recommended to use this report to scrutinise key areas of educational attainment, one of the council's four priorities, and challenge any underperformance.

Committee Conclusion and Chairs Summary:

Members were satisfied that over a 4 year period, there had been a notable improvement in headline indicators with more than 90% of pupils gaining the expected level or better across the core areas of learning in Foundation Phase and English/Welsh, mathematics and science in Key Stages 2 and 3.

Members agreed that key Stage 4 was definitely moving in the right direction, however, expressed concern that other authorities were catching up Monmouthshire at foundation phase level at a steady pace and highlighted there is a need for Monmouthshire to ensure continual progression.

Members acknowledged the gap between free school meal and non-free school meal pupils was narrowing across the stages and agreed close monitoring of this gap must continue.

Members expressed concern with performance at Key Stage 5. Whilst the EAS advised that the reduction in the pass rate was due to a reduction in the size of cohort and entry policies rather than a significant decline in standards, Members requested further explanation from the EAS and officers at a meeting in the New Year as to why the results at key stage 5 were not as expected. Members decided that they would request the EAS to attend this meeting and discuss the Quality Assurance Report.

The Committee also asked that feedback of a meeting which would be held with Head Teachers and Chairs of Governors to discuss performance outcomes be provided to the Committee in advance of the Committee meeting the four comprehensive school head

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 Monday, 2nd November, 2015 at 2.00 pm

teachers in the New Year.

4. The Local Service Board Contribution to Improving Attainment

Context:

We received a report presented by the Strategic Partnership Manager and Youth and Community Manager in order to advise Members on progress and achievements made by Monmouthshire's Integrated Youth Offer group.

Key Issues:

The Local Service Board has formally delegated its statutory responsibilities for delivering Youth Support Services to the Integrated Youth Offer.

The Integrated Youth Offer has formed part of a full review of partnerships undertaken in 2014/15. The review has found the Integrated Youth Offer has governance arrangements that are clear and purposeful. The Integrated Youth Offer is fit for purpose and its actions and outcomes are aligned to the Single Integrated Plan. The action plan is robust and demonstrates impact.

The continued work of the Integrated Youth Offer group has led to reduced duplication and improved focused delivery of services to young people.

Key findings from the mapping exercise carried out in the summer of 2014 have been analysed and used to inform priorities and develop future work programmes.

Collectively all youth support services as part of the IYO have worked with 14,500* young people between the ages of 11-25 in 14/15.

The IYO has clear Safeguarding protocols and hold a database of all members of IYO group for DBS clearance that is current and valid.

The IYO has gathered intelligence from partners to feed into the Single Integrated Plan to provide clear evidence on outcomes achieved.

Both Chief Officer and Cabinet Member for Children and Young People attend and receive information quarterly on the work of the Integrated Youth Offer.

Member Scrutiny:

Members commended Officers for the report and welcomed the case studies included.

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 Monday, 2nd November, 2015 at 2.00 pm

We heard that the key contacts in the report outlined the Chairs of the seven sub groups included in the Integrated Youth Offer. Officers were mindful of the workload pressures on all agencies but were continually encouraging all members to take an active part. It was noted that the Health Board had been absent from more than one meeting and continual negotiations aimed to encourage attendance from the health Board. There were health representatives but not always direct representatives of ABUHB. Members felt that Council should be able to assist with encouraging ABUHB.

The Strategic Partnership Manager agreed that representation of partners could fluctuate, which had been recognised through a review process. Part of a Performance Management Group tackled issues and challenges faced by partnerships. Such issues were logged on a register as part of an escalation process, and then taken to the LSB Programme Board where membership issues could be addressed formally.

Members were reassured that in all Youth Support Services, every member of staff were DBS checked and held a minimum requirement of level 1 safeguarding. Copies of partners safeguarding policies were available upon request.

Members commended the linkage between employment and education but there were concerns that the facilities seemed disproportionate to some areas of Monmouthshire, for instance Magor and Undy. There were concerns that the local public transport did not provide adequate services. Officers were mindful of the problem and would take the issue to the next meeting of the Integrated Youth Offer. Discussions were being held with the Transport Manager to improve services for young people.

A suggestion was made to involve Town and Community Councils to help with funding and volunteering, to place more emphasis on locality.

A question was raised regarding the figure of 14700 people engaged, but the numbers seemed much smaller per group. We were informed that there were many areas which made up that figure, including young carers, scouting and guiding groups. The data was a collective through all the partnerships, in all service areas.

A question was raised regarding what provisions were in place for young people under the age 11. Those groups would be reported through Early Years.

It was questioned if there was a Young Persons Member Champion, who would act as a link between the Council and the Youth Service. We were informed there was no Member acting as Young Persons Champion, but Cllr Hackett Pain and Chief Officer Sarah McGuinness were representatives on the group. It was explained that the Youth and Community Manager acted as Chair on the Integrated Youth Offer, of which there were 32 members, who met quarterly. Seven sub-groups were chaired by independent members and County Councillor Hackett Pain sat on the Young Voice sub-group as well as the main group. Officers would welcome a Member to act as Young Persons Champion.

A suggestion was made to include a Youth Champion who was a member of the youth to also sit on the group. This had previously been addressed but there were complications with regards to meetings being held in the day.

Recommendations:

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 Monday, 2nd November, 2015 at 2.00 pm

Members were recommended to scrutinise the Annual Report of the Monmouthshire Integrated Youth Offer Group and challenge the group on its performance in delivering measurable outcomes to young people.

Committee's Conclusion and Chair's Summary:

Members acknowledged that the Integrated Youth Offer group has reduced duplication and sought to improve services delivered to young people, however felt that some areas of Monmouthshire lacked facilities and that geographical distance and inadequate transport to arrangements to the nearest facility may mean that some young people are disadvantaged.

Members requested that this be discussed at the next meeting of the Integrated Youth Offer group and that discussions be held with the Transport Manager to improve services for young people.

The Committee suggested that efforts be made to involve Town and Community Councils for assistance with funding and possible volunteering.

Members expressed concern that the representation of some partners on the Integrated Youth Offer Group fluctuates and requested this be escalated to the LSB Programme Board if it was felt to be undermining the delivery of the overall programme.

5. Safeguarding Report Card and Performance Information September 2015

Context:

We received a report to provide members with information and analysis regarding the safeguarding of children and young people. Comprehensive strategic and operational information was provided via a suite of three cross referenced reports.

Key Issues:

Safeguarding children and young people is a key responsibility for the Council. These duties apply to all officers and Members of Council and include the specific child protection duties carried out via Children's Services.

In November 2012 Estyn carried out an inspection of the Local Authority and found that the arrangements for safeguarding were unsatisfactory. A monitoring visit in February 2014 found that whilst the Local Authority had made some good initial progress the shortcomings identified in the strategic management of safeguarding had not been addressed well enough. This judgement was echoed by a Welsh Audit Office inspection in March 2014. It was partly as a result of this that the current suite of reports were commissioned to ensure that Members had access to comprehensive and thoughtful analysis of the state of safeguarding in Monmouthshire.

CSSIW carried out inspections of Monmouthshire Children's Services in April and November 2014. Whilst confirming that children involved in the child protection process were safeguarded, CSSIW did identify some key deficits and areas for improvement including the consistency and quality of management oversight within Children's Services and the effective embedding of performance management and quality assurance arrangements.

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 Monday, 2nd November, 2015 at 2.00 pm

Estyn Inspectors will be carrying out a further inspection of the authority in November 2015. The focus will be on how the authority has responded to the recommendations following the November 2012.

Member Scrutiny:

Members questioned if we were satisfied that other agencies were as committed to safeguarding as MCC. In response we heard that it was difficult to provide a generalised answer due to the number of agencies involved. Assurance was provided that the Regional Safeguarding Children's Board was a statutory body which sought to hold statutory partners to account.

Detail on the strengthening between the Regional Safeguarding Board and the Council would be brought to a future meeting if requested.

Members questioned why it was not the case that everyone had access to safe recruitment training. We were informed that the target areas were recruiting managers who were recruiting into regulated posts. All recruiting managers were encouraged to attend training as good practice.

Safeguarding Officers were aiming to create a central register of people who had undertaken the training, where each directorate would be held responsible for their own area. Safe Recruitment Safe Workforce Champions had been appointed in each directorate in order to take this forward.

It was questioned if we were strict enough with our ruling, and should we increase benchmarking. In terms of schools, we noted there were many people involved with schools and were we satisfied that people were fully DBS checked. In response we heard that there was a set criteria for regulated activity. An MCC employee appointed to a regulated activity post would not be able to start until the DBS certificate and 2 satisfactory references had been issued. There were a range of people who would be in and out of school buildings and not all would be checked. In those circumstances we were working with head teachers on awareness of the safe management of those individuals.

In terms of monitoring schools, spot checks were carried out by People Services, and a robust link through payroll.

A self-harm app had been created named Buddy, designed to be accessed by any young person to obtain facts and figures on self-harm. There would also be a therapeutic aspect aimed at preventing, distracting and deterring. The app was not yet launched, and would be done when officers were satisfied it was just right.

We heard that progress was being made with volunteer training processes and Members noted it was an area of concern.

The Cabinet Member commended officers on the achievements over the last 2 years, in communicating across the organisation the meaning of safeguarding.

Recommendations:

Children and Young People Select Committee were recommended to receive the reports, noting the progress and areas for further work and using them as the basis for challenge.

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 Monday, 2nd November, 2015 at 2.00 pm

Committee's Conclusion and Chair's Summary:

Members were satisfied with the consistency and quality of management oversight within Children's Services and felt that progress had been made to embed performance management and quality assurance arrangements across the department.

6. To confirm the date and time of the next meeting as Thursday 12th November 2015 at 2.00pm

We confirmed the date and time of the next meeting as Thursday 12th November 2015 at 2.00 pm.

We noted that there would be joint meeting of Children and Young People Select and Adult Select Committees to discuss partnership work with families on Tuesday 15th December 2015 at 2.00 pm.

The meeting ended at 3.45 pm