

MONMOUTHSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

Minutes of the meeting of Joint Select Committee held at Council Chamber, County Hall, The Rhadyr, Usk, NP15 1GA on Wednesday, 16th December, 2015 at 2.00 pm

PRESENT: County Councillor P. Farley (Chairman)

County Councillors: P. Jones, M. Hickman, M. Powell, A. Wintle and V. Smith

ADDED / CO-OPTED MEMBERS:

C. Robertshaw (Parent Governor Representative)

ALSO IN ATTENDANCE

Councillor Burrows

OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE:

M. Gatehouse	-	Policy and Performance Manager
J. Boothroyd	-	Head of Adult Services
C. Marchant	-	Chief Officer Social Care, Health & Housing
H. Ilett	-	Scrutiny Manager
P. Harris	-	Democratic Services Officer

ALSO IN ATTENDANCE:

A. Ferris	-	CSSIW
M. Rooney	-	CSSIW

1. Apologies

Apologies for absence were received from County Councillors R. Edwards, D. Edwards, R. Harris, S. Howarth, A. Webb, D. Evans and Co-opted Member Mr. Plow & Mrs D. Hudson.

2. Declaration of Interests

There were no declarations of interest.

3. Risk Assessment for Social Services

Context:

To provide members with an overview of the current strategic risks facing the Authority.

Key Issues:

1. The risk assessment ensures that:
 - Strategic risks are identified and monitored by the authority.
 - Risk controls are appropriate and proportionate
 - Senior managers and elected members systematically review the strategic risks facing the authority.

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2. The existing risks on the Strategic Risk Assessment have been updated based on evidence available in 2015, as presented at Appendix 1. Changes to the council's risk management policy were approved by Cabinet in March 2015. These are:
- including pre-mitigation and post-mitigation risk scores, this was also a key recommendation from scrutiny of the 2014 risk assessment
 - ensuring greater clarity to the phrasing of risk so that each statement includes an event, cause and effect as shown below:

Event	Cause	Effect
Risk of...Failure to...Lack of ...Loss of...Uncertainty of ...Inability to...Delay in...	Because of...Due to...As a result of...	Leads to...and/or... result in...

3. The risk assessment only covers high and medium level risks. Lower level operational risks are not registered unless they are projected to escalate within the three years covered. These need to be managed and monitored through teams' service plans. The pre and post mitigation risk levels are presented separately. In most cases mitigating actions result in a change to the likelihood of the risk rather than the consequences as our actions are generally aimed at reducing the chance of a negative event occurring rather than lessening it's impact. Clearly there will be exceptions.
4. Following presentation to select committees, the risk assessment will be presented to Cabinet for sign off. Prior to this, it will also form part of budget papers for discussion at Council to reflect alignment with strategic risks and proposed budget decisions the Council is taking.
5. The risk log is a living document and will evolve over the course of the year as new information comes to light. An up-to-date risk log is accessible to members on the Council's intranet - The Hub. This will ensure as well as the ongoing specific scrutiny of the risk assessment annually, that select committees are able to re-visit the information at any point in the year to re-prioritise their work plan as appropriate.

Member Scrutiny:

It was asked by a Member if the Wellbeing of Future Generations Act deserved its own risk. We were advised that it feed into a number of areas of risk, looking at the potential impact especially reputational. Cabinet and Audit Committee had received the report and it was felt we were on track. It is a significant risk with huge challenges.

A Member commented that was important that as a Committee, along with Officers that we pay close attention to the financial standing of the services we are responsible for, with 3 in particular; Children's Social Services, Youth Services and Adult Education.

We were reassured by the Cabinet Member that the Children's Social Care budget had the full support of Cabinet, it was appreciated that it is an under resourced Directorate and the pressures are understood.

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A Member discussed the difficulties of finance and felt that as an Authority we should encourage people to engage with income generating projects. An Officer briefed the Committee on the Adult scheme 'My day, my life' which aims to give people a sense of purpose and move them away from services.

A Member commented that training for Safeguarding had improved significantly over recent years which reflected how seriously the Authority took Safeguarding matters.

In regard to reductions in the workforce, a Member expressed concerns and stressed the importance of a healthy working environment and talked about having a duty of care for staff.

Recommendations:

1. That members consider the strategic risks presented for the next three years, in particular those of relevance to the committee and scrutinise the extent to which:
 - all relevant risks facing the authority are appropriately captured,
 - the level of risk applied is appropriate based on the matrix in the council's risk management policy and guidance and
 - mitigating actions are proportionate and appropriate
2. That members use the risk assessment on an on-going basis to hold the responsibility holders to account to ensure that risk is being appropriately managed.
3. Use the risk assessment to inform the future work programme of the Committee.

Committee Conclusion and Chairs Summary:

Members are satisfied that the format and content of the risk assessment report captures the key risks facing social services in terms of the remit for both the Adults Select Committee and the Children and Young People's Select Committee. Members of the Children and Young People's Select Committee have scrutinised safeguarding procedures for Children on a frequent basis, the most recent scrutiny taking place at their meeting on 2nd November. Members of that Committee are content with the procedures and will be continuing to monitor the ongoing application of those procedures within Children's Services. An example of this took place at a recent meeting of that Committee whereby officers were requested to return to the Committee with a Safeguarding Children Action Plan for the proposed 'Future Play Model', to provide evidence to the Committee that children would be safeguarded in any proposal. Members of the Adults Select Committee receive regular performance reports on Adult Services and scrutinise Adult Safeguarding specifically on an annual basis through their consideration of the Prevention of Vulnerable Adults Scheme (POVA) performance report. Members of this Committee however, express their concern that the forthcoming Social Services Act presents significant implications for Councils to ensure Adults Safeguarding, which is important for Monmouthshire, given the number of prisons located in the county. Members present today recognise that the Act presents challenges in terms of our procedures and current practice and this will be considered by the Adults Select Committee at their meeting on 19th January 2016.

4. Performance Update Quarter 2 Children's services Scorecard

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Context:

To provide members with a report card that considers quarter 2 performance in children's social services.

Key Issues:

1. The report card uses a narrative format alongside graphs to show how the service is performing using a range of measures from the initial referral through to what care leavers are doing when they turn nineteen. It is supplemented by two appendices:
 - Appendix 1 contains national performance indicators showing how we have performed over time and compared to other council's in Wales.
 - Appendix 2 contains a broader range of measures including local data, Wales averages are available for these measures but we are unable to publish performance for other authorities individually
2. The number of looked after children has increased from 108 at the end of 2014/15 to 121 at the end of quarter 2. Over the same period the number of children on the child protection register has declined from 49 to 41.
3. Children's Services continue to focus on four key National performance indicators where significant improvements were made last year. These are:

	Q2	
	2014/15	2015/16
SCC/011b – Initial assessments where the child is seen alone	57.4%	43.2%
SCC/016 – Child in need reviews	85.2%	59.5%
SCC/025 – LAC statutory visits	84.5%	80.6%
SCC/041a – Reviews of pathway plans	98%	100%

4. Performance in three of the four key indicators is lower at Quarter 2 than at the end of 2014-15. Charts 2, 3, 7 and 8 in the main body of the report show rolling-year data for these indicators.
5. Improvements have been made in 2 of the 3 indicators measuring the timeliness of the children protection process. The timeliness of initial child protection conferences and first core groups have both improved since last year but the timeliness of child protection reviews has decreased.
6. At the end of quarter 2, seven looked after children have had a non-transitional school moves (SCC/002), compared to 15 in the whole of last year. Continuing at this level would produce year-end performance slightly lower than 2014/15 when we were 21st in Wales. The service manager has confirmed that most (but not all) moves are due to children moving into long-term placements.
7. Two looked after children had 3 or more placements (SCC/004) during 2014/15. By the end of quarter 2 this year two children have had 3 or more placements, a further 8 children have had two placements so we are likely to exceed last year's total.

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8. Three care leavers have turned 19 by quarter 2 and are in touch with social services (SCC/033d). Four more will turn 19 in the remaining 6 months. At present, of those four, two appear to be in contact meaning our likely year end position is 71% (5/7), down from 88.9% last year.
9. Of the three care leavers who are 19, one is in suitable accommodation (SCC/033e). Of the remaining two in touch who will turn 19 later in the year, both are currently in suitable accommodation. Our year end position is expected to be 60% (3/5,) a decrease from 87.5% in 2014/15.

Member Scrutiny:

We were informed that Children and Adult Services have new I.T. system which will allow for easier use and greater clarity of KPI's.

A Member commented that as Authority we have a once in a lifetime opportunity and asked the Chief Officer for their view of Children's Services. The Chief Officer told us that the Service had been on a journey of improvement over the last 18 months and that improvement must be sustained.

The new framework focusing on outcomes was discussed by a Member and the Chief Officer explained that new measures were being looked at now. We were told that the nature of services and intervention between Adults and Children's Services were very different and as the Chief Officer they would look forward to bringing the progress of both services to Committee the relevant Committees.

Recommendations:

1. Members should use this report and the associated indicators to scrutinise whether services are being delivered in line with expectations and are contributing to the agreed outcomes.
2. Members should identify any areas of underperformance or concerns that require further investigation

Committee's Conclusion and Chair's Summary:

The Chair advised that many key points had been discussed during scrutiny of the social services risk assessment (the previous agenda item). The Chair advised that Members of both Committees were prioritising safeguarding and would be considering the application of the new Social Services Act to their respective remits. Members were satisfied that the newly appointed chief Officer for Social Services had a clear understanding of the key issues requiring improvement in terms of performance and it was agreed that future performance reports would be based upon the new Outcomes Framework in line with the impending Social Services Act.

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5. Care and Social Services Inspectorate Wales - CSSIW Performance Evaluation Report of Monmouthshire's Social Services 2014-2015

Context:

The report sets out the key areas of progress and areas for improvement in Monmouthshire County Council Social Services for the year 2014–15.

Key Issues:

1. The council is making good progress with a transformation in practice agenda and is well placed to meet the requirements as set out in the Social Services and Wellbeing (Wales) Act (SSWBW Act). The council has concentrated on moving forward an ambitious agenda in adult's services. This has been more difficult in children's services where the department has been working hard to deliver on the post inspection action plan. This was developed to address the recommendations in the inspection undertaken by CSSIW in children's services in November 2014 where a number of areas of weakness were found. The action plan also identified the areas for improvement set out in last year's Annual Council Reporting Framework (ACRF).

2. Progress has been made in a number of areas to date. In particular the council has made improvements around statutory visits to looked after children and the timeliness of reviews for children in need as well as recruitment to permanent posts. However, there is still a journey of improvement that children's services will need to continue over the next year.

3. The council works well with partners across both adult and children's services to deliver better outcomes in the most efficient and effective ways. In adult services, partnership arrangements with Aneurin Bevan University Health Board (ABUHB) are mature at both strategic and operational levels. However, although work is progressing sometimes this needs to develop at a faster pace with renewed energy and clear objectives. The mental health integration work around the Listen Engage Act Participate (LEAP) project across the whole council is an example of this.

4. Performance in adult services has improved further in a number of key areas in particular in relation to delayed transfers of care which have decreased. Ongoing progress in reablement services is evident and is working effectively in the hubs where they have been implemented. However, whilst headway has been made, the pace of change to roll out services overall more systematically across the whole council needs to increase in order to recalibrate services in an appropriate and timely way.

5. There is significant support corporately and from members who have a good understanding of the challenges facing social care. This is evidenced by the protection of budgets in Social Services in 2014-15 and the agreement reached for additional funding of £1.2million in children's services in order to deliver its statutory functions and safeguard children effectively. However, this will become more difficult in the future when there is a need to make significant savings across all services within the council.

6. The council acknowledge that whilst its citizens have high expectations of public services in the future services will need to be provided in a different way and not necessarily by the council. Greater emphasis will be placed on support.

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Member Scrutiny:

It was asked by a Member if placements from other Authorities were monitored. It was answered that yes, there was a register, the parent Local Authority would pay the costs and that some Authorities have reciprocal arrangements.

A Member asked what areas the Authority should be concentrating on. We were told that it was important to prioritise the journey that children's services were on, all recommendations were being worked through. It is important that we focus on the outcomes in adult and children's services with particular focus on early intervention and prevention.

The Cabinet Member updated the Committee on the 2 apprentices who sit on the Corporate Parenting Panel and talked about Dementia Care training, which gives people the tools to understand.

Recommendations:

A number of areas of improvement were identified:

- Ongoing work with health and social care strategic partnership and relationships with the health board
- Increased capacity and responsiveness corporately in relation to recommendations to drive improvements required and meet demand
- Strengthening of the corporate parenting arrangements to ensure voices of care leavers are heard and drive strategic thinking
- Level of challenge and understanding of Select Committee
- Consider how children continue to be safeguarded in light of financial pressures faced by the council

Committee's Conclusion and Chair's Summary:

Members express thanks to the CSSIW Officers for attending and presenting the Social Services Performance Report. Members have discussed several of the key issues highlighted within the CSSIW's report as part of the earlier agenda, the flow of this meeting being partly by design, given the connectivity of the various pieces of work. Members have asked the CSSIW for their view on the Council's readiness for the Social Services Act and have heard that the key challenge facing the Council will be delivering the requirements of the Act in a difficult financial climate. The population is ageing which is leading to a greater number of young people entering the system as young adults who need support against a backdrop of diminishing resources to deliver such services. The CSSIW have advised that we need to focus on ensuring our preventative measures are effective in order to reduce the number of young people requiring specialist services and that the effectiveness of family support programmes in place such as the Joint Assessment Family Framework and Families First will be crucial in reducing the numbers of people requiring these services. The Committee concludes that the meeting of both of these committees planned for late February/early March will be a timely opportunity to scrutinise the effectiveness of these programmes and to consider the challenges posed for them in terms of the new Act. Members furthermore agree to hold an All Members Seminar on the Act in January together with an 'open afternoon with Social Services on the Act's application', in addition to the programmed scrutiny activity. Members agree that

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future scrutiny will need to focus on whether the Council is addressing the specific areas highlighted for improvement in the CSSIW's report. The CSSIW have acknowledged that the report provides a retrospective view of performance, in that it provided 'a snapshot' of performance during the inspection period of 2014-15. Members have expressed that they wish to form a closer working relationship with the CSSIW through pre-inspection and pre-publication meetings to ensure that scrutiny can add value to the work of inspectors by focussing on key areas of underperformance. Members are satisfied that considerable improvements have been made since this time, however have agreed to invite the Chief Officer for Social Services to respond in providing her Social Services Service and Financial Recovery Plan as the next agenda item.

6. Children's Services 3 Year Service and Financial Plan

Context:

The purpose of this report is to obtain approval for a 3 year Service and Financial Plan for Children's Social Services which will form part of the overarching Social Care and Health transformation programme, *Changing Practice, Changing Lives*.

Key Issues:

This plan forms part of an overarching transformation programme in Monmouthshire County Council Social Care and Health which was designed to deliver the cultural and practice change necessary to realise the benefits from the legislative framework in the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act (2015). The transformation programme in Social Care has delivered both improved outcomes and quality of life for people and significant savings over the last 4 years in adult social services.

Recognising the differences in children's services, and the different starting place, the first phase of the transformation programme in children's services has focussed on getting the basics right and improving performance. The Changing Practice, Changing Lives programme will continue to be sensitive to those differences between adults and children's services, but also build on the strengths within the different part of the business to deliver a coherent purpose and governance for practice and commissioning in Social Care and Health.

A shared understanding of 'what good practice looks like' and alignment of all systems (from supervision to quality assurance to management meetings) is needed. Change is delivered by individual practitioners and teams coming together around a common purpose, supported by managers and leaders who set direction and remove the barriers that exist. Some limited external support from a recognised expert in children's services will be sought to develop the detail of practice transformation programme within children's services.

This plan has been developed for a very specific purpose – to ensure there is clear set of prioritised actions to deliver service and financial recovery. It builds on the very positive progress which has been made in children's social services over the last 2 years and sets direction over a medium term time frame to address increasing challenges around managing need, workforce stability and financial sustainability. It reflects increasing challenges since the Service Improvement Plan (SIP) for 2015/16 was agreed. As such, the plan includes a set of actions which are additional to current SIP. The 3 year timescale of the plan and financial model, recognises that practice led transformation requires sustained direction and effort over a prolonged period of time.

The detailed plan is appended to this paper. There are 4 themes contained within the plan which detail the improvements required:

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Quality and Effectiveness of Social Work Practice
Capacity and Capability of the Workforce
Improved commissioning
Service and Financial Performance and Accountability

The plan also contains within it a financial model, risks, mitigations and measures which will enable robust tracking of whether the plan is delivering the outcomes required. The key actions from this transformation plan will form the core of an updated Service Improvement Plan for 2016/17. The plan will also need to be flexible and contain within it a dynamic model which allows service and financial performance to be monitored robustly and challenged.

Member Scrutiny:

It was asked how long the diagnostic expert would be with us, the Chief Officer answered that it would be short and sharp with solutions needing to come from within the Authority.

The Chair stressed that the Chief Officer should not be anxious to share ideas with the Committee, recognising this is the first part of a long process, the Committee will act as a critical friend who will help take things forward.

Recommendations:

It is recommended that the 3 year Children and Young People Services and Financial Plan be referred to Cabinet for approval.

Committee Conclusion and Chairs Summary:

Members express thanks to the newly appointed Chief Officer for Social Services for presenting a report detailing how the service intends to make progress both in terms of the need to improve performance and to balance a budget as far as possible. Members acknowledge that the preparation of this report is likely to have been difficult given that the officer is very new in post. Members conclude that the officer has gained an understanding of the key areas that need to be addressed and agree that whilst the report provides a useful outline of key areas for future focus and should be submitted to the Cabinet, Members recognise that the report is not a definitive plan for Social Services for the next three years. The Members present agree that the report therefore should be considered by Cabinet and the Chief Officer is requested to return with the new performance report based on the Outcomes Framework in the spring.

The meeting ended at 4.02 pm