

Monmouthshire Select Committee Minutes

Meeting of People Scrutiny Committee held at The Council Chamber, County Hall, Rhadyr, Usk, NP15 1GA with remote attendance on Friday, 1st December, 2023 at 10.00 am

Councillors Present

County Councillor John Crook (Chairman)
County Councillor Jackie Strong (Vice Chairman)

County Councillors: Fay Bromfield,
Christopher Edwards, Simon Howarth,
Penny Jones, Sue Riley, Ian Chandler, Tony Kear
(substituting for Maureen Powell), Peter Strong
(substituting for Maria Stevens)

Also in attendance County Councillors: Frances
Taylor, Ian Chandler, Cabinet Member for Social
Care, Safeguarding and Accessible Health
Services and Martyn Groucutt, Cabinet Member
for Education

Officers in Attendance

Hazel Ilett, Scrutiny Manager
Robert McGowan, Policy and Scrutiny Officer
Matthew Gatehouse, Chief Officer People,
Performance and Partnerships.
Clare Morgan, Service Manager, All Age Disability
and Mental Health
Paige Moseley, Solicitor
Ceri York, Group Manager Service Development
and Commissioning
Jenny Jenkins, Head of Adult Services

APOLOGIES: County Councillors Richard John, Maureen Powell and Maria Stevens, and Jane Rogers Chief Officer for Social Care, Safeguarding and Accessible Health Services

1. Declarations of Interest.

None

2. Public Open Forum.

Two written representations had been received in advance of the People Scrutiny Committee meeting and these had been distributed to committee members, the Cabinet Member and Officers. A video submission had also been received from Professor David Abbot, which was played at the meeting.

3. Call-in of the decision by Cabinet of 15th November 2023 in relation to developing the future of My Day My Life Bases.

The Scrutiny Manager explained the Call-in process, as outlined in the Council's Constitution. Councillor Kear spoke as the Call-in Lead, detailing the reasons for calling in the decision, as stated in the Call-in request. Councillor Howarth also outlined his reasons for the call-in.

Key points raised by Call-in Members:

- Concerns about the consistency and thoroughness of the consultation process.

- Concern about the evidence base for the decision and a feeling the process is flawed.
- Concerns about the suitability of the venue proposed for the service in Abergavenny and concerns around the funding plans for ensuring the accessibility of the building.
- Concern around the robustness of the strategy overall.
- Concern that the decision is being rushed and that scrutiny members have not had the opportunity to inspect wider background information that they feel is relevant to their scrutiny of the decision.

Cabinet Member Ian Chandler responded to the points of the call-in and answered the members' questions with Jenny Jenkins, Head of Adult Services. The Cabinet Member addressed the specific grounds for the call-in of the decision, outlining the pre-decision scrutiny that had been undertaken by the committee on 18th July prior to the Cabinet consideration of the matter on 11th October 2023, prior to the decision taken on 15th November 2023. He recognised the commitment by elected members in scrutinising the decision, but commented that the scrutiny process had been robust. He also provided an explanation of the consultation process undertaken and the positive engagement of service users in the process.

The Head of Adult Services confirmed that service users are still receiving the service, but that there is a need to move toward an inclusive and vibrant service as soon as possible.

Key points raised by Committee Members:

- The suitability of the Melville Theatre building was raised and some members spoke of concerns around accessibility.
- Some members expressed their desire that the decision be accepted and that the transformation of the service be progressed with a pace.
- A member expressed doubt that the remit of My Day, My Life fits with a building such as the Melville Theatre.
- There were continuing concerns of various members about the consultation process and the decisions relating to the My Day My Life bases, indicating a fault in the administration's decision-making.
- There were concerns about the communication with service users.

Formal Outcome of the Scrutiny (Chair's Summary):

Following significant debate which can be (in significant part) accessed via the live stream, the Committee proceeded to a vote:

Four Members agreed to accept the Cabinet decision. Five Members agreed to refer the decision to full Council, for the following reasons:

Members have reservations about the decision and concerns about the robustness of the consultation process carried out with service users.

The decision to refer the matter to Council was carried.

The meeting ended at **11.28 am**

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