

MONMOUTHSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

**Minutes of the meeting of Strong Communities Select Committee held
at The Council Chamber, County Hall, The Rhadyr, Usk, NP15 1GA on Thursday, 28th
April, 2016 at 10.00 am**

PRESENT: County Councillor S. Howarth (Chairman)
County Councillor V. Smith (Vice Chairman)

County Councillors: A. Easson, A. Webb and S. White

OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE:

Will McLean	Head of Policy & Engagement
Roger Hoggins	Head of Operations
Sharran Lloyd	LSB Development Manager
Matthew Gatehouse	Policy and Performance Manager
Richard Jones	Improvement Support Officer
Hazel Clatworthy	Sustainability Community Officer
Hazel Ilett	Scrutiny Manager
Richard Williams	Democratic Services Officer

APOLOGIES:

Councillors D. Dovey, S. Jones, P. Jordan and K. Williams

1. Declarations of Interest

County Councillor V.E. Smith declared a personal, non-prejudicial interest pursuant to the Members' Code of Conduct in respect of minute 6, Scrutiny of Partnerships, as she is a Member of Monmouth Housing Association.

2. Special Meeting regarding the Joint Budget - 16th December 2015

We noted the minutes of the Joint Select Committee dated 16th December 2015.

3. Strong Communities Select Committee dated 25th February 2016

The minutes of the Strong Communities Select Committee dated 25th February 2016 were confirmed and signed by the Chairman.

4. Special Meeting - Strong Communities Select Committee dated 17th March 2016

The minutes of the Special meeting of the Strong Communities Select Committee dated 17th March 2016 were confirmed and signed by the Chairman.

5. Sustainable Development Policy

Context:

To provide the Select Committee with the opportunity to scrutinise the proposed Sustainable Development Policy prior to a decision being sought by full Council.

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Key Issues:

In April 2016 the Well-being of Future Generations Act (Wales) 2015 became law setting what sustainable development means in Wales. It places a duty on local authorities to apply the sustainable development principle to maximising their contribution to seven national well-being goals.

The Council was an early adopter of the Act. As part of this approach it worked with the Wales Audit Office which produced a report on the Council's preparedness. The results of this work have been presented at Audit Committee and Cabinet and have been used to help implement The Act.

Sustainable Development has always been central to how we operate as a Council. The authority will now amend its existing policy to reflect The Act and ensure a clear and consistent understanding across the organisation. This will allow the organisation to have coherence across its policy framework and future policies and programmes that are brought to Members for decisions will be expected to reflect it.

Member Scrutiny:

Having scrutinised the report, the following points were noted:

- The majority of the sustainable policy was taken from legislation which is unlikely to change in the future. Therefore, it might be appropriate to review the policy again in 2018 to ascertain whether it remains in line with the wellbeing assessment.
- Structures are being put in place to identify if we as an authority are contributing to our goals. Members and the Wales Audit Office may challenge and identify potential problems. Hopefully, the legislation will help to identify any potential problems.
- Health and Wellbeing issues were at the forefront of the Authority. The Public Service Board will assess this with a view to enhancing people's wellbeing. Social Services will integrate more effectively with G.P. and nursing services to allow the Authority to intervene earlier and provide appropriate support.
- Since the 15th November 2015 new checklists have been introduced which are specific to each of the Wellbeing Goals.

Recommendation:

- (i) We need ensure that we are aware of our responsibilities and be knowledgeable enough to understand the process;
- (ii) The policy should be more user friendly;

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(iii) Officers should work with the Planning Department with regard to sustainability and the Local Development Plan.

6. Partnership Mapping Exercise and the range of services that are delivered by grant-funded partners

Context:

- To provide relevant partnership information to the Strong Communities Select Committee in relation to the contribution of third sector organisations.
- To focus on the representation, activity and delivery of third sector partners across the partnership landscape within Monmouthshire, under the direction of the Monmouthshire Public Service Board (formally Local Service Board).
- To have an oversight of the funding provided to third sector partners.

Key Issues:

In 2012, the Welsh Government Statutory Guidance “Shared Purpose, Shared Delivery” rationalised the partnership landscape, by reducing complexity and duplication, and freeing up resources, through the development of Local Service Boards and the Single Integrated Plan. In April 2016, the Wellbeing of Future Generations Act came into force and the Monmouthshire Local Service Board transitioned into a statutory Public Service Board with the responsibility of overseeing the remaining year of the Single Integrated Plan, which runs until March 2017.

Following the audit and review of the partnership landscape in 2014/15, the Strategic Partnership team concentrated on shaping the partnership landscape into a structure that was accessible to all partners. Strategic partnership groups were mapped and reviewed and this enabled the team to understand the complexities of partnership arrangements, the robustness of partnership governance and how they were contributing to improving population outcomes identified in the SIP for Monmouthshire and reporting into the Public Service Board.

The Partnership landscape in Monmouthshire fully embraces multi-agency working, with representation from a wide range of partner organisations, including the third sector, who work collaboratively to improve the outcomes for Monmouthshire residents. Collaboration and partnership working forms a key part of the delivery mechanism across the county, and it is important that the Select Committee has a solid oversight of this work and the contribution of the Authority’s third sector partners in this wide and varied landscape.

Funding is awarded to some of the Authority’s third sector partners, who contribute towards the outcomes of the Monmouthshire Single Integrated Plan. This funding is as follows:

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Organisation	Project	Amount 2016/17
GAVO	Third Sector Compact	£12,000
Citizens Advice Bureau	Advice Service	£57,105
Home Start	Families First Programme	£31,000
Crossroads, Young Carers	Families First Programme	£50,486
Total		£150,591

Member Scrutiny:

Having scrutinised the report, the following points were noted:

- A presentation and video was shown to the Select Committee regarding this matter
- Home Start has made a difference. Schools are pleased with the outcomes.
- The Authority's financial contribution to GAVO ensures that we obtain value for money from this service. GAVO plays an important role as one of our partners.
- GAVO will be coming to a future meeting of the Select Committee.
- The Citizen's Advice Bureau (CAB) provides excellent work and will be coming to a future meeting of the Adults Select Committee.
- It was noted that the Community Council's contribution to CAB was generally smaller than the contributions provided by the Town Councils within Monmouthshire. Knowledge of ratepayers' precepts could help in determining how much each community council should be contributing to CAB.
- GAVO also receives a grant from Welsh Government.

We resolved to accept the recommendations of the report, as outlined below:

- (i) That the Select Committee has oversight of the partnership structure and landscape which contributes to the delivery of the Monmouthshire Single Integrated Plan, under the direction of the Public Service Board.

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- (ii) That the Select Committee reviews the role of the third sector and how it contributes to the Monmouthshire Single Integrated Plan.
- (iii) That the Select Committee reviews with a critical eye, the representation, spread and scope of third sector organisations across the Monmouthshire partnership landscape and how well represented they are currently under the Public Service Board.
- (iv) The Select Committee reviews and has a clear oversight of the funding arrangements allocated by Monmouthshire County Council to third sector organisations.

7. Improvement Objectives in development of the Improvement Plan for 2016-2017

Context:

To scrutinise the Improvement Objectives contained in the Improvement Plan 2016-17 ahead of a decision by Council on 12th May 2016.

Key Issues:

The setting of annual Improvement Objectives and the production of an Improvement Plan are statutory requirements under the Local Government (Wales) Measure 2009.

The Improvement Plan is produced in two parts. This is the forward looking section of the plan and is focused on commitments and aspirations. It presents an opportunity to set the key actions that will deliver the Council's priorities of education, support for vulnerable people, supporting business and job creation and maintaining locally accessible services.

The Improvement Plan 2015-17 was published in May 2015 and contained five objectives closely aligned to delivering the Council's priorities. The improvement objectives for 2016/17 are a continuation of five objectives set in May 2015:

- We will improve at all key stages of education.
- We will safeguard people, whether young or old, while reducing people's dependence on social care.
- We want to enable Our County to thrive.
- Maintaining locally accessible services.
- We want to be an efficient, effective and sustainable organisation

The information for scrutiny focusses on the detail of the Improvement Objectives for 2016/17, which will be contained within the full Improvement Plan. The objectives have been reviewed and updated to continue relevant activity that was already committed in the objective and include any new actions that have been identified. The Improvement Objectives are currently subject to a public consultation which will run until 22nd April

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2016 and feedback from the consultation will be incorporated into the objectives, as relevant, prior to being put forward for approval by Council on 12th May 2016.

This is a draft plan for scrutiny and at this stage some parts of the plan are not fully completed and targets not finalised, these will be completed ahead of the decision by Council.

Some changes have been made to the format plan to reflect latest legislation, respond to feedback from the Wales Audit Office as well as the Authority's own learning.

These are:

- Explaining the structure of the objective so everyone understands why certain information is included.
- Continuing to ensure clearer links between actions and measures with associated targets for improvement.
- Embedding the Well-Being of Future Generations Act requirements in our planning, including considering how our activity contributes to Welsh Government seven wellbeing goals

During 2016-2017 Monmouthshire County Council will undertake two substantial assessments of need and wellbeing within the County as a consequence of the Wellbeing of Future Generations Act and the Social Services and Wellbeing Act. The information that is gained during this work will provide a much deeper evidence base to inform the publication of the Council's well-being objectives by 31st March 2017 (a requirement under the Wellbeing of Future Generations Act). At the point of developing the wellbeing objectives a fundamental rethink of improvement objectives will be undertaken in line with the principles of the Act.

Part two of the plan, focusing on what has been achieved in 2014-15, will be presented to Council in October 2016 when full audited information becomes available for publication. Prior to that select committees will be presented with reports showing progress against the objectives set for 2015-16.

Member Scrutiny:

Having scrutinised the report, the following points were noted:

- The Head of Operations would investigate the following issues raised and report back to Select committee Members:
 - What level of recycling is generated through incineration?
 - Whether the Authority has a mandate to save £250,000 by removing glass from the comingled recyclates.

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- The cost effectiveness of incineration rather than recycling. It was noted that this is not the case now but depended upon the recycling market in simple financial terms albeit the Authority has recycling targets set by Welsh government, so incinerating everything was not feasible.
- It was noted that the feasibility of materials being sold at recycling centres had been raised with Viridor.
- A six month pilot scheme was being undertaken in Abergavenny regarding glass collection prior to implementation in 2017.
- In response to a Select Committee Member's question regarding a Council owned property in Caldicot, it was noted that this was a matter for the Estates Team.
- In response to a Select Committee Member's question regarding the Select Committee visiting Rover Way in Cardiff, the Scrutiny Manager stated that this matter could be investigated.

We resolved:

- (i) To receive the report and noted its content;
- (ii) The Head of Operations would investigate the matters raised and report back to Select Committee Members.

8. Scrutiny Forward Work Programme

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

- The next ordinary meeting will be held on Thursday 30th June 2016 at 10.00am.
- A special meeting of the Select Committee will be required before the 30th June 2016. The Scrutiny Manager will investigate a convenient date for this meeting.
- The Scrutiny Manager will write to the Cabinet Member County Councillor P. Murphy with a view to ascertaining the latest position regarding the sale of the public convenience in Raglan.
- The Scrutiny Manager will liaise with the Head of Operations regarding the Highways Working Group with a view to adding this item to the Forward Work Programme to consider resurrecting the working group.

We resolved to receive the Forward Work Programme and noted the points raised.

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9. Council and Cabinet Forward Work Plan

We resolved to receive the Council and Cabinet Forward Work Plan and noted its content.

10. Next meeting

The next ordinary meeting of the Strong Communities Select Committee will be held in the Council Chamber, County Hall, Usk on Thursday 30th June 2016 at 10.00am.