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MONMOUTHSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

Minutes of the meeting of Adults Select Committee held
at Council Chamber, County Hall, The Rhadyr, Usk, NP15 1GA on Tuesday, 12th July,
2016 at 10.00 am

PRESENT: County Councillor P. Farley (Chairman)

County Councillors: R. Chapman, R. Edwards, M. Hickman,
P. Jones, P. Jordan, P. Watts, A. Wintle and D Hudson

OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE:

Nicola Perry	Senior Democracy Officer
Ian Bakewell	Housing & Regeneration Manager
Matthew Gatehouse	
Hazel Ilett	Scrutiny Manager
Sharran Lloyd	LSB Development Manager

APOLOGIES:

County Councillor R. Harris and D Hill

1. Declarations of interest

County Councillor A. Wintle declared a personal non-prejudicial interest in relation to agenda item 7, as a board member for Monmouthshire Housing Association.

2. Public Open Forum

There were no questions from members of the public.

3. To confirm the minutes of the meeting held on 21st June 2016

The minutes of the meeting held on 21st June 2016 were confirmed as an accurate record, and signed by the Chairman, with the following amendment:

In attendance: Shirley Lightbound, not Lightfoot.

4. To discuss the partnership framework relating to Adult's Services and their relationship to the Public Service Board.

We welcomed the PSB Development Manager, to the meeting who presented her report on the Landscape and the Partnership Structure in Monmouthshire. She provided additional detailed information to the previously circulated organogram.

Background:

- An extensive audit and review of all the partnerships in Monmouthshire was undertaken in 2014/15 to gather information to better understand the activities and services they deliver, their outcomes, how they fit within the structure of the Local Service Board Single Integrated Plan (SIP) and how they report back.

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- The Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 provides for transition to a statutory Public Service Board (PSB), chaired by the Chief Executive. It is made up of the Chief Executive Officers of the multi agencies involved (Police, Fire and Rescue, Health, National Resources Wales, Welsh Government etc.) and is the responsible body that will oversee the SIP until March 2017. The PSB sets out the vision and direction to respond to needs within Monmouthshire.
- The Programme Board, chaired by Mr. W. McLean, Head of Democracy, Engagement and Improvement, is more operational ensuring that agencies are maximising contributions to deliver outcomes against the SIP.
- The SIP Performance Group monitors partnerships to ensure delivery of outcomes, that they are accountable when delivering statutory responsibilities and that they are effective. During the review, the group acted as a critical friend and offered a peer review to consider barriers, challenges and opportunities for improvement. Issues identified were escalated to provide resolution. All partnerships have action plans for development and report back accordingly.
- The Engagement and Participation group considers the data in context and the Gwent Needs Assessment Group considers the data in detail. The partnerships and their sub groups sit below these groups in the structure and the additional information circulated provides details of the organisations and agencies represented on each.

Members Scrutiny:

It was queried and confirmed that partnerships meet quarterly; their sub groups vary with some meeting quarterly and some monthly.

The Chair questioned how well the perspectives of the whole County are covered in the various groups. It was explained that there was more peer alignment at operational level on the Safer Monmouthshire Group and Integrated Youth Offer Group which have multi-agency representation from across Gwent or Monmouthshire. It was commented that the Community Safety Action Teams (CSAT) are very responsive; based in each town and working with town and community partners. Work is being undertaken to consider ways of developing them to be based more on information from the community.

In response to Members' concerns, it was confirmed that variations in response from the 101 service have been reported to Gwent Police.

Members asked how the Older People's Forum is advertised. It was confirmed that the Forum is advertised on the website and in the press, an officer visits local groups and distributes leaflets and posters. The Aging Well Executive Group has requested that a Communications Plan to promote the forum is established.

It was confirmed that the Violence against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence Board champions recognition that such acts are also committed against men.

Members commented that 50 plus is no longer an appropriate age range. It was confirmed that 50 plus is derived from Welsh Government and acknowledged that the 50-70 age group had differing needs (e.g. preparing for retirement) from the 70 plus age group.

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It was queried if the many organisations that deal with older people could be integrated. It was confirmed that the agencies that work with older people are all represented on the Aging Well Executive Group.

Future work programme: It was agreed to consider further consideration of the work of the Aging Well Executive group and the Older Person's Forum, and also the consistency of service across the County.

Chairmans Summary:

The Chair summarised that the item had been a helpful insight into the work of partnerships in Monmouthshire adding that although the PSB Select Committee was responsible for the overall scrutiny of the PSB, there were key areas for individual Select Committees to consider specific matters in more depth.

We thanked the officer for her attendance and contribution to the meeting.

5. Year-end Performance Reporting together with Outcome Agreements and Improvement Plan

Context:

We welcomed the Policy and Performance Manager to the meeting who presented the Year-end Performance Reporting together with Outcome Agreements and Improvement Plan:

The purpose of the report was:

- To present the end of year data for the Improvement Objectives which are under the remit of Adult Select Committee:
 - Improvement Objective 2: We will safeguard people, whether young or old, while reducing people's dependence on social care.
- To present an evaluation of the progress and impact made over the three years of the Outcome Agreement 2013 -16, for themes which are under the committee's remit:
 - *Outcome Agreement Theme 2: Ensuring people receive the help they need to live fulfilled lives.*
- To present the latest performance against wider key national performance indicators that are under the committee's remit.

Members Scrutiny

The Chair questioned the consistency of provision of services across the County.

Members queried if anything has been learnt about how to remove persons from social care when appropriate once in the system. It was confirmed that this is a difficult aspect, referring particularly to people with low level care needs. It was explained that there is a high satisfaction rate in the services provided, and the individual and family rely on the

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support provided. It was discussed that it may be better to limit entry to the system which could provide cost benefits in the longer term. Members spoke of concerns related to delayed transfer to social care from hospital. It was explained that the performance data spiked in September/October which has been attributed to a change in the measurement system used by the Aneurin Bevan Health Board which incorrectly included non-Monmouthshire residents. Although figures are not as low now as last year, anecdotal reports support that systems appear to be working well. It was agreed it would be useful to gain the perspective of Aneurin Bevan Health Board witnesses when they next attend our meeting.

Members questioned the use of over 60 bus passes and wished to understand more about their usage given that in many areas of the county, there is no bus service. It was agreed that take up is limited because of service availability and that this was an area that would be assessed as part of Wellbeing of Future Generations evaluations. It was agreed to monitor the suggested proposal to stop persons over the age of 70 driving. Interest was also expressed in the percentage of disabled badges issued. It was commented that there had been a dramatic reduction due to a change in criteria for renewal.

Recommendations:

- To scrutinise the performance achieved and impact made, particularly in areas that fall under the committee's remit, to assess progress and performance against the improvement objectives.
- That members scrutinise the performance achieved and impact made, over the three years (2013/14, 2014/15 and 2015/16) of the Outcome Agreement
- That members identify and explore any areas of underperformance or concerns, and to seek assurance from those responsible for future activity where they conclude that performance needs to improve.
- That members confirm the evaluation scores based on the evidence provided.

Chairmans Summary:

The Chair sought and achieved agreement that the Committee had fulfilled the recommendations in the report.

The Chair expressed his appreciation for the volume of data and graphs provided and its presentation which has provided greater clarity.

We thanked the Policy and Performance Manager for his attendance and contribution to the meeting.

6. Joint Housing Solutions Service Pilot - Joint evaluation of the service.

Context:

The Housing and Regeneration Manager was welcomed to the meeting to present a report to provide an update on the pilot joint Housing Solutions Service with Torfaen County Borough Council that started in March 2015. The report seeks to both highlight the achievements secured and key conclusions of the progress.

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Members Scrutiny

Members recognised the drive for greater engagement with the private sector to increase the number of houses available to let within a context of the UK Government seeking to limit private landlords' ability to provide private rental properties through a 3% increase in stamp duty on second property purchases and the discontinuation of the ability to offset income from private rental properties against mortgage interest payments, from tax year 2017/18.

Members asked how it was intended to increase engagement with landlords. It was explained that this was a less successful area of the pilot and would require a dedicated resource to engage with them and to market working with the Council. This continues to be a challenge and there is much work to do which still might not eliminate the risk. Feedback from the Landlords Forum is that the sector is being squeezed and that letting properties is becoming a less attractive prospect. It was reported that the level of prevention work has improved which is linked to engagement with private landlords. It was suggested that default to social stock was the fall-back position but there are limited numbers of vacancies unfortunately, and it would be preferable to increase stock. Members spoke of the need for more affordable housing and identified the 30-35% percentage of such housing included in the Local Development Plan noting that it is difficult to achieve the percentage when developers seek profits of 20%.

It was queried if the pilot highlighted cultural differences between the two counties. This was not thought to be the case.

Members asked what HR involvement there had been to support staff. It was confirmed that staff had received support for six months. It was confirmed that the problems have diminished and that a temporary member of staff has been appointed to provide cover. In response to a question, it was confirmed that it was not a geographical problem but that staff felt isolated from the Council and its priorities.

Members referred to the Financial Inclusion Officer post and queried if there was duplication with similar posts provided by the Citizens Advice Bureau (CAB) and Monmouthshire Housing Association (MHA) comparing the higher volume of referrals dealt with by CAB, and querying if it might be more efficient to use the CAB dedicated officer instead. It was explained that the services of each Financial Inclusion Officer are quite distinct. The Financial Inclusion Officer is funded by a Welsh Government grant to prevent homelessness. The CAB offers a wider service; a differing role. MHA has invested in a similar post to maximise its rental income. The Chair sought assurances that the three sources of advice collaborate, that any differences are clarified and opportunities for rationalisation are explored.

Members asked if there were any funding issues. They were informed that there were some financial benefits to the partnership e.g. access to the Torfaen furniture store and a joint out of hours service. It was added that there was an allocation of grant funding from Welsh Government last year and this year. This year's is suspended in relation to statutory returns. There are issues with the IT system e.g. the need to align with new legislation and financial responsibility will return to Monmouthshire for this.

The Chair concluded that there had been problems with the pilot and a proposal to withdraw in favour of reintegration to Monmouthshire. The disadvantages identified were access to Torfaen accommodation and vice versa which provided useful flexibility for the provision of emergency accommodation for Monmouthshire residents and noted that this could possibly continue. It was possible that the shared IT system could continue and options are being explored. There will also be short term reintegration costs mostly related to IT provision.

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Recommendations:

- Consider the achievements of the service, how the service has benefited the Council and community and the ongoing issues and risks identified
- To consider the proposal to end the pilot and withdraw from elements of the joint Housing Solutions service that are not delivering added value and to agree an exit plan with Torfaen.

Chairmans Summary:

The Chair summarised that the pilot had been tried and evaluated, with a proposal to reverse the arrangement which, for a range of reasons hasn't achieved what was intended. He remarked that there is an expectation for authorities to collaborate more. He asked if there were any lessons learnt that could be communicated to other Heads of Service. It was recommended that a lead authority should be appointed instead of a joint approach.

The recommendations were unanimously agreed. The Chair emphasised that this decision would not rule out joint working in the future.

The Chair expressed his gratitude to the Head of Housing and Regeneration Manager for his report, for providing him with regular updates and invited him to return to report on reintegration.

7. Adults Select Committee forward work programme

We received the Forward Work Programme. In doing so, we noted the following topics for future discussion:

- Report from Financial Inclusion Officer
- GWICES – ongoing monitoring report
- CSSIW Domiciliary Care Report
- Aging Well Group – invite to meeting
- Aneurin Bevan Health Board: The Chair was authorised to negotiate topics with the Health Board (to include Primary care, Out of hours GP service in Monmouthshire and Specialist Centre).

8. To note the date and time of the next meeting as Tuesday 20th September 2016

20th September 2016 at 10.00am. Apologies for absence were tendered in advance from County Councillor R. Edwards.

The meeting ended at 12.30 pm