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MONMOUTHSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

**Minutes of the meeting of Joint Select Committee held
at County Hall, The Rhadyr, Usk, NP15 1GA on Tuesday, 22nd November, 2016 at 10.00
am**

PRESENT: County Councillors: D. Dovey, P. Farley, R. Harris, M. Hickman, P. Jones,
M. Powell, A. Webb and A. Wintle

Mr M. Fowler
Mrs D. Hudson

OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE:

Hazel Ilett	Scrutiny Manager
Paula Harris	Democratic Services Officer
Claire Marchant	Chief Officer Social Care, Health & Housing
Will McLean	Head of Democracy, Engagement and Improvement
Nicola Needle	Changing Lives Lead
Julie Boothroyd	Head of Adult Services
Andrew Burford	Team Manager, Community Care Team, Adult Service
Dawn Davies	Monmouthshire County Council
Louise Dovey	Social Worker Younger People
Teresa James	Autistic Spectrum Disorder Coordinator
Tyrone Stokes	Accountant

ALSO IN ATTENDANCE

Nygaire Bevan	Regional Transformation Team
Tracey Bressington	Aneurin Bevan University Health Board

County Councillors G. Burrows, V. Smith and A. Webb

1. Election of Chair

County Councillor Peter Farley was elected as Chair.

2. Appointment of Vice-Chair

County Councillor Penny Jones was appointed Vice Chair and will lead the discussion during the CYP item.

3. Apologies for Absence

We received apologies from County Councillors R Chapman, R. Edwards, D. Blakebrough, S. Howarth, L. Guppy, D. Dovey, D. Evans, D. Jones, Mr Keith Plow, Mr David Hill and Bernard Boniface.

4. Declarations of Interest

In respect to items 6 and 8 County Councillors P Farley, R. Harris and M Powell declared a personal, non-prejudicial interest as School Governors of schools mentioned in discussion.

MONMOUTHSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

Minutes of the meeting of Joint Select Committee held at County Hall, The Rhadyr, Usk, NP15 1GA on Tuesday, 22nd November, 2016 at 10.00 am

5. Social Services and Well-being Act (Part 11)

Context:

The Adult Select Committee received an update on the progress in implementation of Part 11 of the Social Services and Well-being Act 2014 relating to the delivery of care and support to those in the secure estate

Key Issues:

Part 11 of the Social Services and Well-being Act 2014 concerns adults with care and support needs in prison, approved premises and bail accommodation, and children with care and support needs in youth detention accommodation, prison, approved premises or bail accommodation; the secure estate.

The overall principles of the Act fully apply to both adults and children who are detained/residing in the secure estate. Part 11 of the Act and its supporting Regulations and Code of Practice sets out the duties placed on local authorities in respect of adults with care and support needs who are in the secure estate in Wales and a change in how existing responsibilities for the care and support of children in the secure estate (whether detained in England or Wales) are fulfilled. This duty exists regardless of their place of ordinary residence in Wales or elsewhere before their detention.

The majority of the provisions under the 2014 Act apply to those in the secure estate just as they would to individuals living in the community, which includes:

- Population needs assessment.
- Information, advice and assistance.
- Prevention.
- Assessing and meeting need.

The following provisions are disapplied for both children and adults in the secure estate:

- **A person cannot be a carer** within the terms of the Act if they are detained in prison, approved premises or youth detention accommodation.
- **A person cannot receive direct payments** towards meeting the cost of their care and support.
- **A person cannot express preference for accommodation** while they are in custody although they would be able to do so if they were expressing a preference for accommodation they would occupy on their release.
- **A person cannot have their property protected** while they are in prison, youth detention or residing in approved premises. Local authorities with secure estate establishments within their boundary must meet the care and support duties for those adults detained in them **regardless** of their place of ordinary residence in Wales or elsewhere before their detention. In Wales only Cardiff, Swansea, Bridgend and Monmouthshire have prisons within their boundaries.

A new prison is being built in Wrexham and is due to open in 2017.

HMP Usk and Prescoed is in Monmouthshire and it falls to MCC to provide care and support to the prisoners therein.

MONMOUTHSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

Minutes of the meeting of Joint Select Committee held at County Hall, The Rhadyr, Usk, NP15 1GA on Tuesday, 22nd November, 2016 at 10.00 am

Member Scrutiny:

Member of the Committee wished to thank Bernard Boniface and his team for arranging the recent Prison visit, which they unanimously agreed was most informative and useful.

A Member commented that as the subject matter was new to the Committee, less jargon and abbreviations would be useful in reports.

Members discussed the Buddy system and agreed this was an excellent idea.

It was asked if the anticipated funding would suffice and if the implications of the new responsibilities on resources had been considered.

A Member asked if once Autism was identified was there support in place for the individuals and we were told that accessing needs was a priority with the onus on people supporting themselves alongside staff and the Buddy system.

Concerns were raised about staff levels and we asked if the shortage of staff affected the service offered. We were reassured that the safety of staff was paramount and that staff received appropriate training and support.

The Chair commented on the value of the Committee's visit to the prison and was reassured that wellbeing of the inmates was a priority.

Delia Hudson feedback to the Committee regarding her visit to the Older Prisoners Forum, which she has been invited to join and we were told;

- The forum involved approx. 20 inmates in a nice atmosphere.
- The inmates were bored and asked for art and craft supplies.
- During the winter the inmates found the cold weather difficult requesting thermal under garments and hessian gloves whilst tending the gardens.
- The inmates commented that they had extremely long waits for chiropody and dental appointments.
- General points were raised such as, when out at hospital visits the inmates didn't like being hand cuffed.

The Chair thanked Delia Hudson for her feedback and looked forward to future updates.

Committee's Conclusion:

The Chair expressed how pleasing the work already done was and how as a committee look forward to reviewing the work in 9 – 12 months with particular interest in new projects such as the seven day service.

The Chair also looked forward to Delia Hudson's informal feedback.

MONMOUTHSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

**Minutes of the meeting of Joint Select Committee held
at County Hall, The Rhadyr, Usk, NP15 1GA on Tuesday, 22nd November, 2016 at 10.00
am**

6. Budget Monitoring Report (Period 2)

Context:

A report was presented to Committee to provide Members with information on the forecast revenue outturn position of the Authority at the end of period 2 which represents month 6 financial information for the 2016/17 financial year

This report will also be considered by Select Committees as part of their responsibility to,

- assess whether effective budget monitoring is taking place,
- monitor the extent to which budgets are spent in accordance with agreed budget and policy framework,
- challenge the reasonableness of projected over or underspends, and
- monitor the achievement of predicted efficiency gains or progress in relation to savings proposals.

Key Issues & recommendations to Cabinet:

That Cabinet notes the extent of forecast revenue overspend at period 2 of £839,000, an improvement of £529,000 on previous reported position at period 1.

That Cabinet expects Chief Officers to continue to review the levels of over and underspends and reallocate budgets to reduce the extent of compensatory positions needing to be reported from month 6 onwards.

That Cabinet appreciates the extent of predicted schools reserve usage and an anticipation that a further 4 schools will be in a deficit position by end of 2016-17.

That Cabinet approves a caveated use of reserves to finance £318,000 employment tribunal costs if the Council's budget is not able to absorb the effect of this extraordinary expenditure over the remaining 6 months of financial year.

That Cabinet considers the capital monitoring, specific over and underspends, and importantly that Cabinet recognises the risk associated with having to rely on a use of capital receipts in the year of sale and the potential for this to have significant revenue pressures should receipts be delayed and temporary borrowing be required.

Member Scrutiny:

A question was raised regarding a large cohort of residents in Chepstow who required residential care. We were told that when clients go into residential care they are means tested, once their capital drops below 24K they can represent themselves for local authority funding and MCC have had 20 cases of this during this year.

It was asked if this would be happening throughout the County and we were told that the Welsh Government were looking to increase the capital threshold limit from 24K to 50K incrementally.

MONMOUTHSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

Minutes of the meeting of Joint Select Committee held at County Hall, The Rhadyr, Usk, NP15 1GA on Tuesday, 22nd November, 2016 at 10.00 am

From 1st April 2017 the limit will be 30K, we have a provisional within the settlement from Welsh Government, but it will not be enough.

A question was raised by a member regarding the employment tribunal costs, in answer the officer advised the member that as it would not related to the adult portfolio he had little information to hand and he would look in to it further and get back to the member. **(ACTION T.S.)**

We were told by the Head of Service that Adult Services had been a great success over the past number of years. What we are seeing now is a consequence of pressures and demographics against a budget which has been reducing annually.

Committee's Conclusion:

Resource pressures have been discussed in Children's services, in Adult's service we appreciate that Officers have undertaken very detailed analysis.

The idea is emerging that we may wish to write formally from our Select Committees to Welsh Government to make the case that all of these pressures and demands on us do need to be rethought.

The Committee acknowledged the pressure on the Adult Services budget, which has been decreasing annually. Given that we have an ageing population, the Committee is concerned that the budget for social services across adults and children's remits is insufficient. The Chairs of both Committees agreed to write to Welsh Government to highlight their concern about the level of funding.

7. IAA Report

Context:

Members received a report which determines how Information, Advice and Assistance (IAA) is currently delivered across Monmouthshire (to ensure this meets the requirements of the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act and to set out proposals for the future model of IAA provision across the county.

Key Issues:

The Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014 came into effect on 6th April 2016. Wellbeing and prevention are at the centre of the Act and the provision of IAA will ensure voice, choice and control for people in meeting their personal wellbeing outcomes and remaining independent of statutory services for as long as possible.

Part 2 of the Act requires local authorities to have in place an information, advice and assistance service as from April 2017 Data capture is required for which there are performance indicators and aggregated data measures.

MONMOUTHSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

Minutes of the meeting of Joint Select Committee held at County Hall, The Rhadyr, Usk, NP15 1GA on Tuesday, 22nd November, 2016 at 10.00 am

Regional discussions have highlighted a difference in the interpretation of the duty to provide an information, advice and assistance "service" and models range from delivery at the front door of social services to multiple points within and across communities. As a result it is anticipated there will be a degree of incongruence in reporting and measurement across Wales. It may take some time to ascertain what good looks like in terms of Monmouthshire's quantitative measures if comparisons are made with differing models of provision.

Initially the authority intends to measure advice and assistance from a point of delivery at statutory front door(s) but, as the attached report illustrates, this is not a complete picture of activity. Through the development of place based approaches, information, advice and assistance provision will continue to be mapped and co-ordinated and systems developed which will measure both the numbers of people who access this and, more importantly, the impact this has had on wellbeing at individual and community levels.

Monmouthshire has excellent foundations on which to build but there are challenges. The model for IAA proposed, incorporates Future Monmouthshire work streams and the development of place based community wellbeing approaches.

5.6 Members are requested to approve the next steps to take forward this work and to engage in early debate with Welsh Government civil servants to ensure our compliance with the SSWBA.

Member Scrutiny:

A Member commented on the Council's website and found it sadly lacking. The Chief Officer commented on the importance of being able to find information easily and spoke of the DEWIS website which will be launched for Monmouthshire County Council in January 2017.

The Head of Adult Services spoke of a website they are modelling on the Eden Project's website with help with the council's communication team. It will initially be trialled on an internal basis and when it is ready to roll out the team will bring the site to Adults Select for scrutiny.

A member asked if the information will be put in leaflet form and we were told that would be useful driver to get the message out. It was stressed that not everyone has access to the internet and that it is important that the message is available to all.

Committee's Conclusion:

The Chair recognised that this is a work in progress and that the responsibilities under the act should help us to ensure that improvements are made as to how we communicate service and advice to people.

Members suggested that officers need to consider providing information in different formats, such as by leaflet and not to assume that all citizens are able to access information via the internet.

The Committee agreed with the direction of travel and requested that this returns to the committee in the Spring/early summer 2017 for further scrutiny.

MONMOUTHSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

**Minutes of the meeting of Joint Select Committee held
at County Hall, The Rhadyr, Usk, NP15 1GA on Tuesday, 22nd November, 2016 at 10.00
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8. CYP Chief Officer Report

County Councillor P. Jones was the Chair for this item.

Context:

We received a presentation from the interim Head of Service to provide Members with an evaluation of the Children and Young People's directorate and the extended schooling system that it works with.

Key Issues:

- It reflected on the progress that our schools have made in the last year at the end of all key stages. The report will focus on the key headline indicator at the end of each stage. The full range of outcome indicators (for the Foundation Stage, Key Stage 2 and Key Stage 3) can be found in papers that have been presented to the Children and Young People Select Committee on the 3rd November.
- The results included in the report for Key Stages four and five are still provisional and there may be some small changes when the numbers are finalised. However, in terms of trend and our high level analysis we believe them to be sufficiently robust for inclusion in this report.
- The report concludes with a set of objectives for the coming year based on the key areas of focus identified in this report

Member Scrutiny:

It was asked why there was so little reference to the EAS, in answer we were told that in regard to some of the partnerships we are involved in the Officer didn't see the need to put them in, on reflection this will be changed for full Council.

Members congratulated the Chief Officer on the report, the presentation style report was preferred to an essay.

A Member asked about the excellent schools and we were told that we know there is excellent practice in our schools and these schools need to be identified and best practice models rolled out across the county so that we can build on work already taking place.

In respect to Free School Meals it was asked if a body of work was required to drive the uptake of this. We were answered that there were issues surrounding this during 2016 with people being unregistered without realising they had to reregister and the reduction of benefit funding.

The Chair commented on quartiles and that we must accept that schools rightly accept children with learning difficulties so that it not always possible for schools to reach quartile 2. It's not the schools, it's the system.

In relation to the Foundation Phase gender gap it was asked if by introducing intervention work with the girls, it looks as if we have disadvantaged the boys and if the strategy we have employed needs to be revised. The Chief Officer agreed and spoke of the gender gap being too wide until KS2 and it will be explored with teaching colleagues and the EAS.

MONMOUTHSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

**Minutes of the meeting of Joint Select Committee held
at County Hall, The Rhadyr, Usk, NP15 1GA on Tuesday, 22nd November, 2016 at 10.00
am**

Committee's Conclusion:

The Chair thanked the Chief Officer for an excellent report, note the great improvements which have been made and acknowledge the work of the staff in the CYP Directorate.

The Chair looks forward to monitoring the progress.

The meeting ended at 1.23 pm