

Minutes



Performance Scrutiny Committee - People

Date: 6 March 2018

Time: 10.00 am

Present: Councillors J Cleverly, J Guy, T Holyoake, L Lacey, H Thomas, K Thomas, C Townsend, J Watkins and T Watkins

Co-opted Members : R Penn (Church in Wales)

In Attendance: Councillors P Cockeram (Cabinet Member - Social Services) and G Giles (Cabinet Member - Education and Skills)

H Davies-Edwards (Principle Challenge Advisor), J Harris (Strategic Director - People), C Humphrey (Head of Adult & Community Services), S A Jenkins (Head of Children & Young Peoples Services), A Powles (Assistant Head of Education - Engagement and Learning) and D Cooke (Overview & Scrutiny Officer)

Apologies: Councillors D Williams

1 **Declarations of Interest**

None

2 **Minutes of the Meeting held on 23 January 2018**

The minutes of the meeting were approved as a true and accurate record subject to the following amendment; Cllr Laura Lacey was in attendance.

3 **Performance Update - Quarter 3**

Education

Performance Measures

Invitees;

- Andrew Powles – Assistant Head of Education – Engagement and Learning
- Cllr Gail Giles – Cabinet Member for Education and Skills
- James Harris – Strategic Director - People

The Committee were advised that the Chief Education Officer was unable to attend the meeting.

The Cabinet Member presented an overview of the performance within the service area to the Committee. All performance measures were Green, with Primary school attendance increasing by 0.3% on the last academic year, a 0.4% increase for Secondary school attendance which improved the ranking for Newport from 22nd to 18th. The Cabinet Member advised that Primary and Secondary school attendance remained a priority and thanked all the schools and Head Teachers for the hard work in achieving this.

The Committee asked the following:

- Why were performance measures **PAM/004 % Pupils achieving the expected outcome at end of KS2** and **PAM/008 Attendance Secondary Year End %** showing within target for the year, however the direction of travel for both was showing as going down. The Officer advised that this was because there was a significant level of sickness in the schools, twice the amount of last year for the same period, and that this had impacted on the figures for this performance measure. The adverse weather conditions, along with the timing of the Christmas holiday had contributed to this increased figure. The Officer advised the Members that the Education Welfare Service had looked into this. Members then asked if this could be included in future reports on matters relating to attendance, for information purposes.
- Members queried the 0.4% increase in attendance for Secondary schools, and asked how many students the percentage equates to. The Officer estimated that 0.1% equated to 10,000 sessions over the course of the year, and agreed to check this figure and confirm this with the Committee.
- Members asked if there were any improvements with exam and GCSE results for schools that were in special measures. The Cabinet Member advised that it varied between schools.
- Was there a link with school attendance and attainment? It was confirmed that there was a link between attendance and attainment, and that for every 2 weeks a young person was absent, this could result in as much as half a grade lower GCSE result. The Cabinet Member provided assurances that the Council was working to ensure good attendance for young people, with the figures being checked monthly and a meeting with parents being triggered if attendance was below 80%.
- **PAM/004 (% Pupils achieving the expected outcome at the end of KS2) PAM/005 (% pupils achieving the expected CSI outcome at the end of KS3)**
Both of these measures were on target for the year. The Committee requested a breakdown of these figures in terms of the numbers in receipt of Free School Meals (FSM).
- The Committee discussed the financial support available through the Pupil Deprivation Grant, it was noted that it was be up to the individual schools how the grant was utilised. Members asked for a general overview of what the schools are spending the money on and how many pupils were in receipt of support through the grant.
- Free School Meals was discussed, and Members asked whether eligibility criteria was available for parents and pupils, and what the Council was doing to ensure those who were eligible were using the support available. It was confirmed that eligibility criteria was given, although there were barriers to engaging with all of those eligible. The Gwent Education Minority-Ethnic Service (GEMS) and the Education Achievement Service (EAS) were providing support to assist families accessing FSM. The Cabinet Member advised that opening sessions were being held at schools for general information, and that the information could also be provided via social media.

The Strategic Director advised the Committee that in the previous year leaflets which contained the criteria for claiming FSM were given to schools to pass onto parents, but it was not confirmed if this had been the case this year. Schools were the most appropriate level at which to engage with parents regarding FSM, as they have daily contact with both parents and children. Members requested for figures for each

school of the number of children in receipt of FSM, and commented it would be helpful for the criteria details to be put on the Council website.

- Was there a relationship between those young people who received FSM and attendance rates? Members were advised that after tracking attendances across the city, young people who received FSM had lower attendance, and young people with Special Education Needs (SEN) who claimed FSM had slightly lower attendance.

Education - Pupil Performance Data 2016/17 Key Stage 4 and 5 Report

Invitees;

- Hayley Davies-Edwards – EAS Principal Challenge Advisor
- Cllr Gail Giles – Cabinet Member for Education and Skills

The Cabinet Member then gave an overview of the performance data contained within the report. It was advised that the Council had planned for 2 years to ensure everything was put in place for the GCSE and exam changes. As a result for the first time, Newport had achieved over the target set for Level 2 Inclusive and Level 2 Maths indicators. The national rankings had improved, and All Wales comparisons show strength in the regional positions.

The Committee asked the following:

- Do schools prefer pupils to take GCSE examinations fully or BTEC? Members were advised that schools would like to offer pupils a range of qualifications; this down to the Head Teacher to ensure the balance was right.
- Were Welsh Government allowing schools sufficient time to adjust the curriculum? It was advised that schools had been under a lot of pressure to make quick changes to review the curriculum over a relatively short period of time, those schools that started early to prepare and train staff had managed. It was noted that Newport did well compared to other LAs. The Cabinet Member praised the effort of all schools and members of the Education department..
- Were the same authorities still appearing in the top 5 for rankings? The Officer advised that Monmouth tended to come higher in the rankings. With exception from Level 1 which stayed the same, all of Newport's rankings had improved.
- Members were advised that support for schools were tailored specially for the needs for the learners, and noted that some schools use the PGD funding for pupils to engage in certain cultural activities that they would not get elsewhere.
- In relation to the data on Free School meals eligibility, broken down by individual schools, the Committee asked for clarification on how this was measured and coded for Red, Amber and Green. For example, for the % L2 figure for St Julian's School was 56.4% and coded red. Lliswerry High had a lower figure of 54.6%, but was coded green.

The Officer gave overview of the Key Stage 4, School Benchmark Quarter Performance and explained that with Welsh Government's categorisation model, each Secondary school was grouped with similar schools. Training was offered to the Committee to assist with their understanding of the benchmarks data.

- Members spoke of the widening in the gap in achievement levels between young people receiving FSM and those who do not. It was asked will the lower attainment at Key Stage 2 and 3 have a knock on affect further increasing the gap at Key Stage 4 and 5, and if so what mitigations were in place to prevent this? Members were

advised that ways to decrease this was being looked into. The Committee requested that this information is provided at a later date.

- Is there confidence that schools were identifying all children with Dyslexia? Members were advised that the policy was not to identify Dyslexia until children were 6 or 7, but hopes that schools were requesting testing at this age where appropriate.

Children and Young Peoples Services

Invitees;

- Sally Jenkins – Head of Children and Young Peoples Services
- Cllr Paul Cockeram – Cabinet Member for Social Services
- James Harris – Strategic Director – People

The Cabinet Member introduced an overview of the performance to the Committee, which included 4 Red measures, 2 Amber and 10 Green. In relation to Red measures **CYP/33 PAM/029 - % of looked after children who have had 3 or more placements**, the Cabinet Member advised that this had been an area of focus for the team, and stressed that correct placement of children was important. The Committee were told that all measures in Green had improved greatly and the focus was now on improving other areas.

The Members asked the following:

- It was asked if it was more difficult to find placement for related children. The Head of Children and Young People advised that wherever possible family members were kept together in Newport, and emphasised the importance of this. An example was then given to the Committee of 6 siblings brought into care as an emergency, who started in separate placements but were reunited within a matter of weeks.
- **CYP/33 PAM/029 - % of looked after children who have had 3 or more placements** – a breakdown of the number of residential placements was requested. The Committee were advised that every child was treated as an individual and the Council did its best to meet their needs, residential care was the right option for some children.
- The number of Interim Care Orders (ICOs) had doubled and the number of looked after children had risen from 278 to 332 between June 2014 to June 2017. Members asked if there would be any impact on these figures in light of the reduced support to the families as a result of savings carried out in the previous budget setting process. Members were told that this was a complex issue; there was no single reason why children come into care. The Head of Service explained that Social Services had the capacity to care for all those children, but the concerns stemmed from a wide range of issues not just one single one. .
- **CYP/30 - % of children seen by a dentist within 3 months of becoming looked after:** The Officers indicated that this performance measure was not a key indicator as it did not necessarily add value to the children in care, as children might see a dentist before coming into care and would not need to see them again within the time 3 month time frame.
- **CYP/26 - % of looked after children returned home from care** – The Officers indicated that this was not a key indicator as it did not take into account the complex issues around why children were in care. Children could be incorrectly placed in care where more appropriate options should be explored. This impacted upon the figures and the achievement of the target.

The Cabinet Member added that there was a new way of working being completed by Families First, which would be positive for families in the future. An example was given where agencies that speak multiple languages, enabling them to engage and help a wider range of families. This would involve bringing together individual agencies that do similar work which would result in work not being duplicated.

- How will these agencies coming together be monitored? There had been cases in the past of different agencies not working collaboratively which could result in an increased risk for children worked without coming together and children were at risk of harm as a result, and with a reduction in the Councils family services this was a worry.

It was advised that these agencies would be monitored by the Local Authority, and even though there was a reduction in the budget there was only a very small reduction in the Integrated Support Team. The Strategic Director added that the Welsh Government had appointed Newport to monitor a small number of pilot schemes that could bring funding streams together. It was not yet known how the authority would be accountable for performance measures and monitoring as they were still in very early stages of discussions. The Cabinet Member advised the Committee that this was a national pilot scheme; it was needed to make sure that it was robust as it will be spread across all of Wales.

- Members queried how long the pilot scheme would run for. The Strategic Director advised that the intention was to make initial changes for 2018-19, but the main changes were expected to be introduced during 2019-20. Once the proposal has been assembled Welsh Government would have to sign it off. Members were told that Newport had been given scope to develop the scheme. Members requested a breakdown of the changes which will be implemented in 2018 -2019 and 2019 - 20.

Adult and Community Services

Invitees;

- Jeanette Jenkins – Service Manger – Children’s Teams
- Cllr Paul Cockeram – Cabinet Member for Social Services
- James Harris – Strategic Director - People

The Cabinet Member presented an overview of the performance to the Committee, highlighting that all performance measures were Green apart from one Red – Delayed Transfers of Care. **ACS/ 19 PAM/ 025 Delayed Transfer of Care** had been reduced as a result of a strong performance in 2016/17, but the target had increased to 6.0 in response to new demand. It was also advised that the work from the Assessment Team was moving performance in the right direction. Although there are ongoing financial pressures, the Cabinet Member was pleased with the performance.

The Committee then asked the following:

- Members asked the Officers how they felt the budget would affect the performance for the next quarter. The Strategic Director advised that the constrained budget made it challenging to deliver the levels of performance. However the performance in Adult Services, despite the budget challenges in recent years, has seen some areas maintain the same level and others had improved. The Officer advised that Adult Services strives to adapt and anticipate maintaining the same level of service for the foreseeable future.
- The Service Manager advised the Committee that there had been investment in developing preventative services over the last year, and described the services

offered by the Community Connectors service. Through signposting to services and support communities, many customers did not need to contact Adults Services for a second time.

- Members asked for the numbers of residential care self-funders and those coming to the Council after their ability to self-fund their care. and what are the financial implications to the Council. It was advised that only figures for those coming to the Council for care would be known, as self-funders make their own arrangements. In terms of financial implications, care providers could be asked for the financial figures for the high cost placements and sustainability..
- Are there enough organisations out there for Community Connectors can refer people to? Members were advised that there were regular meetings with the Community Connectors team, who have set up a number of new carer groups and links. They have many contacts within the community, but stressed that realistic expectations were needed and sometimes the CC team were not able to help.
- Are there are enough private care providers to cope with the capacity needed to transfer service users from hospital to nursing homes? There was a national problem with provision for nursing and Dementia beds. This was being managed and currently the Occupational Therapists have 6 people waiting in hospital for domiciliary care, with a few people waiting for a place in a residential home. It was noted that some people only wish to go into a home that was close to their families so they decided to wait. Members request clarification on the capacity in Newport for residential care, in particularly the location and cost of the placement.
- The Committee wished to commend and congratulate staff, external providers and the public for keeping services running during the snow. The Manager also praised the initiative and tenacity from everyone involved and advised the Committee that no service user missed a care call.
- The Cabinet Member advised that there was now a Rehabilitation Officer working for the Council who specifically engages with the visual impaired.
- Request was made for the Community Connector directory to be placed back onto the Council website. Member was advised that a corporate commitment had been made to make sure the directory was constantly updated but it takes up a lot of resources. The Officer agreed to confirm with the Community Connectors when the directory was finalised to be put back onto the website.

The Chair and Committee then thanks the Officers and Cabinet Members for attending.

Conclusion

Comments to Cabinet

The Committee noted the progress being made toward the performance indicators for the service areas, and agreed to forward the minute to the Cabinet as a summary of the issues raised.

Actions to the Committee

In addition to the actions agreed with the Officers during the meeting, the Committee requested the following be provided:

Education

The Committee stated that in order to fully understand the progress being made, they requested that comparable data from previous years schools attendance being included in the performance report.

4 Forward Work Programme Update

The Overview and Scrutiny Officer presented the report to Members and outlined the purpose of the report in seeking the Committees approval for items on its work programme for the next two meetings.

The Committee **approved** the report and the items to be considered during the next two meetings.

The meeting terminated at 12.05 pm