

# Minutes



## Performance Scrutiny Committee - People

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Date: 9 October 2018

Time: 10.00 am

Present: Councillors D Williams (Chair), J Cleverly, K Critchley, J Guy, R Hayat, H Thomas, K Thomas, C Townsend, J Watkins and T Watkins

In Attendance: D Cooke (Scrutiny Adviser), R Cornwall (Head of People and Business Change), J Harris (Strategic Director - People), C Humphrey (Head of Adult & Community Services) and Rees (Assistant Head of Education - Inclusion)

Apologies: R Penn (Church in Wales)

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### 1 Declarations of Interest

None.

### 2 Minutes of the meeting 10/07/2018

The minutes of the meeting 10 July 2018 were **approved** as a true and accurate record of the meeting, subject to the following amendment;

- Item 3 – *'Service Area Performance Update – Year End 2017/18 – Education'* *'There was a theme evident that schools in affluent areas had low exclusions rates and schools that were in ~~depraved~~ deprived areas had higher exclusion rates. Education was looking at how to combat this.'*

Chair stated that the Cabinet Member for Education was unhappy with the comments within the minutes of the meeting relating to her attendance. The Cabinet Member had asked to make statement in the meeting in response to this. The Chair asked the Committee if it approved this statement being presented to the Committee, and the statement being attached to the minutes of this meeting as a record. The Committee approved this, and the Cabinet Member read the statement in response to the Committees comments. (**Appendix 1**)

### 3 2018 End of Key Stage Teacher Assessment Outcomes and National Test Results - Newport

#### Attendees

- Gail Giles – Cabinet Member for Education and Skills
- Hayley Davies – Edwards – EAS Principle Challenge Advisor
- James Harris – Strategic Director – People
- Katy Rees – Assistant Head of Education – Inclusion

The Cabinet Member for Education and Skills and the representative from EAS introduced the report and brought important aspects to the attention of the Committee.

Members asked the following questions:

- Members questioned the amount of time spent on comparing schools and whether it would have more effective to ensure that the young people had the best education. The EAS representative explained that the Welsh Government were analysing and questioning the data made available by EAS and Newport regarding the pupil achievement. This would drive up performance, ensuring higher levels of pupil achievement in the future.
- Members asked why the number of young people achieving key stage two English was down on last year. The EAS representative explained that a cohort in a single year can distort the figures; however, it would be monitored going forward to ensure a trend does not become evident.
- The Committee queried the national target for Welsh (First Language), at Key Stage 2, was lower than the target Newport has set itself. EAS explained that this was due to small cohort of young people with Welsh as their first language. The smaller the number of young people the larger the impact they have on the percentage, which was why Newport have a higher target than Wales.
- A Member of the Committee commended the Head Teacher of the school they were a governor of. The Head Teacher had improved the outcomes for the young people who are unable to succeed in the school. The EAS representative explained that was one of the responsibilities Head Teachers took very seriously. The Strategic Director - People informed the Committee that Careers Wales were responsible for the tracking of all young people leaving school across Newport. This tracking ensured no young person was left without a destination, be it further or higher education, employment or training.
- The Committee asked if the Officers believed whether Educations performance could improve over the next two years due to the financial pressures faced by the Local Authority. The Strategic Director - People explained that the teachers and the relationships they had with the young people were the reasons behind the successful performance. This was understood by the Head Teachers and support staff and enables them to make difficult decisions for budget savings limiting the impact on the young people's education.
- A Member wished to know what commitment was made with to the schools and the Continued Professional Development (CPD) of its staff. The EAS representative explained that this was part of their remit and informed the Committee of a Teachers Training Network, in-school experts and e-learning links which also provided help and support. EAS also provide a comprehensive programme for professional learning and development.

The Committee thanked the Cabinet Member and Officers for their attendance and responses to their questions.

### **Recommendations and Comments**

The Committee noted the progress being made in this area, and requested more information on how schools nurture young people who would not make level 5+ at Key Stage 3.

#### **4 Recommendations Monitoring - 2018/19 Budget Saving Proposals**

Attendees;

- James Harris – Strategic Director - People

- Chris Humphrey – Head of Adult and Community Services
- Katy Rees – Assistant Head of Education - Inclusion

The Officers introduced the each of the budget proposals and the Committee were discussed the update on each proposal;

#### Review of Oaklands Short Break Service

The Officers explained that sometimes they were able to find ways of not making a saving or making a partial saving. This was the case with this proposal; during the consultation we identified other areas to make the savings.

#### Restructuring of the funding within preventative services

The Officers informed the Committee that this saving had been achieved.

#### Integrated Family Support Team Restructure

The Officers informed the Committee that this saving had been achieved.

#### Review of the Domiciliary Care Service

The Officer expected the saving would be made over two years. The contract for the new service would start in January 2019.

#### Re-Provision of Supported Living Service

The Officer believed that the full saving would be achieved this year. The Members raised concerns for those individuals who were still living in the remaining two homes that were not fit for purpose and do not meet the needs of the individuals.

#### Reduction in Adult Budget

The Officer stated that the saving associated with this proposal was too optimistic and would not be met completely. The Members wished to know how successful the marketing of the Centrica Lodge provision had been to other Local Authorities. The Officers explained that there had been some uptake but there had been room for more young people.

#### Consolidation of the Education Psychology, Additional Learning Needs and Specific Learning Needs Teams into an 'Inclusion Enrichment Team'

The questioned the ways the teachers are being prepared for the changes which had been implemented on 1 September. The Officers explained that they used a number of different training and resources to increase the skills and knowledge of the teachers and support staff to work with the young people. The Officer explained to the Members that the additional savings included six voluntary redundancies, one resignation and one redeployment.

#### Re-Modelling of the Pupil Referral Unit

The Strategic Director - People requested that he be allowed to update the Committee at the next meeting on the 26<sup>th</sup> November, he continued by saying that he did not have all of the information currently. The Directors final comment was that a number of unforeseeable and complex issues meant that the department were unable to make the saving. The Assistant Head of Education explained that they had developed a rigorous plan in partnership with EAS and newly recruited staff to drive forward the essential work. The Committee welcomed the additional information at the next meeting.

The Committee thanked the Officers for their attendance and the detailed answers to their questions.

### **Recommendations and Comments**

The Committee made the following recommendations and comments;

- The Strategic Director - People to provide an update on the Pupil Referral Unit at the meeting on the 26 November 2018.
- For an explanation the impact of the unmade saving proposals from 2018/19 impact on the next year's budget 2019/20.
- The Committee commented on how higher quality proposals might lead to more savings being made.

## 5 **All Wales Performance Comparison Data 2017 /18**

### Attendees:

- Rhys Cornwall – Head of People and Business Change

The Head of People and Business Change introduced the report and explained the reasons for it being on the Committee Forward Work Programme. The Head of People and Business Change explained that there were limited numbers of measures reported on due to Social Services related measures being removed. The remaining measures show how Newport compares to other Local Authorities in Wales.

The Committee wished to know what the main barriers were to improving the overall position in the nation table. The Head of People and Business Change outlined the main barriers being resourcing of services and the decisions needed to be taken around the organisation of services.

The Committee thanked the Officer for their attendance.

## 6 **Scrutiny Adviser Reports**

### Forward Work Programme

The Scrutiny Adviser presented the report to the Committee and explained that due to Estyn inspection in Education the Head of Service and Deputies were unavailable. The Committee agreed to move the Education Service Plan meeting date to the 26<sup>th</sup> November at 10am to facilitate the Officers attendance.

## **Scrutiny – People Oct 2018**

### Statement in response to comments and the publication of comments in regard to my attendance

I would like to begin by asking everyone here today: who has never missed a meeting whether it is any Scrutiny, Council or other meeting, associated with their work as a Councillor?

How many have never missed two meetings?

How many of you have been berated for that or have not had your apologies accepted?

I have been a Councillor for nearly 15 years and Cabinet Member 6 years. I have an exemplary record for attendance and am known to be a conscientious and hardworking member of this Authority.

Everyone can find themselves in a position that can result in them being unable to attend a meeting eg: through illness, family and personal issues or a clash in their diary that cannot be avoided. I once had to miss a planning appeal meeting because I was in a car accident when someone drove out of a junction and into my car.

I believe the Chair missed a meeting of this Scrutiny in March and there have been few meetings of this Scrutiny which have had 100% attendance. Looking at other Committees, such as the Audit Committee, will also show less than 100% attendance.

Records are also kept in regard to attendance at briefings and planned visits to educational establishments. In fact it was a member of this Scrutiny who asked for a visit to the PRU to be specially arranged and on the day did not visit. These things happen.

In regard to the comments published in the Minutes that you have all just agreed I wish to make the following points:

It is stated I have not attended 2 Scrutiny Meetings.

The first meeting I did not attend was due to the fact that I was on holiday. The holiday with my family was booked prior to me having any knowledge of the date of the Scrutiny meeting. In addition it was in the school holidays. The school holidays are not only when my family take their holidays with my grandchildren but are also the best time for me to take leave as the schools are closed.

This was accepted at the time, as far as I am aware, and yet was dragged up at the last Scrutiny meeting as unacceptable. Why? It was then, and still is, written into the Minutes. Why? Who agreed the wording?

I was informed of the second Scrutiny date **after** I had arranged a public event which the Mayor and Leader were attending.

The date, 10 July, is the 81<sup>st</sup> anniversary of the arrival and welcoming of 57 Basque child refugees aged 5-15 years, in Caerleon. They had been evacuated from the terrors of the Spanish Civil War.

So the date was already set and it had to be that date. I was organising the whole event from start to finish, not just attending, because I am central to this important historical event, being the published author of the original paper on the Basque Children in Caerleon and deeply involved in supporting the Basque children's history across the UK.

When I was informed of the Scrutiny date, some two months before the event, I emailed the appropriate officer stating that, given I was organising the event, I would have to leave Scrutiny at the latest by 10.30am. This made it clear that,

given the meeting was due to start at 10am, I would not have sufficient time.

I received an email back saying the officer would contact the Chair and request a 9.30 start. I received no further correspondence. Meanwhile, there was full knowledge about my commitment on the day. In fact the time I actually needed to be in Cross Street Caerleon on the day was just after 10.30 and had I known I was expected at Scrutiny at 9.30 I would still have had to send my apologies.

As it was I did ask Sarah Morgan, who attended the meeting, to reiterate my apologies for not being able to attend.

To clarify what organisation was required on 10 July prior to the actual start of the event at 12.00 was:

- The road closure before 11am ( Streetscene staff were very efficient and arrived not long after 10.30), including the parking space available for the Mayor and Leader's cars
- Welcoming the combined schools' choir of fifty six 5-15 year olds, and positioning them safely
- Ensuring the cover for the plaque was properly positioned for the unveiling
- Ensuring the positioning of information boards
- Ensuring the refreshments at Curro's were prepared
- Welcoming the Mayor, Leader , VIPs and 100 guests

So, the Minutes you have just agreed are inaccurate because I was not due to attend the unveiling at 12 midday, that was the time it was due to commence and that was known. At no time was I planning to just turn up at 12 midday.

Following that Scrutiny meeting I was informed that there was shock and concern by the tone of the comments made by some Scrutiny Members in

regard to my absence.

In the nearly 15 years I have been attending meetings in this Council I have never heard of any Member being treated in such a way, without seeking any review into the circumstances, without me being given any opportunity for redress, or even being informed, and demanding that the unsubstantiated criticism must be published in public.

I am aware that the Chair subsequently agreed to 'tone down' the original Minutes, which in itself, makes clear they were unacceptable. As I have pointed out I believe the present Minutes are inaccurate.

I remain concerned by the way this matter has been handled and would hope that anybody who is unable to attend a meeting in future will be treated with fairness and with consideration and not criticised in their absence without gathering the facts.

This is particularly important when putting such comments on public documents.

I request that this statement is published in the Minutes of this meeting.

Meanwhile, I believe a review needs to be undertaken to ensure everyone in future is treated in a fair and considered manner.