

**SUBJECT: RECOMMENDATIONS AND OUTCOMES FROM SELECT COMMITTEES (JANUARY – MARCH 2016)**

**MEETING: CABINET**

**DATE: 13<sup>th</sup> April 2016**

**DIVISION/WARDS AFFECTED: ALL**

**1. PURPOSE:**

- 1.1 The purpose of the report is to provide the Cabinet with a record of the recommendations and outcomes of the Select Committee meetings during January to March 2016).

**2. RECOMMENDATIONS:**

- i) That the Cabinet acknowledge the contribution made by the Council's Select Committees towards policy development and decision-making;
- ii) That Cabinet Members familiarise themselves with the outcomes of the Select Committees to ensure they respond appropriately to recommendations and requests made by the Select Committees, in line with the Council's Scrutiny and Executive Protocol.

**3. KEY ISSUES:**

**3.1** Select Committees conduct a variety of important 'critical friend' roles:

- i) Reviewing the appropriateness of existing policy and shaping new policy to ensure 'fitness for purpose';
- ii) Conducting pre-decision scrutiny, by challenging the rationale for proposed decisions with the decision-maker;
- iii) Holding the Cabinet Members and Officers to account for their performance, including their management of budgets and risks;
- iv) Engaging with the public to ensure that the Council is delivering effective services which resonate with needs of the public, their communities and local businesses.

- 3.2** The Select Committees add value by driving improvement in service delivery and through offering constructive challenge to decision makers to ensure decisions are robust. Each Select Committee agrees its forward work programme and undertakes its workload in a flexible manner to ensure diligent scrutiny of key emerging programmes, projects and initiatives. This has led to an increased number of additional Select Committees being called to scrutinise single subjects, sometimes on a recurring basis. The calling of additional meetings is an approach that is favoured over the establishment of numerous task and finish groups, given the ability for

Scrutiny Members to produce quicker outcomes in addition to enabling wider elected Member and public involvement in its meetings.

**3.3** In line with the Council's Scrutiny and Executive Protocol, Cabinet Members are invited to Select Committees to be challenged upon their performance and also their rationale for decisions they may make. Outcomes of Select Committees are formally recorded in the minutes of Select Committees following 'summing up' by the Select Committee Chair, who will (if appropriate) write to the relevant Cabinet Member or Chief Officer to advise the Committee's stance on an issue together with any recommendation the Select Committee wishes to make. Discussions are frequently held between the Select Committee Chairs and the relevant Cabinet Member following the meeting, with further scrutiny and requests for information identified.

**3.3** Following a self-evaluation of the scrutiny function in 2014 and a corporate assessment in 2015, the Scrutiny Chairs agreed a need to formally document outcomes and recommendations made by Select Committees via a regular report to the Council's Cabinet. The purpose of the report is to demonstrate the valuable contribution made by Scrutiny Members and to ensure that Cabinet Members are aware of the outcomes of Select Committees, in order that they may respond appropriately.

**4. REASONS:**

4.1 To implement effective corporate governance and decision-making, through ensuring clarity of role, purpose and mutual expectations of the Select Committees and the Cabinet.

**5. RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS:**

None identified.

**6. SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT AND EQUALITY IMPLICATIONS:**

None identified.

**7. SAFEGUARDING AND CORPORATE PARENTING IMPLICATIONS**

None identified.

**8. CONSULTEES:**

Not required.

**9. BACKGROUND PAPERS:**

None - Minutes publicly available.

**10. AUTHOR:**

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## Record of Recommendations/Outcomes from Select Committees during January and March 2016 (14 meetings)

<b>Economy and Development Select Committee – 5<sup>th</sup> January 2016 (Call-in)</b>	
<b>Sale of Old County Hall site, Croesyceiliog - Revised bids</b>	<p>The decision had been called in to establish whether the Council was receiving the best value for the County Hall, Croesyceiliog site. Members sought reassurance that the best deal for Monmouthshire had been negotiated, particularly in respect of the value of the land. The committee expressed their concern that there had been a lack of Member input with reference to negotiations. Members requested:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Clarification on the total costs to date for each Council incurred through the disposal and demolition of the site</li> <li>• Confirmation on the amount of the Section 106 agreed</li> </ul> <p>The Committee referred the decision to the Cabinet for re-consideration.</p>
<b>Strong Communities Select Committees – 11<sup>th</sup> January 2016</b>	
<b>Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment</b>	<p>The Chair advised Members that the Special Select Committee had been convened to consider the draft findings of the Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment for Monmouthshire, which will be submitted to Cabinet for approval and to Welsh Government. Members concluded that the assessment being undertaken in-house by officers was mutually beneficial to both the community and the Council as a positive relationship was developing which had enabled everyone to have a clearer understanding of Gypsy and Traveller Needs. It was also agreed that the officers should continue to work with Gypsy and Traveller households in Monmouthshire on the next stage of the process.</p>
<b>Pollinator Policy</b>	<p>The Committee have scrutinised the subject over the course of 18 months and have received significant public input into their meetings on various aspects of the policy. The Chair reminded Members that the Committee had scrutinised the Grounds Maintenance Budget in December and that whilst they had agreed with some aspects of the mandate, they had not agreed with the proposal within that mandate for reduced verge maintenance. The Chair advised Members that he believed the wording of the pollinator policy has changed since the Committee last scrutinised the policy and that this only raised further concerns, particularly in relation to the number of verge maintenance cuts the various parts of the county will receive. The Committee received the policy update - monitoring of the policy will be factored into the Committee's future Work Programme.</p>
<b>Children and Young People's Select Committee – 14<sup>th</sup> January 2016</b>	
<b>Play Opportunities Review</b>	<p>The Committee had scrutinised the Play Opportunities Review report outlining the future delivery model for staffed play provision and had requested a further report, specifically on how safeguarding issues would be addressed. The committee reiterated the significance of ensuring safeguarding issues are addressed. Members heard that Monmouthshire's safeguarding unit had not been consulted (consultation had taken place with Torfaen's safeguarding team) and the Committee concluded it was imperative that the team and the Council's corporate safeguarding group is involved.</p>

	Members requested the locations of inclusive play scheme and how they would service the whole County. The committee agreed to await an evaluation report of summer play schemes in Autumn 2016.
<b>Proposed changes to the funding formula for schools</b>	The Committee supported the first part of the report on schools funding formula, however, they could not agree to support the second part of the report in respect of the funding of the residential element of Mounon House School. The Committee were in unanimous agreement that they could not agree the report deciding the funding formula for Mounon House when the future strategic direction of the school remained unclear. The Committee agreed that the Chair and Vice Chair would visit the school to meet the Executive Head Teacher and the Chair of Governors.
<b>Quarter 2 Performance Report 2015/16: Improvement Objectives and Outcome Agreements</b>	The Committee were satisfied with the directorate's ongoing performance, however, requested the policy and performance Officer provide numerical data in addition to percentages in future reports.
<b>Adults Select Committee – 19<sup>th</sup> January 2016</b>	
<b>Social Services Act and the implications for Monmouthshire Council</b>	<p>The Chair thanked the Head of Adult Services for the informative report and asked that notes from the recent seminar be circulated.</p> <p>Adults Select Committee welcomed the Social Services Act and at this stage were satisfied that senior management were on top of the requirements</p> <p>The Committee would welcome an update no later than January 2017, with the understanding that any problems would be highlighted to the Committee when necessary. Updates regarding the prison dimension would be welcomed sooner.</p>
<b>Review of the Raglan Project</b>	The Committee welcomed the progress on this and the recent positive media coverage. The Chair asked if it was appropriate for Members of the Committee to access the training sessions and it was confirmed that Members would be welcomed.
<b>Supporting People Service's Response and Action Plan</b>	<p>Members recognised that the audit and its recommendations are very recent and the actions proposed are very much 'work in hand'. The Committee accepted the report's recommendations, noting with concern the capacity for delivery. Members were advised that senior management were aware of the issues and were working on them.</p> <p>The Committee acknowledged that system issues were being addressed and would encourage the preparation of desk instructions.</p> <p>The Committee appreciated receipt of the interim report and would look forward to the full report in due course, and would expect to see some account of the issues raised today. The Committee expressed their appreciation for the constant efforts made to manage and provide the service with constraints.</p>

## Strong Communities Select Committees – 28<sup>th</sup> January 2016

<b>Strategic Equality Plan</b>	The Chair suggested that Welsh Government should be encouraged to take some responsibility for this issue, with training costs provided and agreed to write to the Welsh Government.
<b>Waste Recycling Review</b>	<p>The Chair concluded that whilst Members support the recommendations contained within the report, they would ask officers to consider the following points:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The pilot scheme if not carefully communicated could confuse the public and therefore not demonstrate an accurate reflection of take-up – Members suggested effective communication with the public involved in the pilot should be undertaken in advance to ensure the various methods that will be trialled and the period over which each trial will commence are understood.</li> <li>• Members were opposed to the 4th option, which would involve a vehicle sorting recyclates at the kerbside. Members suggested that whilst they recognise that they quality of recyclates is improved via this type of collection method, they feel it is too burdensome for the public to collect their recyclates in this manner.</li> <li>• Members are opposed to the plastic recycling boxes as the feedback that they have received suggests these are blown away in poor weather conditions and may damage vehicles or property. Members argue that the plastic bags are a better option and ask officers to pursue the potential for these instead of plastic boxes.</li> </ul> <p>The Committee agreed that the report should be taken to Cabinet and the pilot be commenced, reporting back to the Select Committee with the outcomes before permanent collection methods are implemented.</p>

## Children and Young People’s Select Committee – 11<sup>th</sup> February 2016

<b>Final Estyn Inspection Feedback</b>	Members were content that progress had been made in terms of the Council having well designed systems and practices in place, however, members acknowledged the need for further work to ensure continuous improvement. The Committee agreed that it is important that information passed to senior management and the Cabinet Member is also received by the scrutiny committee, if the committee is to ensure ongoing improvement. The Chair advised that it is important not to become complacent and highlighted the need for detailed and accurate reports with officers and the Cabinet Member being challenged and held to account. The Committee requested that the Chief Officer and the Cabinet Member maintain ongoing dialogue with the committee to relate information received through meetings with experts, regulators so that the Committee is fully aware of developments and how other authorities may be progressing on similar issues.
<b>National Schools Categorisation Report</b>	The Committee agreed that the evaluation of each school’s progress would be a fundamental part of the scrutiny of the EAS. Members recognised that the schools categorisation process is ongoing and that the next report should clearly display further progress. The committee were satisfied with progress thus far, which suggested that the support being provided is effective and that interventions are appropriate. Members felt it disappointing that the media did not always reflect progress made.
<b>Quality Assurance Report EAS</b>	The Committee were satisfied that overall the impact of the EAS work was improving, and improving outcomes from schools had been positive.

	<p>Members felt that the overall balance between support and intervention was appropriate and that challenge had been welcomed by schools. The Committee had noted shortcomings, in terms of the standard of reports from the EAS to the Scrutiny Committee, however, they acknowledged that these were improving.</p> <p>The Committee requested 6 monthly updates on the progress being made within the Red schools. The Chair advised that herself and the Vice Chair would be members of the EAS Risk and Assurance Committee and would be able to provide feedback to Members.</p>
<b>Childhood Obesity Strategy</b>	<p>The Committee suggested there may be benefit in reporting this to full Council and recognised that the implementation of the strategy would fall under some of the Future Generations Act responsibilities, which would be scrutinised by the newly appointed Public Service Board Scrutiny Committee.</p>
<b>Economy and Development Select Committee – 11<sup>th</sup> February 2016</b>	
<b>Events Strategy</b>	<p>The committee heard that the update on Eisteddfod and Velothon had not been available for the meeting and agreed the item would be deferred.</p>
<b>Investment Property Acquisition Policy</b>	<p>Members agreed the report that recommended that the Council should acquire investment properties to facilitate economic development, to generate a revenue income stream and to secure an appreciating capital asset.</p> <p>The Committee discussed the benefits of investing in and out of Monmouthshire in terms of alignment with corporate strategy, Whole Place and the potential for wider economic benefits for the county. Members also highlighted risks in terms of the limited property availability and the perceived use of public money. Members agreed that the strategy should be pursued in Monmouthshire in the first instance, but should not restrict future wider investment.</p> <p>Members concluded they had every confidence in the abilities of the estates team to deliver the strategy, however, raised their concern that the team may not have the capacity in terms of staff resources to fulfil the expectations identified within the report. The Committee agreed that any future businesses cases should be brought to the committee for pre-decision scrutiny.</p>
<b>Quarter 2 Performance Report: Improvement Objectives and Outcome Agreement</b>	<p>The committee highlighted the importance of senior officers being present for performance reporting and agreed this would be raised with Senior Leadership Team.</p> <p>Members requested reassurance from Chief Officers regarding the underperformance of leisure centres and whether this was expected to improve.</p> <p>Members questioned the targets associated with the 'supper connected voucher scheme' and agreed to table an update to a future meeting on the I-County Strategy, Broadband and the Enterprise Strategy together.</p>
<b>Strategic Risk Assessment 2015</b>	<p>The Committee agreed that the risks facing the authority are appropriately captured and that the level of risk applied is appropriate. The Chair advised that the risk areas are items within the scrutiny work programme and reminded Members that ICT issues would be included within a future agenda.</p>

## Children and Young People's Select Committee – 22<sup>nd</sup> February 2016 (Call-in)

<b>Proposed changes to the Funding Formula for Schools</b>	<p>The Committee agreed to refer the matter back to the Cabinet for re-consideration given the reasons outlined in the call-in request and highlighted by Members at the meeting regarding the immediacy and extent of the funding reduction, whilst the strategic direction of the school remains unclear.</p> <p>The Committee unanimously agreed that a meeting should be held to discuss the funding reduction further prior to the decision being reconsidered by the Cabinet. Members agreed that the Chair and Vice-Chair of the Select Committee would meet with the Cabinet Member, relevant Officers, the Chair of the Governing Body and the Executive Head Teacher to discuss this in order to prepare a new report on this for future Cabinet decision.</p>
<b>Revenue &amp; Capital Monitoring 2015/16 Month 9 Outturn Report</b>	<p>The Committee agreed to schedule the following update reports at a future meeting:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Monmouthshire Youth Service</li> <li>• Recruitment of Social Workers</li> </ul>
<b>Scrutiny of the performance of the South East Wales Adoption Service (SEWAS)</b>	<p>The Chair summed up by noting the recommendations as outlined in the report, with no particular concerns identified at this stage.</p>
<b>Social Services and Wellbeing (Wales) Act 2014</b>	<p>The Committee expressed its support for the Act and agreed they were satisfied that staff were ready for the changes that will occur. The Committee agreed to undertake regular monitoring of the implementation of the act with a progress report to be brought 6 months post implementation. The Chair advised that Members were invited to an 'open afternoon' in which they could meet with staff in order to understand the changes to the service as a result of the implementation of the Act in April 2016.</p>

## Strong Communities Select Committees – 25<sup>th</sup> February 2016

<b>Community Asset Transfer Request for Drybridge House, Monmouth</b>	<p>The Committee agreed that the Policy should be revisited to include an opportunity for groups to apply for Big Lottery Funding and that Officers and the Cabinet Member explore this matter and bring to Cabinet and Full Council at the earliest opportunity.</p>
<b>Revenue and Capital Monitoring 2015/16 Month 9 Outturn Report</b>	<p>The Committee agreed to defer the item as there was no officer representation available to present the report and answer Members' questions.</p>

## Adults Select Committee – 1<sup>st</sup> March 2016

<b>Gwent Frailty Programme Section 33 Report</b>	<p>The Committee agreed to accept the report's recommendations and felt satisfied that the Section 33 provision is available. Members recognised that this is a desirable way of working, in that the focus is not on financial gain and statistics, moreover on the impact and outcome for individuals. Members acknowledged that a significant amount of work had been undertaken to assess value for money and the Committee were satisfied to accept the recommendations on this account. The Chair recommended that officers continue to engage with civil servants and others to increase understanding and learning of the model, particularly with those who determine criteria by which the Council will be judged. The Committee agreed to await the WAO report on the Gwent Frailty Programme which will be presented to all five Council's at a single meeting in the Spring.</p>
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<b>Revenue and Capital Monitoring 2015/16 Month 9 Outturn Report</b>	<p>The Committee welcomed the report, whilst recognising that there are tough times ahead. Members acknowledged there are contingencies in place and felt this approach reflected the culture of the directorate. Members commended officers who are managing budgets well in difficult times whilst providing a high level of services. Members welcomed the joint working between the directorate and the finance team and the Cabinet Members which is apparent in the sustained efforts to manage the finances of volatile services.</p>
<b>Mardy Park Progress Report</b>	<p>The Committee supported the ongoing progress that has been made on the service re-provision at Mardy Park. The Chair felt that many of the issues discussed transcend discussions also held with the Aneurin Bevan University Health Board on the “Live Now” initiative, which the Select Committee are keen to progress in conjunction with the Health board. The Chair acknowledged that there has been a useful dialogue that is helpfully assisted by the Cabinet Members sharing is effective. The Chair agreed to take forward discussions on “Live Well” with the Health Board and the Leader.</p>
<b>Economy and Development Select Committee – 3<sup>rd</sup> March 2016</b>	
<b>Contaminated Land Inspection Strategy</b>	<p>Members scrutinised the strategy for identifying potentially contaminated land and prioritising any identified sites for remediation action. The Committee were advised of the work undertaken to date and the options for revising the statutory requirement to produce a Contaminated Land Inspection Strategy.</p> <p>Members requested clarification on sites owned by the Council which may be considered high risk and questioned the position in relation to the land on the Llanfoist School site. Officers agreed to provide further information following the meeting. The committee agreed to favour Option A: Dealing with land contamination through the planning regime.</p>
<b>Monmouthshire Business and Enterprise Performance Report</b>	<p>Members scrutinised the performance report on the activities of Monmouthshire Business and Enterprise, the committee highlighting the importance of promoting Monmouthshire’s strategic position to businesses in Bristol.</p> <p>Members raised ongoing concerns in respect of the roll-out of Superfast broadband in the South of the County and agreed to invite British Telecom to the next committee meeting to address the issues with Superfast Cymru.</p> <p>The committee requested an update on the Abergavenny Business Improvement District to a future meeting. Members agreed to table a comprehensive assessment of progress against the Monmouthshire Business Growth and Enterprise Strategy and the Vale of Usk Local Development Strategy at their June meeting.</p>
<b>Revenue and Capital Monitoring 2015/16 Month 9 Outturn Report</b>	<p>The Committee commended the efforts made by the Enterprise directorate to reduce the overspend of over £500,000 to £127,000, despite 14% of the enterprise budget having been reduced.</p> <p>The committee requested early engagement of the alternative service delivery model (joint scrutiny programmed for April and June) and requested an update on the implementation of the Abergavenny hub.</p>



<b>Update on Monmouthshire's Events</b>	<p>Members were provided with an update on the work and achievements of the Events team for 2015-2016 and on the progress of plans for events within 2016-2017.</p> <p>The committee congratulated the team and the volunteers and were content that a vibrancy and economic benefit was being brought to the county by the work of the team. The committee noted that the return on investment of the National Eisteddfod would be significant and welcomed a report on this after the event.</p> <p>The Committee were satisfied that the problems encountered during the Velethon 2015 had been addressed.</p>
<b>Adults Select Committee – 8<sup>th</sup> March 2016</b>	
<b>Minutes not available</b>	
<b>Children and Young People’s Select Committee – 17<sup>th</sup> March 2016</b>	
<b>Minutes not available</b>	
<b>Strong Communities Select Committees – 17<sup>th</sup> March 2016</b>	
<b>Minutes not available</b>	