



HEALTH, SOCIAL CARE AND WELLBEING SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD AT PENALLTA HOUSE, TREDOMEN,
YSTRAD MYNACH ON TUESDAY, 1ST MAY 2018 AT 5.30 P.M.

PRESENT:

Councillor Mrs J. Gale - Vice Chair - Presiding

Councillors:

C. Bezzina, D. Cushing, M. Evans, Miss E. Forehead, A. Gair, V. James, B. Owen, J. Simmonds, S. Skivens and C. Thomas.

Cabinet Member: C. Cuss (Social Care and Wellbeing).

Together with:

D. Street (Corporate Director Social Services), J. Williams (Assistant Director - Adult Services), G. Jenkins (Assistant Director - Children's Services), J. Morgan (Trading Standards, Licensing and Registrars Manager), C. Evans (Interim Scrutiny Officer), J. Morgan (Solicitor) and R. Barrett (Committee Services Officer)

Users and Carers – Mrs M. Jones and Mr C. Luke.

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors A. Angel, L. Binding (Chair), D.C. Harse, L. Jeremiah, Mrs A. Leonard and J. Simmonds and Ms J. Lawton (Co-Opted Member).

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest received at the commencement or during the course of the meeting.

3. MINUTES - 20TH MARCH 2018

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting of the Health, Social Care and Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee held on 20th March 2018 (minute nos. 1 - 10) be approved and signed as a correct record.

4. CONSIDERATION OF ANY MATTER REFERRED TO THE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE CALL-IN PROCEDURE

There had been no matters referred to the Scrutiny Committee in accordance with the call-in procedure.

5. REPORT OF THE CABINET MEMBER

The Scrutiny Committee noted the contents of the report from Councillor C. Cuss (Cabinet Member for Social Care and Wellbeing) which provided an update on his portfolio, and had been circulated to Members in advance of the meeting.

Members were updated in respect of positive feedback from Care Inspectorate Wales following their recent visit to review the annual performance across Adults and Children's Services. The Scrutiny Committee were also advised that Cabinet recently approved a proposal to exempt care leavers between the age of 18 and 25 from Council Tax payments.

Councillor Cuss outlined a recent meeting with the Foster Carer Forum to discuss various issues and achievements from our Caerphilly Foster Carers, during which some attendees stressed the disparity between foster care fees in Caerphilly and neighbouring authorities, (which was due to be addressed in the report being presented later that evening). The Cabinet Member also placed on record his thanks to the Authority's foster carers and emphasised that without them the Authority would be in a very difficult position.

During the course of the ensuing discussion, Officers provided clarification on the reciprocal arrangements for council tax exemptions in cases of out of county placements and Members were pleased to note the details of the new policy. A query was also received regarding the feedback from Care Inspectorate Wales and it was explained that the process had changed so that feedback is more focused on service areas rather than producing an overarching letter of response.

The Cabinet Member was thanked for his report.

6. HEALTH SOCIAL CARE AND WELLBEING SCRUTINY COMMITTEE FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME

Charlotte Evans (Interim Scrutiny Officer) presented the report, which outlined details of the Health, Social Care and Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee Forward Programme (FWP) for the period May 2018 to June 2018. Members were asked to consider the FWP alongside the Cabinet Work Programme as appended to the report and to suggest any changes.

Members noted the details of the reports for the June meeting and were reminded of the forthcoming workshop scheduled for 31st May 2018 to consider and agree the Committee's forward work programme for the year ahead. It was explained that a report request had been received which would be considered for inclusion on the FWP at the workshop.

It was unanimously agreed that the Health, Social Care and Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee Forward Programme as appended to the report be published on the Council's website.

7. CABINET REPORTS

None of the Cabinet reports listed on the agenda had been called forward for discussion at the meeting.

REPORTS OF OFFICERS

Consideration was given to the following reports.

8. PARLIAMENTARY REVIEW - HEALTH SOCIAL CARE (PRESENTATION)

The Scrutiny Committee received a presentation from Dave Street (Corporate Director of Social Services) which outlined the key recommendations of the Parliamentary Review of Health and Social Care in Wales, which was published in January 2018 and the emerging response in the Long-Term Plan for Health and Social Care from Welsh Government (WG).

Copies of the Parliamentary Review document were tabled at the meeting and it was explained that it was important for Members to be informed of the concept of the Review and its implications on Health and Social Care moving forward, as it will underpin future reports to the Scrutiny Committee. It was noted that the Gwent Regional Partnership Board had also recently received the same presentation.

It was explained that the Review has identified that the current pattern of health and social care in Wales is not fit for the future, and that there is a need to make a case for change and introduce new approaches in order to maintain and improve the quality of health and care.

Mr Street provided an overview of 10 key recommendations identified in the Review and intelligence regarding the emerging national plan. The Review places an emphasis on practical proposals in key areas including new models of care and care closer to home, public engagement, choice and control, workforce and capacity to transform. The recommendations promote a need for collective working and improvement of critical infrastructure, together with greater influence and involvement of the people of Wales particularly in view of the recruitment crisis across health and social care in Wales and the difficulty in fulfilling key roles across the NHS, voluntary sector and private sector.

The recommendations promote an alternative method of delivering services and place an emphasis on faster change, and for the streaming and alignment of governance, finance, and accountability arrangements across health and social care. Leadership and cultural issues need to be addressed, and resolved to enable more rapid and effective progress. Mr Street explained that this is particularly relevant to the Gwent Regional Partnership Board, in that matters for approval currently have to go through each of the 5 partner authorities for ratification and that a more seamless approach needs to be tackled by Welsh Government.

Members were referred to the key themes highlighted within the Review, with it explained that the models and the case for change are not new, but that they have not been delivered sufficiently to date. Rather than restructuring, the Review focuses on seamless services centred around the citizen and promotes a joined up approach to transformation at national, regional and local level and across NHS, local government, the voluntary and private sectors. Essentially the focus is on effective implementation and not further rethinking.

The model suggested by the Review places a focus on care and support organised around the individual or family as close to home as possible, focuses on prevention and early intervention, and promotes the continual improvement of quality of care and support through increased investment in care outside hospitals and rebalancing of services currently provided inside hospitals to maximise support of local services. This should lead to high quality services, the delivery of seamless care and support experiences crossing all aspects of care, and re-oriented specialist care complementing local provision.

The Scrutiny Committee were advised of expected progress by 2019-20 at local, regional and national levels. Locally there needs to be leading examples of effective seamless locality services, rethinking on the future role of hospitals, and a different quality of engagement with public, patients and service users. Regionally it is expected there will be a renewed focus on

locality-based seamless care and support, shared resources targeted at early help and prevention (such as the pooling of budgets between local authorities), shared initiatives to deliver better workforce, quality, technology and incentives, together with co-production and public engagement. Nationally, there needs to be a seamless health and social care policy and levers, national principles for local delivery, transformation capacity, and public engagement and understanding.

Members were advised of the proposed visions of WGs Long Term Plan for Health and Social Care in Wales arising from the Review, which will be delivered through a package of transformation, technology and infrastructure, whilst promoting accountability, progress and pace. Mr Street summarised what the bold shifts in local models are and how these will be delivered, and it was noted that during the next year, it is proposed for a National Transformation Programme to be developed, whereby each Regional Partnership Board will develop and implement a substantial seamless locality model in at least two new localities in their region, using extra investment through a national Transformation Fund. Members were also provided with details on how there will be greater involvement by the people of Wales in delivering this model, how workforce shortages will be improved upon, and how there is capacity for local health boards, trusts and local authorities to transform the delivery of Health and Social Care in Wales.

In closing, Members were advised of the next steps arising from the Review, with Welsh Government currently preparing a formal response. The findings of the Review will inform NHS medium-term plans and potentially the National Transformation Programme.

During the course of the ensuing debate, a Member queried how Caerphilly Council would progress the visions of Welsh Government across its own health and social care services. It was explained that currently there is a lot of duplication across local authorities and that there needs to be a shift towards more collaborative working in order to achieve these visions. Officers provided an explanation regarding pooled budgets between local authorities and health boards and how these will be put to best use. A query was also received regarding governance arrangements across local authorities in respect of health and social care. It was explained that a number of possibilities are being examined but that these will become clearer with the emergence of the Cardiff Capital Region City Deal. It was confirmed that public engagement and an alternate focus on resources would form a key part of any proposals for long-term solutions in order to see the benefits.

Following discussion on the item, Members thanked Mr Street for his detailed delivery and noted the contents of the presentation.

9. NOTICE OF MOTION – TO SUPPORT THE LUCY’S LAW NATIONAL CAMPAIGN TO BAN AND OUTLAW THIRD PARTY PUPPY FARMING

Jacqui Morgan (Trading Standards, Licensing and Registrars Manager) presented the report, which detailed a Notice of Motion received from Councillors E. Stenner, S. Morgan, L. Phipps and C. Cuss in relation to a ban on third party puppy farming.

Consideration was given to the Notice of Motion, which requested:-

“That Caerphilly County Borough Council adds its support to the Lucy’s Law National Campaign to ban and outlaw third party puppy farming. That Caerphilly County Borough Council will add its name to the growing list of supporting organisations and will proactively highlight the campaign to our residents across the County Borough. This Council requests that the Leader of the Council Cllr David Poole writes to UK Government, supporting the call for urgent action on this matter”.

Officers summarised the background information in relation to Lucy’s Law, which was launched in December 2017 and promotes an immediate ban on all commercial third party

sale of dogs. It was explained that “third party sellers” are dealers who did not breed the dogs and who operate as “middlemen” between the breeders and the buying public. The sale of puppies through third party dealers can seriously harm animal welfare, trauma of transportation, increased risk of exposure to disease, behavioural problems resulting from premature separation from the mother and lack of appropriate socialisation. The puppy market is very lucrative with even small breeds selling for over a thousand pounds.

New legislation has been proposed in England which places enhanced requirements on licensed pet sellers who are not pet breeders. As the legislation is currently slightly different in Wales, the Welsh Government is keeping a watching brief on developments in England and has expressed its general support for a ban on third party sellers.

During the course of the ensuing debate, Members discussed the remit of such a ban and whether it could also apply to other types of animals, the effectiveness of a ban, and the enforcement processes and penalties that could be applied to illegal dealers.

Following consideration of its content, it was moved and seconded that the Notice of Motion be endorsed and that its acceptance be recommended to Council. By a show of hands, this was unanimously agreed.

RECOMMENDED to Council that the Notice of Motion be supported.

10. FOSTER CARER FEE LEVELS.

Gareth Jenkins (Assistant Director - Children’s Services) presented the report, which asked Members to support the implementation of a revised fee structure for Caerphilly foster carers, which will bring the Council in line with other local authorities in South Wales and will assist Children’s Services to recruit additional foster carers. It was noted that the report also sought a referral to Cabinet on the recommendations contained therein.

Members were reminded of the service pressures faced across Children’s Services with the increased complexity of difficulties being presented by families, the significant increase of over 100 Looked After Children, the relentless demands of increased court proceedings and the resultant budget overspend. These pressures have been compounded by the availability of sufficient in-house foster care placements. Given the increase in looked after children, Children’s Services have to commission foster care placements from independent fostering agencies (IFAs), which adds to the cost pressures placed on the Authority. In addition, and despite continuous recruitment activity, Caerphilly has experienced a net loss in the total number of available placements over the last few years and the age profile of existing carers suggests that more will be retiring over coming years.

It has also become apparent that a number of potential applicants are choosing to apply to other Councils or the IFAs based on the remuneration packages offered, and therefore a need for Caerphilly Council to offer more competitive placement allowances has been identified. Officers outlined the current payment structure, with it noted that the fee comprises of either a mainstream or career allowance, together with a child allowance. These fees were last reviewed in 2004 and place mainstream carers at a disadvantage compared to career carers and those carers in other local authorities.

It was therefore proposed to streamline the fee structure in line with the age bandings for the National Minimum Allowance (NMA) set annually by Welsh Government, and which will equalise payments to mainstream and career carers. Further details of the proposed structure were set out in the report. The report also proposed an annual fee increase in line with the Council’s agreed pay award percentage, and that a Birthday Allowance of £100 and a Christmas Allowance of £200 be implemented. Members were also asked to note that two weeks annual leave allowance will be payable across the board for all carers. As it has been recognised that a number of existing career carers will be at risk of detriment with the

implementation of the new fees due to the ages of the children currently in placement, the report proposed that existing fee levels for those carers are protected for the duration of the current placement or until the transition through to a higher age band (whichever comes first).

Members were advised that consultation has been carried out with Caerphilly's Foster Care Forum, with mainstream carers supportive of the level of equality that will be set via the standardised fees. There has been some apprehension amongst career carers but they are satisfied with the level of fee protection offered. Both parties appreciate the recognition of their efforts arising from the annual leave allowance and annual fee increase.

Discussion took place on whether career carers might opt to foster less challenging cases due to the removal of the enhanced fee. Officers explained that this will be a choice for each individual and expressed the need to introduce an equitable level of payment in view of the demands and pressures being faced by the service. A Member queried whether it was a realistic expectation for the additional costs to be met through the Children's Services budget from 2019 onwards and Officers explained that in addition to the savings that would be made through the use of IFAs, additional savings would be made in other areas of this budget if necessary in order to meet the demands of this essential service area. Officers responded to queries regarding the current level of recruitment for foster carers, and agreed to circulate further information to the Scrutiny Committee regarding the number of carers in training. Discussion also took place regarding out of county and reciprocal fostering arrangements between local authorities, and it was emphasised that the Authority consider all relevant factors in order to provide the most stable placement for children in care.

Following consideration of the report, it was moved and seconded that the following recommendations be referred to Cabinet for approval. By a show of hands this was unanimously agreed.

RECOMMENDED to Cabinet that:-

- (i) the revised fee structure as detailed in the report be implemented (with immediate effect from 1st June 2018);
- (ii) Birthday and Christmas Allowances be reintroduced;
- (iii) fee payment protection for those career carers with younger aged children in placement be applied;
- (iv) the use of service reserves to fund the proposals for the remainder of 2018/19 be approved;
- (v) the level of savings achieved as a result of placements returning to Caerphilly carers be monitored throughout 2018/19 and be used to fund the recurring impact of the revised fee structure from April 2019 onwards.

The meeting closed at 7.00 p.m.

Approved as a correct record and subject to any amendments or corrections agreed and recorded in the minutes of the meeting held on 19th June 2018, they were signed by the Chair.

CHAIR