



HEALTH, SOCIAL CARE AND WELLBEING SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD AT PENALLTA HOUSE, TREDOMEN,
YSTRAD MYNACH ON TUESDAY, 24TH JUNE 2014 AT 5.30 P.M.

PRESENT:

Councillor L. Ackerman - Chair
Councillor Mrs P. Cook - Vice Chair

Councillors:

Mrs E.M. Aldworth, L. Binding, Mrs E.J. Gale, L. Gardiner, N. George, Mrs P.A. Griffiths,
G. Hughes, S. Morgan, J.A. Pritchard, A. Rees.

Cabinet Member: Councillor R. Woodyatt, Cabinet Member for Social Services.

Together with:

D. Street (Corporate Director Social Services), G. Jenkins (Assistant Director Children Services), J. Williams (Assistant Director Adult Services), L. Dallimore (Lead Collaboration Project Officer, Health, Social Care and Well-Being), I. Richards (Performance Management Officer), J. Jones (Democratic Services Manager), C. Evans (Committee Services Officer) H. Jones (HART) and P. Williams (HART).

Users & Carers: Mr C. Luke and Ms L. Price.

Aneurin Bevan University Health Board: Mrs S. Crane

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence had been received from Councillors A. Angel, Mrs G. Bevan and from Mrs J.M. Morgan and Mrs M. Veater MBE.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest made at the beginning or during the course of the meeting.

3. MINUTES

RESOLVED that the minutes of the Health, Social Care and Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee meeting held on 13th May 2014 (minute nos. 1-14; page nos. 1-6) be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

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 received a verbal report from Councillor Robin Woodyatt, Cabinet Member for Social Services.

Councillor Woodyatt informed the Scrutiny Committee that Friday the 13th June 2014 was World Elder Abuse Awareness Day. Social Services staff once again commemorated the event in their now customary enthusiastic manner. A cake sale, raffle and the opportunity to abseil from Penallta rocks had raised approximately £3,000 for Action on Elder Abuse. In addition, an event at Morrisons in Bargoed, together with other activities continues to raise the awareness of adult abuse within our communities. The Cabinet Member for Social Services and the Scrutiny Committee congratulated all of the staff involved in this event.

Councillor Woodyatt reminded Members of a report to the Health, Social Care and Well-Being Scrutiny Committee, which highlighted a series of successful bids from the Welsh Governments Intermediate Care Fund. Members were pleased to note that Welsh Government have opened up the opportunity for further bids from tranche 2 monies and officers are working on a regional basis to submit further bids.

Members were reminded that a Special Meeting of the Scrutiny Committee has been scheduled for Thursday 17th July, in order to begin addressing some of the options open to Members in terms of the authority's Medium Term Financial Plan. This meeting will principally concentrate on three areas where service provision is discretionary.

SCRUTINY REPORTS

Consideration was given to the following.

6. PRESENTATION: HART SERVICES

P. Williams and H. Jones, HART provided Members of the Scrutiny Committee with a presentation and demonstration on the 'Dragon' Encrypted devices and its services, provided to Carers.

Members noted the key features of the devices, which included the ability for carers to log their times with clients, check their tasks, note key information about clients and safety advice when lone working. An example of a handset was passed to the Members to view.

Members thanked the officers for the presentation and were pleased to note the capabilities and benefits of the device.

A Member queried whether there were any coverage issues for the device within the County Borough and if alternative arrangements has been made for staff safety in these areas. Officers explained that the data service is provided through the Council's Corporate Mobile Phone supplier, and some issues have been reported with signal availability in parts of the borough. However, Members were assured that the device is still capable of recording real-time information without data signal. Safety of staff has been considered and Members were assured that Social Services staff put in place specific individual plans to mitigate risk when clients' behaviour gives cause for concern. If a concern was raised that a carer had been out of contact longer than expected, the device allows a degree of tracking to determine the carers' geographical position.

Members queried the cost effectiveness of the system. The Officers confirmed that, on implementation; the devices provided efficiencies in stationery, office staff and overheads. Arising from the discussion, Members requested a further report with case studies, costs, efficiencies and performance data e.g. timeliness of visits.

The Scrutiny Committee noted the presentation.

7. WINTER PRESSURES

Following a request at a previous Scrutiny Committee, Members were provided with the report, which highlighted the impact winter pressures have had on the local authority over the past five years, the financial commitments made in respect of domiciliary care packages and long-term care placements for residents of the borough.

Members noted that the information illustrated the financial and service impact of demographic pressures, together with the pressures caused by the need to expedite discharge from hospital and achieve good outcomes for people and their carers.

The report illustrated that there is no discernible pattern relating to the time of the year in terms of the pressure faced by the authority to either fund long term care placements or provide packages of care for individuals to enable them to be discharged from hospital or remain within their communities. The pressure is constant and increasing.

Members thanked Officers for the report and discussed its contents in detail. Members noted that Welsh Government (WG) had been provided with feedback on the consistency of pressure on the service throughout the year and it had been highlighted that there is a constant pressure on the service, regardless of season.

Members discussed the demographical forecast and its impact on the service and budgets. A significant increase in demand was noted and a Member queried how this increased pressure on the service would be managed now and in the future. Officers highlighted that work is underway to look at alternative models and new ways of working in order to meet the increasing demand. A report would be presented to Committee over the coming weeks on the Medium Term Financial Plan, which would demonstrate essential savings opportunities and the impact on services, service users and residents.

A Member queried the Council's Direct Payments policy. Officers clarified that further work is underway in this area to determine the benefits and Members would be updated in due course.

The Scrutiny Committee thanked the officers for the report and noted its contents.

8. PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT 2013/14

D. Street, Director for Social Services, provided Members with an overview of the report, which highlighted the final position for 2013/14 in relation to the performance management figures for both adult services and children services.

Members noted that adult services and children services have a range of performance indicators. Some of which are national indicators determined by Welsh Government while others are local indicators, created by senior managers to oversee areas not covered by the national indicators.

Members thanked the Officer for the report and a full discussion ensued.

Members raised concerns around the format in which performance reported and queried the reasons for changing from dedicated performance management committees. The Officer explained that a corporate approach has been adopted in which performance is added to the regular Scrutiny Agenda, however, welcomed feedback from Members.

A Member queried the importance of performance indicators and meeting targets in respect of service delivery. Officers assured Members that, although performance is important, meeting the needs of the service users is the main priority.

Members considered the indicators fully within the report and raised queries around the performance direction in SCA/002a (The rate of older people supported in the Community aged 65 or over per 1,000 population aged 65 or over). Officers stated that the aim is to support people to live independently in their own homes; therefore, performance improves as the number increases for this indicator.

Particular concerns were expressed towards target setting and Members felt that there was little opportunity in Scrutiny Committees to fully challenge targets and performance. Members noted that the future reporting of performance issues is being considered and a report would be presented to Members in the future.

The Scrutiny Committee noted the contents of the report.

9. IMPROVEMENT OBJECTIVE 1- 2013/14 YEAR END REPORT

The report and appendix provided Members with a 2013/14 year-end update on the progress made against Improvement Objective 1 'Ensuring children and young people who are looked after are supported to achieve their full potential'.

The Council is required to set Improvement Objectives under the Local Government (Wales) Measure 2009. Success, or otherwise, of delivery of the Improvement Objective outcomes forms part of the Auditor General's annual assessment on the performance of the Council.

The Scrutiny Committee thanked the Officer for the overall positive report and a full discussion ensued.

A Member sought further information around transition. Officers highlighted that Social Services and Housing staff are working effectively together to secure suitable accommodation for young people leaving care. There are always challenges around transition, however, the Council has a very dedicated team who aim work with young people and offer support as long as possible. The Member thanked the Officer for the update and hoped a further updated could be provided in the future.

The Scrutiny Committee noted the content of the report.

10. ANNUAL DIRECTORS REPORT ON THE EFFECTIVENESS OF SOCIAL CARE SERVICES 2013/14

Lianne Dallimore provided Members with an overview of the report, which informed the Health, Social Care and Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee of the key messages that had been identified in the preparation of the fifth Annual Director's report on the Effectiveness of Social Care Services.

The report sought the views of Members prior to the reports presentation to Council on 22nd July 2014. A Member expressed concern about the late receipt of the draft Directors Report. The Scrutiny Committee unanimously agreed to defer the item to the next available agenda in order to have more time to consider, scrutinise and discuss its contents.

11. REQUESTS FOR ITEMS TO BE INCLUDED ON THE NEXT AVAILABLE AGENDA

Councillor L. Binding requested a report Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards (DoLS).

12. ITEMS FOR INFORMATION

The following items were received and noted without discussion.

1. Update Report on Domestic Abuse Services.
2. Social Services Grants 2014/15.
3. Statement of Intent for Older People with Complex Needs.
4. Rota Visits by Members to Social Services Establishments: 1st Jan 2014 – 31st March 2014.
5. Summary of Members' Attendance – Quarter 4: 1st Jan 2014 to 7th May 2014.

The meeting closed at 7.14 p.m.

Approved as a correct record subject to any amendments agreed and recorded in the minutes of the meeting held on 9th September 2014.

CHAIRMAN