



SOCIAL SERVICES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

MINUTES OF THE MULTI-LOCATIONAL MEETING HELD AT THE COUNCIL OFFICES PENALLTA HOUSE AND VIA MICROSOFT TEAMS ON TUESDAY 22ND NOVEMBER 2022 AT 5.30 P.M.

PRESENT:

Councillor D. Cushing – Chair
Councillor M. Chacon-Dawson - Vice Chair

Councillors:

C. Bishop, R. Chapman, P. Cook, K. Ethridge, M. Evans, D. Harse, T. Heron, L. Jeremiah, A. Leonard, J. A. Pritchard, D. Price, S. Skivens.

Councillor: E. Forehead. (Cabinet Member for Social Care).

Cabinet Member: J. Pritchard

Co-Opted Members: Vacant.

Together with:

Officers: G. Jenkins (Assistant Director – Children's Services), J. Williams (Assistant Director - Adult Services), D. Street (Corporate Director for Social Services and Housing), C. Forbes-Thompson (Scrutiny Manager), J. Thomas (Committee Services Officer).

RECORDING AND VOTING ARRANGEMENTS

The Chair reminded those present that the meeting was being live streamed, and a recording would be made available to view via the Council's website, except for discussions involving confidential or exempt items. [Click Here To View](#).

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor A. Broughton-Pettit.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

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

UPDATE FROM THE DIRECTOR OF SOCIAL SERVICES AND HOUSING

The Chair invited Mr Dave Street (Corporate Director - Social Services and Housing) to address the Scrutiny Committee.

The Corporate Director advised Members that an independent company had been

commissioned to look at producing a model of day services for the future. The Associates were commissioned in May 2022 which left a very tight timescale to produce a brief. It had been anticipated that a report would be produced to present to the Scrutiny Committee during that evening's meeting. However, following the agreement of the Chair and Vice Chair, the report would now be presented at the January 2023 Scrutiny Committee Meeting. It was explained that given the large number of stakeholders and the need to obtain their views, it had been impossible for the Associates to gather this information within the given timescale. The Corporate Director emphasised the importance of ensuring that this piece of work is not rushed and is completed correctly to achieve the best outcome.

Following concerns raised from several Members of the Scrutiny Committee, the Corporate Director gave assurances that the implementation of the results found in the report would be a priority with as little delay as possible.

3. MINUTES – 11TH OCTOBER 2022

It was moved and seconded that the minutes of the meeting held on 11th October 2022 subject to a members request for accuracy on item 6, Para 3 which stated '*costs had gone up a couple of hundred percent due to fuel increases*' be approved as a correct record and by way of Microsoft Forms (and in noting there were 11 for, 0 against and 1 abstention) this was agreed by the majority present.

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. SOCIAL SERVICES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME

Cath Forbes-Thompson (Scrutiny Manager) introduced the report that informed the Committee of its Forward Work Programme planned for the period November 2022 to March 2023.

Following consideration of the report, it was moved and seconded that the recommendations be approved. By way of electronic voting this was unanimously agreed.

RESOLVED that the Forward Work Programme as appended to the meeting papers be published on the Council's website.

6. CABINET REPORTS

It was confirmed that there had been no requests for any of the Cabinet reports listed on the agenda to be brought forward for discussion at the meeting

REPORTS OF OFFICERS

Consideration was given to the following reports.

7. ANNUAL REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF SOCIAL SERVICES AND HOUSING FOR 2021/22

Councillor E. Forehead (Cabinet Member for Social Care) introduced the report which informed the Scrutiny Committee Members of the key messages that had been identified in the

preparation of the Annual Report of the Director of Social Services and Housing 2021/22, and sought the views of the Scrutiny Committee, prior to the report being presented to Council on the 13th December 2022.

Dave Street (Corporate Director for Social Services and Housing) addressed the Scrutiny Committee and provided clarification from Members on the current issues and challenges that Social Services are facing, particularly in relation to staffing and resources for Domiciliary Care and Children's Services, and the plans in place to mitigate these issues. The Officer advised the Committee that in relation to Domiciliary Care, there are currently 95 people waiting to receive around 642.5 hours of care. The Committee were also advised that one independent provider has notified Caerphilly Council that they will be terminating their contract with the Authority on the 5th December 2022, as they require more hours to continue to be viable but have been unable to recruit the staff to support these additional hours.

It was explained that this particular provider currently provides 850 hours of domiciliary care services in the south-and east areas of the county borough. Members were advised that 20% of the hours which were delivered in the east were going to another independent agency and 10 staff would TUPE to that provider. The remaining 80% of the hours were being transferred to the Councils in house Dom Care Services HART. 32 Staff were eligible for TUPE transfer. These staff have been offered the opportunity to take up the Council's terms and conditions of employment, which has resulted in 32 staff accepting this offer. Mrs Williams acknowledged the considerable efforts by the HART Team and Human Resources in their attempts to address this matter prior to the deadline of the 5th December.

However, there are still a large number of vacancies across provider services and to date there have been teams attending recent fairs to speak to people interested in care work. There will also be a major recruitment campaign across the county borough which will include advertising in cinemas, on buses and in local supermarkets.

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The Scrutiny Members were informed that Children's Services have experienced an increased number of referrals and contacts that are challenging and complex in nature. These complex needs have resulted in significant resourcing issues. The Corporate Director also informed the Members that the recruitment of staff is a significant issue with salary levels being a key factor.

Members of the Scrutiny Committee commented that they felt distanced from un-paid carers and would like to have the opportunity to meet with them to discuss how they feel and ensure they understand how important and valued they are. Mr Street agreed to consider this and see how this could be taken forward in the New Year.

A Member recalled how previously rota visits (now discontinued) were carried out and allowed Members to visit residents at care homes and day centres which gave them a feel for what was going on and the opportunity to speak to residents. Mr Street advised Members that this activity would be a backward step and that this exercise was stopped due to a lack of interest and participation. Such visits also require significant administrative support, which is no longer available due to a lack of resources.

Following a Member's query regarding the ABUHB-funded service "Home First", Domiciliary Care, the Scrutiny Committee were advised that this is a small service for the Caerphilly Basin area and care would remain in place for an individual until Caerphilly County Borough Council were able to broker a long term provider.

In addition, Members sought clarification on whether the recent agreement to increase the fees to providers, linked to the increase in fuel costs, had been passed on to employees. The

Scrutiny Committee were assured that the funding had gone straight to the employees, and they were paid virtually the same hourly rate as CCBC staff. However, in terms of the staff who have transferred over to CCBC, the Council were able to offer better terms and conditions, such as rota patterns. In addition, Social Care Wales registration is paid for, along with the opportunity to participate in the Council's pension scheme.

Following consideration and discussion, it was moved and seconded that the recommendation in the report be approved. By way of electronic voting this was unanimously agreed.

RESOLVED that for the reasons contained in the Officer's report the content therein be noted prior to its submission to Council on the 13th December 2022.

8. BLAENAU GWENT AND CAERPHILLY YOUTH OFFENDING SERVICE - YOUTH JUSTICE PLAN 2022-2024 AND YOUTH OFFENDING SERVICE INSPECTION

Councillor Elaine Forehead (Cabinet Member for Social Care) introduced the report which provided the Scrutiny Committee Members with updates on the joint Blaenau Gwent and Caerphilly Youth Offending Service (YOS) in relation to the 2022-2024 Youth Justice plan and an also an overview of the Inspection of the YOS by Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Probation (HMIP).

Mr Gareth Jenkins (Assistant Director for Children Services) invited the Members of the Scrutiny Committee to ask any questions.

Although there were no questions regarding this report, a Member informed the Scrutiny Committee that they had recently had the opportunity to attend the Youth Justice Simulation at City Hall, Cardiff, with Caerphilly staff also present at the event. The Member wanted to highlight that the event was a very good experience and very educational and identified some of the problems that young people experience across the Youth Justice System. The Member informed the Scrutiny Members that there are future events planned for next year and encouraged the Authority to send as many staff as possible and also encouraged Councillors to attend the event. The Member also informed Members there is a Forum to work with Partner Agencies and the Senedd to try and integrate services.

Following consideration of the report and for the reasons contained therein the Social Services Scrutiny Committee noted its contents.

9. CO-OPTED MEMBERS SOCIAL SERVICES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE VACANCIES

Cath Forbes-Thompson (Scrutiny Manager) introduced the report which informed the Scrutiny Committee that following the Local Government Elections in May 2022, the three co-opted members positions on the Scrutiny Committee became vacant. The Members were informed of the Council decision in May 2017 for the positions to be on a fixed term to run concurrently with the term of office for each respective administration. In line with the agreed process, GAVO were contacted and asked to circulate to User and Carer Groups in the county borough to nominate persons interested in the positions.

The Social Services Scrutiny Committee were advised that disappointingly there had only been one nomination received, which was from the Alzheimer's Society. Therefore, a further letter would be sent out with the hope of more nominations being received. The Officer asked the Scrutiny Committee for a nomination to sit on the Appointments Sub Committee. It was explained that the previous process for the Sub Committee was for the Chair, the Vice-Chair plus one additional member from the Scrutiny Committee to sit on this Sub Committee. The Officer also requested that the co-opted member position for ABUHB is recommended to be removed from the Social Services Scrutiny Committee, at the next Council AGM. The committee was advised that they have not attended for a number of years and after contacting them to

seek their views they have confirmed that they no longer wish to hold a co-opted position on this Committee.

A Member expressed their concerns as to how the co-opted members were recruited and interviewed and felt that GAVO should be making the nominations. The Member felt that the interview process might be off-putting and requested that the Scrutiny Manager write to GAVO to enquire whether they feel the recruitment process is adequate. The Officer reminded the Scrutiny Committee that the process of filling the positions was agreed by Council and assured the Member that the process follows the guidance from Welsh Government from the Local Government Measure 2011 which were sets out as good practice in terms of the co-opted member positions. It was suggested that it should be a matter for the Scrutiny Committee Members to decide which areas they felt there were gaps in skills and experience within their specific Committee. However, the Officer confirmed that they would correspond with GAVO and enquire whether they felt the process of recruitment needed to be changed. Should this be the case, the Officer assured the Member that they would present a report to Council seeking their approval to change this recruitment process.

Having fully considered the report it was moved and seconded to approve the recommendations as set in 3.1 to 3.3 of the Officers report. By way of Microsoft Forms this was unanimously agreed.

The Social Services Scrutiny Committee RESOLVED:-

3.1 To agree and appoint three members to sit on the Social Services Co-Opted Member Appointments Sub-Committee as outlined in 4.1 of the report and that Cllr C. Bishop is nominated to sit with the Chair and Vice Chair;

3.2 To Recommend to Council AGM that the ABUHB co-opted position is removed;

3.3 That the Scrutiny Manager write to GAVO to enquire if the current procedure for nominating co-opted members is satisfactory.

The meeting closed at 6.44PM

Approved as a correct record, subject to any amendments agreed and recorded in the minutes of the meeting held on the 24th January 2023.

CHAIR