



HEALTH, SOCIAL CARE AND WELLBEING SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD AT PENALLTA HOUSE, YSTRAD MYNACH ON TUESDAY, 14TH MAY 2013 AT 5.00 PM

PRESENT:

Councillor L. Ackerman - Chairman
Councillor B.A. Jones - Vice Chairman

Councillors:

E.M. Aldworth, G. Bevan, L. Binding, P. Cook, J. Gale, L. Gardiner, N. George, C. Gordon,
S. Morgan, J.A. Pritchard.

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

Together with:

D. Street (Acting Director Social Services), N Scammell (Acting Director Corporate Services & Section 151), S. Harris (Acting Head of Corporate Finance), J. Williams (Interim Assistant Director Adult Services), R. Ballantine (Personnel Manager), J Jones (Democratic Services Manager), C. Forbes-Thompson (Scrutiny Research Officer).

Users & Carers: Mrs M. Veater.

APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence had been received from Councillors A.P. Angel, K. Dawson, P.A. Griffiths, and G. Hughes.

Users & Carers: Mr C. Luke, Mrs J.M. Morgan.

1. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor L Binding sought advice regarding his role as Chair of the Joint Scrutiny Panel, he was advised that there was no interest to be declared. There were no declarations of interest raised at the beginning or during the course of the meeting.

2. MINUTES

RESOLVED that the minutes of the Health, Social Care and Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee held on 26th March 2013 (minute nos. 1-11; page nos. 1-6) be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

3. 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.

4. REPORT OF THE CABINET MEMBER

The Scrutiny Committee received a verbal report from Councillor R. Woodyatt, Cabinet Member for Social Services in relation to the following.

Mr. Gareth Jenkins has been appointed as Assistant Director for Children's Services, and is expected to commence his new role at the end of the summer.

Cllr Woodyatt stated that he and the Acting Director attended the 1st Anniversary Celebration for the Shared Lives along with more than 170 staff, carers and service users from the six local authorities participating in the scheme. Long service awards were given to carers who had taken part in the scheme for 20 years or more

He was delighted to report that the Children's Rights Service had made the final of the Social Care Accolades, which will be judged in a few weeks time. He made reference to the recent POVA seminar at the Council Chamber where the standard of discussion and questions were excellent.

Cllr Woodyatt stated that the agenda this evening contains the background to the decision to move away from full-blown integration with Blaenau Gwent and will also focus on some key budgetary issues. Despite 2012/13 being very successful in terms of budget management there is going to be key challenges moving forward and members of scrutiny committee will have a key role in this area in the next six months or so.

Members asked if there was an update on the condition and replacement of adapted vehicles used by social services. A report will be brought forward for Members to consider.

The Scrutiny Committee wished to pass on their congratulations to the Children's Rights Service on reaching the final of the Social Care Accolades.

5. CABINET REPORTS

There had been no requests for either of the Cabinet reports listed on the agenda to be brought forward for discussion at the meeting.

SCRUTINY REPORTS

Consideration was given to the following reports.

6. CAERPHILLY AND BLAENAU GWENT SOCIAL SERVICES INTEGRATION PROGRAMME - DECISION TO PROCEED OR NOT

The report, which set out to inform Members of the following, was considered by Cabinet on 9th April 2013:

- The work completed to date on the integration of Caerphilly CBC and Blaenau Gwent CBC Social Services Directorates.
- The detailed financial analysis undertaken by the Section 151 officers.

- A recommended way forward in terms of a decision to proceed or not to an integrated model of working.

Following consideration of the report Cabinet agreed to implement option 4 - Explore the potential for further collaboration on an individual business case basis.

The Scrutiny Committee commented that they were disappointed to have reached this point but agreed with the decision that was made. Members expressed concern that the joint scrutiny panel was not involved in considering the situation over the past months and wanted to ensure that lessons are learned for the future.

Members were pleased to note that the work carried out to date would not be in vain and that there are opportunities to work with Blaenau Gwent on an ad-hoc basis. The Scrutiny Committee sought clarification on the joint work already agreed, and were assured that the joint workforce development team will go ahead and that other opportunities were being explored. In addition Officers stated that the Council has worked with the Social Services Improvement Agency to develop a toolkit for other local authorities who are looking at working together.

The Scrutiny Committee asked if there had been any feedback from Welsh Government about the decision, it was stated that a meeting had taken place and it is not anticipated that there would be any further intervention.

The Scrutiny Committee endorsed the recommendation and noted the report.

7. VOLUNTEER SCHEME

The report provided information on the volunteer scheme previously known as 'befriender service', following a request received at a previous meeting.

The report informed the Scrutiny Committee that the volunteer scheme has been in place for over 25 years with 46 service users matched to a befriender and a further 30 on the waiting list. The aim of the scheme is to provide service users with opportunities to establish and maintain friendships, socialise and access community based activities and services.

In November 2011 a pilot scheme was established to provide service users known to the Physical Disability and Sensory Impairment Team with opportunities to access the Volunteer Befriender Scheme. The pilot scheme was initially for a 3-month period but savings made at this time were reinvested to extend the pilot until June 2013.

The pilot matched 22 service users with a further 24 on the waiting list. Feedback from those who have taken part in the pilot has shown a positive impact upon their confidence and wellbeing. A volunteer befriender service is also being developed as part of Day Services for older people.

The Scrutiny Committee commended the scheme and made suggestions to encourage more volunteers to take part.

8. 2013/14 REVENUE BUDGET AND MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL PLAN UPDATE

Details were received of the 2013/14 revenue budget for the Directorate of Social Services together with an update on the Medium Term Financial Plan.

The report outlined the Welsh Government (WG) Revenue Support Grant (RSG) settlement for Caerphilly County Borough Council for the 2013/14 financial year. The WG have included a 1% protection on the Social Services Budget.

Officers outlined the key movements within the revenue budget, the funding received in respect of the Learning Disabilities Resettlement and the Blue Badge Scheme. The WG 1% protection funding, and the £1.2m additional growth monies supporting increased demand in Domiciliary Care & Sitting, Day Care, Supported Living and Supporting People. In addition the lease at Enterprise House is due to terminate at the end of September 2013 saving £200k.

The indicative RSG from WG for 2014/15 indicates that CCBC will need to make £6.099m in savings by March 2016. The continued protection for schools and social care will continue until March 2016, therefore the Directorate of Social Services will not be required to make a contribution the £6.099m savings. However due to increased demand upon services, cost pressures will result in savings of £1.845m required for 2014/15 and £1.427m for 2015/16

A member asked if the Council is now accessing service charges for the supported living service, Officers confirmed that this is now in place for in-house service and they are working on external services with some success.

The Scrutiny Committee noted that the Looked After Children Health project is still in operation despite funding being withdrawn. Members asked when the Task and Finish group recommendations on Extra Care charges would be implemented. Officers confirmed that they are working on an October 2013 commencement date.

The Scrutiny Committee noted the contents of the report.

9. REVIEW OF CARE HOME FEES

The report provided details of a recently completed review of fees paid by the Authority for elderly residential and nursing placements in care homes within the County Borough and sought support of a recommended three-year fee strategy.

A Member asked for information on the quality payment referred to in the report. Officers explained that this was introduced 2 years ago to encourage providers to enhance provision in Care Homes, and approximately 70% received a payment.

The Scrutiny Committee asked if the recommended increase in fees would have an impact on self-funders. Officers felt this was unlikely because self-funders already pay significantly more than the Council does at present.

A Member asked if the projected £ 541k additional costs would affect service levels within the Directorate. Officers stated that it would add to the burden but that they would look at efficiencies before considering jobs and services. However there is a significant risk of a judicial review if we did not go ahead with the recommendations.

The Scrutiny Committee asked if the savings have been identified, Officers stated that they would look at efficiencies in the long term but would look at a number of options in the short term. There is a possibility of identifying funding at a Corporate level from uncommitted budgets which would allow time for a review of the MTFP.

Members asked if the fees had been compared with other local authorities across Wales, Officers stated that these increases would put CCBC in 5th/6th position. However some local authorities have not yet carried out this review. A Member asked if the fees compared to in-house costs, it was clarified that the proposed fees were still less than the cost of in-house provision because of the living wage and pension costs etc.

The Scrutiny Committee asked if a 3-year projection of the fee increases had been carried out and expressed concern that could be a significant burden on the Local Authority. Officers stated that projections are based on Retail Price Index and assumptions have been made based on projected RPI.

The Scrutiny Committee endorsed the proposed 2013/14 fees and fee uplift methodology for 2014/15 and 2015/16 prior to consideration by Cabinet.

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

The following requests were received:-

1. Councillor L Binding requested a report on Continuing Health Care Funding.
2. Councillor S Morgan requested that the information report on Development of 16+ Services be discussed at the next meeting.

11. INFORMATION ITEMS

The following items were received and noted.

1. Inspection - Role of the Statutory Director Social Services.
2. 2012/13 Annual Representations and Complaints Report.
3. Development of 16 Plus Services.

12. EXEMPT ITEM

Members considered the public interest test and concluded that on balance the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighed the public interest in disclosing the information and it was: -

RESOLVED that in accordance with Section 100(A) of the Local Government Act 1972 the public be excluded from the remainder of the meeting because of the likely disclosure to them of exempt information as defined in paragraphs 12 and 13 of Part 4 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972.

13. ANNUAL ACCIDENT AND VIOLENT INCIDENTS REPORT 2012-13

The report provided information on the number and type of employee related accidents and violent incident reports received during the period 1st April 2012 to 31st March 2013.

The Scrutiny Committee noted the information contained within the report.

The meeting closed at 18:10 pm.

Approved as a correct record subject to any amendments agreed and recorded in the minutes of the meeting held on 25th June 2013.

CHAIRMAN