



HEALTH, SOCIAL CARE AND WELLBEING SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD AT PENALLTA HOUSE, TREDOMEN,
YSTRAD MYNACH ON TUESDAY, 25TH MARCH 2014 AT 5.00 P.M.**

PRESENT:

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

Councillors:

Mrs E.M. Aldworth, Mrs G. Bevan, L. Binding, Mrs P. Cook, Mrs E.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 (Corporate Director Social Services), G. Jenkins (Assistant Director Children Services), J. Williams (Assistant Director Adult Services), S. Harris (Acting Head of Corporate Finance), M. Jones (Group Accountant), C. Forbes-Thompson (Scrutiny Research Officer), S.M. Kauczok (Committee Services Officer).

Users & Carers: Mr C. Luke and Mrs M. Veater MBE.

Aneurin Bevan University Health Board: Dr. Y. Bhat (Clinical Lead for Stroke), Sam Crane (ABUHB Stroke Lead) and Martin Lane (Planning Lead).

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence had been received from Councillors A. Angel, Mrs P. Griffiths and G. Hughes; Mrs B. Bolt (ABUHB).

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor L. Gardiner declared an interest during consideration of agenda item 6(3).

3. MINUTES

RESOLVED that the minutes of the following meeting be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman: -

1. Health, Social Care and Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee held on 11th February 2014 (minute nos. 1-13; page nos. 1-6).

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, on the following issues.

On Monday, 17th March Councillor Woodyatt had attended the official opening of the Rhymney Integrated Resource Centre, which had been undertaken by the Earl of Wessex. Councillor Woodyatt congratulated all those who had been involved in the development of the Resource Centre, which provides citizens in the north of the County Borough with a first class facility. Invitations to the opening had been strictly regulated by the Palace. However, an event for the wider community, to include the burial of a time capsule, is currently being organised.

The Social Services Directorate is currently being inspected on two counts. Wales Audit Office is looking at the Authority's arrangements for Safeguarding Children and CSSIW is inspecting its practices around Looked After Children. Both reports will be presented to Members when received.

The Social Services & Wellbeing (Wales) Bill has finished its passage through Welsh Government and is well on the way to becoming law. A seminar for all Members will be held on Monday, 7th April at Penallta House to explain the Bill and its implications for the Authority as a whole.

The agenda for this evening's Scrutiny Committee meeting would include a presentation from colleagues in ABUHB on their review of stroke services as well as items from officers in Children and Adult Services.

The Chair thanked the Cabinet Member for his report and invited questions and comments from the Scrutiny Committee.

During the course of the debate it was agreed that invitations to the seminar on 7th April would be extended to co-optees on the HSC&WB Scrutiny Committee. Sam Crane confirmed that she would liaise with representatives of GAVO and the Voluntary Sector Sub-Committee in terms of inviting representatives of the voluntary sector to the event to mark the opening of the Rhymney Resource Centre.

SCRUTINY REPORTS

Consideration was given to the following.

6. PRESENTATION: REVIEW OF STROKE SERVICES

The Chair welcomed Dr. Yaqoob Bhat (Clinical Lead for Stroke), Sam Crane (ABUHB Stroke Lead) and Martin Lane (Planning Lead) who had been invited to the Scrutiny Committee to brief Members on the Stroke Services Redesign Programme as part of the engagement process. The proposed model for stroke services has been developed by the multi-disciplinary Stroke Board and through broader engagement achieved in a series of clinical workshops during 2013. ABUHB now wishes to engage more widely with stakeholders who have an interest in stroke care including stroke survivors, carers and partner agencies to consider the vision and proposed stroke service reconfiguration in ABUHB.

Copies of a briefing paper on the Stroke Services Redesign Programme, which had been prepared by ABUHB had been circulated to all members of the Scrutiny Committee prior to the meeting. The paper sets out how ABUHB is working towards its vision for stroke services through its clinical pathway and proposed model of care and poses a set of questions to help test and refine the service configuration options prior to formal public consultation.

Members were informed that stroke is the leading cause of adult disability in Wales with approximately 900 strokes occurring every year across the ABUHB area. Many improvements have been made to stroke care across Wales in recent years through the provision of specialist and timely interventions that have helped to save lives and reduce the impact of stroke for many people. The public are also increasingly recognising that stroke is a medical emergency and seeking help quickly. During the presentation to the Scrutiny Committee two health promotion videos (When Stroke Strikes Act F.A.S.T.) were shown, which are helping to raise public awareness of stroke signs and symptoms.

Acute stroke care and inpatient rehabilitation in ABUHB is currently provided across seven hospital sites. Patients are managed by small teams of stroke specialist consultants, nurses and therapists often with small numbers of patients at each site and with limited post-discharge support available within the community. Evidence suggests that stroke patients do better when admitted to a specialist centre and then return home as quickly as possible after the acute phase.

The proposed new model for stroke services for ABUHB features a centre of excellence for hyper-acute care; acute care and early rehabilitation; an increased focus on prevention; community based Early Supported Discharge services; fewer inpatient stroke rehabilitation units providing specialist rehabilitation; ongoing rehabilitation, complex care planning and palliative care in a local hospital or home setting as appropriate and multi-agency support for life after stroke and secondary prevention.

In order to deliver the proposed model of care and to create centres of excellence for stroke patients it is proposed that the number of inpatient stroke facilities in ABUHB is reduced and that community services are developed. An options appraisal, which began on 1st May 2013 has thus far defined 7 potential options. Moving to the Clinical Futures model of one hyper-acute unit will concentrate the expert acute stroke staff in a centre of excellence able to deliver consistent high quality care in the most efficient way for patients 24 hours a day. The preferred site, before the Specialist and Critical Care Centre (SCCC) is built, for hyper acute specialist care is the Royal Gwent Hospital, Newport.

Following the detailed presentation, a full discussion ensued on the proposals and officers responded to the issues raised. Concern was expressed in terms of the reconfiguration proposals having regard to the problems that Welsh Ambulance Service is experiencing in meeting its response time targets. Sam Crane advised that the Welsh Ambulance Service had indicated that they are happy with the proposals and the fact that there would be a specialist medical team on one site. It was suggested that it might be beneficial for the Ambulance Service to be invited to attend a future meeting of the Scrutiny Committee to discuss the matter further.

Following an interesting question and answer session, the Chair thanked Ms. Crane, Dr. Bhat and Mr. Lane for their attendance and contribution to the debate.

7. SERVICES FOR DISABLED CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE

The Assistant Director Children's Services presented the report, which updated the Scrutiny Committee on the remodelling of services for disabled children and young people that was originally agreed in 2011.

The report outlines the key changes made to services to improve the quality of services together with improved efficiency and cost effectiveness. In addition, it sets out the potential areas for future development of services including a proposal to work with key partner agencies to establish a multi agency integrated disability service for children and young people, building on good practice and ensuring families receive the support they need. The services provided across Caerphilly are recognised to be of high quality by families and partner agencies and these services will need to be enhanced. The proposal will be based on the Children with Disabilities Team being co-located with health colleagues, Action for Children services and the ISCAN Project in the Caerphilly Children's Centre. Building on successes to date, the proposal will improve services by providing the potential to develop.

Following discussion on the services provided for disabled children and young people in the County Borough Members expressed their appreciation of the improvements that had been made to date to service delivery.

The Scrutiny Committee noted the contents of the report and endorsed the plans to continue to improve the delivery of services for disabled children and young people in Caerphilly.

8. FINANCIAL ASSESSMENT PROCEDURE FOR SPECIAL GUARDIANSHIP ORDERS AND RESIDENCE ORDERS

Councillor L. Gardiner declared an interest in this item, the details of which are recorded in the Members' Declarations of Interest Register.

The report provides details of a revised financial assessment procedure for determining financial support payable by Caerphilly CBC to carers of children under Special Guardianship Orders and Residence Orders.

The payment of basic allowances for Residence Orders and Special Guardianship Orders is subject to a means-tested financial assessment. The procedures have been updated and combined into a single document taking account of best practice and guidance and external legal advice. An overview of the financial assessment calculation is provided in section 6 of the updated procedure document and is summarised in paragraph 4.5.3 of the Officer's report.

The most significant changes to the existing procedures relate to the annual uplifting of allowances payable, linkages to Caerphilly CBC foster rates and the treatment of disposable income where there are sibling groups included in the financial assessment. These changes result in increased costs for the Authority. A number of other changes have been made to the revised procedure and the most significant of these are set out in paragraph 4.5.8 of the report.

As a consequence of some of these changes, the assessed allowance payable for some existing carers will reduce. In these cases it is proposed that the level of allowance currently payable will be protected for the duration of the Order or until future financial assessments result in a higher allowance being payable or there is a significant change in financial circumstances.

The additional cost of the revised financial assessment procedure is £368k per annum and it was noted that this was affordable within existing budgets due to reduced commitments against residential and fostering budgets.

It is proposed that the revised assessment procedure will be effective from 1st April 2014. However, due to the number of Orders in place it will not be possible to immediately re-assess every family. It is therefore recommended that a re-assessment will be undertaken at the normal anniversary date for each family and that the outcomes from these will be backdated to 1st April 2014.

Following detailed consideration and discussion on the proposals, it was moved and seconded that the recommendations in the report be approved. By a show of hands this was unanimously agreed.

The Scrutiny Committee noted the content of the report and RECOMMENDED to Cabinet that:-

1. The revised financial assessment procedure attached at Appendix 1 to the report be endorsed.
2. The payments to those carers whose allowances will reduce as a consequence of the revised financial assessment procedure will be protected at current levels for the duration of the Order (or until future financial assessments result in a higher allowance being payable or there is a significant change in financial circumstances).
3. The re-assessments be undertaken at the normal anniversary date for each family but the outcomes from those assessments be backdated to 1st April 2014.

9. ADULT SERVICES MINIBUS FLEET

The report provides information on the fleet of specially adapted minibuses providing transport for adult social care service users and updates Members on the proposals to replace 4 of the vehicles.

The responsibility and budget for the operation of the minibus fleet for Adult Care transferred to the Integrated Transport Unit (ITU) from Social Services in April 2011, as part of the centralisation of passenger transport provision for education, social services and public transport. Since that time reports and business cases have been presented to Corporate Management Team identifying the financial and operational issues associated with operating an aging fleet and proposing a replacement strategy based on contract hire.

A fleet of 16 minibuses is used to transport clients to day centres and activities throughout the County Borough. The average age of the fleet is over 9 years old and this results in high maintenance costs and frequent breakdowns. Members were advised that arrangements had recently been made to purchase a low mileage two year old minibus to the specification required at a cost of £46k and that this would be funded from underspends in the 2013/14 Social Services revenue budget. It is further proposed that 3 new minibuses will be purchased in 2014/15 and funded from Social Services reserves. In addition it was intended that 2 of the vehicles to be replaced would be retained to use as spares.

During discussion on the proposals a request was made for a report to be prepared on the usage of these vehicles across the Directorate. Officers advised that this matter was already being addressed and that a report would be brought back to the Scrutiny Committee in due course.

Members endorsed the need for a sustainable vehicle replacement strategy to be implemented for the remaining fleet and for a review of the eligibility criteria for transport provision to be undertaken. These issues would be subject to future reports.

The Scrutiny Committee noted the content of the report.

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

1. Councillor E. Aldworth requested that information on the 'Dragon' and 'Hart' programmes be presented to a future meeting.

2. Councillor J. Pritchard requested a report on the number of hospital beds in the ABUHB area compared with other health authorities across Wales together with details of usage. The Director advised that he would liaise with Sam Crane, ABUHB, with a view to a report being presented to a future meeting of the Scrutiny Committee.

11. ITEMS FOR INFORMATION

The following items were received and noted without discussion.

1. 16 Plus Service Update.
2. Intermediate Care Fund.
3. Consultation Re: Revision of Weekly Maximum Charge for Non-Residential Social Services.

12. WELSH GOVERNMENT REPORT: LOCAL AUTHORITY SERVICES PERFORMANCE 2012/13

A Member of the Scrutiny Committee had requested that this item be brought forward for discussion at the meeting. The report summarises the key findings pertinent to the scrutiny committee from the published Welsh Government Report, Local Authority Services Performance 2012/13. The data sets are compared on an All-Wales basis and rated in accordance to levels of performance achieved or response from surveys.

Disappointment was expressed with the performance results for Delayed Transfers of Care, which Members felt would have improved since the implementation of the Gwent Frailty programme. It was noted that in 2012/13 the rate of delayed transfers of care was 9.32, which increased compared to last year's figure of 8.02 (the all Wales average is 4.57). For 2011/12 and 2012/13 Caerphilly's performance was in the lower quartile, finishing 20th out of 22 local authorities. During the course of the ensuing debate, it was noted that the situation differs in Caerphilly in that there tends to be a relatively high number of hospital patients who are only delayed for a few days.

In terms of the other two social care indicators referenced in the report, it was noted that Caerphilly's performance was well above the all Wales average for 2012/13 in respect of the Percentage of formerly looked after children known to be in education, training or employment at 19. With regard to the Percentage of looked after children with three or more placements, performance had improved to 6.9% in 2012/13 compared to the previous year. Caerphilly had also improved its position from 10th to 5th in Wales for 2012/13.

The Scrutiny Committee noted the report.

The meeting closed at 7.06 p.m.

Approved as a correct record subject to any amendments agreed and recorded in the minutes of the meeting held on 13th May 2014.

CHAIRMAN