



HEALTH, SOCIAL CARE AND WELLBEING SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD AT PENALLTA HOUSE, TREDOMEN,
YSTRAD MYNACH ON TUESDAY, 13TH MAY 2014 AT 5.30 P.M.

PRESENT:

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

Councillors:

Mrs E.M. Aldworth, Mrs G. Bevan, Mrs E.J. Gale, L. Gardiner, N. George, C. Gordon,
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), S. Harris (Acting Head of Corporate Finance), J. Jones (Democratic Services Manager), S.M. Kauczok (Committee Services Officer).

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

Aneurin Bevan University Health Board: Mrs S. Crane.

WELCOME

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting and in particular representatives of the support group who were in attendance to listen to the debate in relation to Agenda item 7(3) Operation Jasmine.

The Chair congratulated Councillor Mrs P. Cook on her appointment as Vice Chair of the Scrutiny Committee and placed on record her appreciation of the contribution made by the former Vice Chair, Councillor Mrs B. Jones who had recently been appointed as Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Corporate Services.

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence had been received from Councillors A. Angel, L. Binding, Mrs P. Griffiths, Miss L. Price (Users and Carers) and Mrs B. Bolt (ABUHB).

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor L. Ackerman declared an interest in agenda item 7(1) and left the meeting during consideration of this item.

Councillor Mrs E.M. Aldworth declared an interest in agenda item 7(2).

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 25th March 2014 (minute nos. 1-12; 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.

Councillor Woodyatt welcomed Councillor Allan Rees to his first meeting of the Scrutiny Committee following the recent by-election and wished him well for the future. He also congratulated Councillor Pat Cook on her appointment as Vice Chair of the Scrutiny Committee following Councillor Barbara Jones' move to Deputy Leader/Cabinet Member for Corporate Services.

Councillor Woodyatt informed the Scrutiny Committee that last week, accompanied by Councillor Gerald Jones, Deputy Leader/Cabinet Member for Housing, he opened the new facility for single homeless people at Ty Croeseo in Newbridge. This facility came about through the hard work of a whole range of people including the Directorate's Supporting People Team.

In terms of this evening's meeting, there were two reports from Adult Services with regard to the eligibility criteria for transport together with a proposal to withdraw the incentive payment to service users in some of the County Borough's day centres. These would be followed by two reports from the Director relating to Operation Jasmine and Intermediate Care Fund Bids.

6. CABINET REPORTS

There had been no requests for any of the Cabinet reports listed under agenda item 6 to be brought forward for discussion at the meeting.

SCRUTINY REPORTS

Consideration was given to the following reports.

7. ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA FOR TRANSPORT ADULT SERVICES

Councillor L. Ackerman had declared an interest in this item at the beginning of the meeting and left the meeting during its consideration. Councillor Mrs P. Cook, Vice Chair, therefore took the chair for this item only.

The Assistant Director Adult Services presented the report, which sought Members' views on the proposal to implement criteria for the provision of transport for adult service users, prior to being referred to Cabinet.

Members were advised that the Council is committed to promoting independence for individuals to enable them to meet their own needs. The implementation of robust eligibility criteria for transport will ensure focus is on promoting or maintaining independence, ensure equity across service user groups and enable the Authority to manage its transport budget.

Where appropriate, Caerphilly CBC will consider whether the service user requires assistance in the following key areas: Advice or training on the use of public transport; promotion of increased mobility through the provision of physiotherapy; the provision of volunteer drivers (in the absence of family or friends) and maximising their benefits, including mobility allowance. The Authority would only provide transport in exceptional circumstances in certain situations, eg. availability of a vehicle through the mobility scheme for an individual's use and where the service user chooses to attend a service outside of their locality when a suitable service is available more locally.

It was noted that if a service user is unable to access services due to mobility issues then that person could be entitled to transport provided or arranged by the Authority. However, the provision or arrangement of transport would be in cases when there is no alternative means of promoting the person's independence and failure to provide transport would prevent access to eligible services.

A full discussion ensued and officers responded to the various issues raised by Members in relation to the proposals. Arising from a request for details of the level of disability borne by the service users, Officers advised Members that they would report back. A Member expressed concern in relation to those who might have difficulties in getting to transport from their homes, particularly in rural locations. In terms of the financial implications, Members queried whether the unsuitability of some of the buses had been taken into account and whether any savings had been identified yet in terms of this proposal. It was reported that it was not possible at this stage to quantify cost savings. Whilst there are elements of the transport budget that are causing concern, this initiative is more about promoting independence amongst the service users. Members requested that consideration be given to rolling out the initiative further, if successful and it was agreed that a report would be brought back to Members on the feasibility of developing the strategy in due course.

Members' views would be conveyed to Cabinet following a wider consultation exercise.

8. THE WITHDRAWAL OF INCENTIVE PAYMENTS TO SERVICE USERS WITH LEARNING DISABILITIES WITHIN COMMUNITY SUPPORT SERVICES

Councillor L. Ackerman returned and took the chair for the remainder of the meeting. Councillor Mrs E.M. Aldworth declared an interest in this item, details are recorded in the Register of Members' Interests.

The report informed Members of the current position in Community Support Services in relation to incentive payments made to service users and sought Members' views on the proposal to withdraw incentive payments and the proposal to make a one off payment of £100 to the relevant establishments.

Members received details of the background to the historic arrangements for incentive payments made to people with a learning disability to attend local authority day services. The payments are small, the maximum daily allowances paid is 60 pence and the lowest 15 pence. Arrangements for these payments are inconsistent across Community Support Services, for example, payments are not made to people who receive from the Links, Community Support Team and Blackberry Catering.

Mr C. Luke, Caerphilly People First, outlined the consultation process that had been undertaken with service users to ascertain their views on the proposal to withdraw these payments. People First wrote to all service users in receipt of these payments explaining their role and advised that they would attend meetings at all the relevant day services to seek people's views on the proposal. Those who were unable to attend the meetings were offered the opportunity to send comments directly to People First. These comments are set out in the appendix to the report.

During the course of the ensuing debate appreciation was expressed of the work undertaken by Caerphilly People First in relation to this matter. It was moved and seconded that the recommendations in the report be approved. By a show of hands this was endorsed by the majority of Members present.

The following recommendations would therefore be referred to Cabinet on 4th June 2014: -

1. To approve the proposal to withdraw incentive payments for the reasons set out in the report.
2. To approve the proposal for a one off payment of £100 to be made to each of the establishments concerned for 2014/15.

9. OPERATION JASMINE

Members were informed of a forthcoming thematic review into six residential care and nursing care homes in Gwent that came to be known as Operation Jasmine. This will be a major review and its outcome will potentially impact across Wales. The report is intended to give Members an initial awareness that the review is taking place.

Operation Jasmine is a Gwent Police investigation into abuse, neglect and deaths in care homes in Gwent. Operation Jasmine was launched in October 2005 and has been ongoing since that point. At the latter stages of the investigation Gwent Police were joined by the Health and Safety Executive.

Welsh Government has recently commissioned Dr Margaret Flynn to undertake a thematic review of the issues surrounding Operation Jasmine. The review will be undertaken through a series of two day events, one event per agency. The two day event for Caerphilly CBC will be held on 27th and 28th May 2014. This will be followed by further two day events for the other agencies involved eg. Gwent Police, ABUHB, Care and Social Services Inspectorate for Wales and other local authorities.

Dr Flynn has indicated that she wishes to give an initial response to Welsh Government by the end of June 2013, in order that any lessons can be incorporated in forthcoming legislation. The First Minister had indicated that the final report will be published by the end of 2014 and this will be presented to the Scrutiny Committee in due course. In order to ensure that agencies are kept informed of progress Dr Flynn is publishing monthly newsletters and the latest is attached to the report as an appendix.

Whilst noting that the report was purely for information at this stage, it was agreed that members of the support group present would be invited to address the Scrutiny Committee when a further report comes back to Members following the review.

10. INTERMEDIATE CARE FUND

In December 2013 Welsh Government announced the creation of an Intermediate Care Fund across Wales. The aim of the fund is to encourage integrated working between local authorities, health third sector and housing. The fund is made up of £35 million revenue funding and £15 million capital.

The fund has been created primarily to support frail elderly people in their own home and to avoid unnecessary hospital admissions or inappropriate admissions to care, as well as preventing delayed discharge from hospital.

In January 2014 Welsh Government provided further guidance, which indicated in particular, that the fund is only available for 2014/15 and the deadline for bids was 7th March 2014. The guidance further stated that local authorities would lead the development of the proposals working in close partnership with the Local Health Board, Housing and third and independent sectors.

A total of 25 bids totalling £7.9 million were submitted to Welsh Government on 7th March 2014. On 2nd April 2014 Welsh Government confirmed that all 25 schemes had been approved and that officers could proceed with their implementation. The Corporate Director Social Services is Programme Manager on behalf of the Gwent region and is responsible for the liaison between Welsh Government and the partner agencies.

A quarterly monitoring regime has been put in place by Welsh Government to track spend and service progress. Partners have the ability to undertake variations of up to 10% between the schemes and there is potentially the opportunity for further funding bids from any underspends as the year progresses. Members were advised that officers report to Welsh Government on a quarterly basis and a meeting has been scheduled to discuss progress on 1st June.

During the course of the ensuing discussion, officers responded to issues raised by Members and provided further information in relation to a number of the approved schemes set out at Appendix 1 to the report. The Director explained that the intention had been to try and identify where the gaps were within the system eg. avoiding inappropriate discharge etc. The timescale for the whole process had been very tight allowing just six weeks for bids to be compiled and submitted. Members congratulated officers on securing the bids within the tight timescale and looked forward to receiving a report on progress in due course.

The Scrutiny Committee noted the creation of the Intermediate Care Fund by Welsh Government and the schemes laid out in Appendix 1 that will support older people across Gwent.

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

1. Councillor J. Gale requested a report on a private hospital for mentally ill patients in her ward, in terms of the potential financial impact on this Authority's resources.
2. In terms of the rota visits which Members make to the Authority's residential care homes, Councillor S. Morgan queried the possibility of similar arrangements being put in place for those in private ownership.

12. ITEMS FOR INFORMATION

The following items were received and noted without discussion.

1. 2013/14 Annual Representations and Complaints Report.

2. Rota Visits by Members to Social Services Establishments:
1st July 2013 - 31st December 2013.
3. 2014/15 Social Services Revenue Budget.

13. EXEMPT INFORMATION

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.

14. ANNUAL ACCIDENT AND VIOLENT INCIDENT REPORT 2013-2014

The report provided details of employee related accident and violent incident reports received during the period 1st April 2013 to 31st March 2014.

The recording and reporting of accidents is a statutory duty under the Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations 1995 (RIDDOR). The regulations cover specific injuries that arise from work activity and work related diseases. All completed accident reports are examined in the first instance by the appropriate manager and where necessary, an investigation is undertaken by a Health and Safety Officer. Overall the number of accident and violent reports received has decreased by 23% from the previous year.

The Scrutiny Committee noted the report.

The meeting closed at 7.05 pm.

Approved as a correct record subject to any amendments agreed and recorded in the minutes of the meeting held on 24th June 2014.

CHAIR