



HEALTH, SOCIAL CARE AND WELLBEING SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD AT PENALLTA HOUSE, TREDOMEN,
YSTRAD MYNACH ON MONDAY, 26TH JUNE 2017 AT 5.30 P.M.

PRESENT:

Councillor L.J. Binding - Chair
Councillor Ms J. Gale - Vice Chair

Councillors:

A. Angel, D. Cushing, M. Evans, A. Gair, D.C. Harse, V. James, L. Jeremiah,
Ms A. Passmore, J. Simmonds, C. Thomas

Cabinet Members:

C. Cuss (Social Care and Wellbeing), Mrs E. Stenner (Environment and Public Protection)

Together with:

D. Street (Corporate Director Social Services), G. Jenkins (Assistant Director - Children's Services), J. Williams (Assistant Director - Adult Services), R. Hartshorn (Head of Public Protection), M.J. Jones (Interim Financial Services Manager), E. Sullivan (Interim Scrutiny Officer), B. Manners (Senior Solicitor), A. Dredge (Committee Services Officer)

Users and Carers - Mr C. Luke

1. WELCOME

The Chair welcomed both new and returning Members to the first meeting of the Health, Social Care and Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee following the local elections and congratulated the new Cabinet Members on their recent appointments.

2. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence had been received from Councillors C. Bezzina, Miss E. Forehead, B. Owen and S. Skivens, together with Mrs J.M. Morgan (Users and Carers) and S. Crane and S. Millar (Aneurin Bevan University Health Board).

3. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

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

4. MINUTES – 21ST MARCH 2017

RESOLVED that the minutes of the Health, Social Care and Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee meeting held on 21st March 2017 (minute nos. 1 - 11) be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

5. 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.

6. REPORT OF THE CABINET MEMBERS

The Scrutiny Committee received verbal reports from Councillors Mrs E. Stenner (Environment and Public Protection) and C. Cuss (Cabinet Member for Social Care and Wellbeing).

Both made reference to their recent appointment as Cabinet Members and gave an overview of their role, as well as outlining recent developments within the service areas for their respective portfolios. They welcomed the opportunity to work with Members going forward and advised that they would present detailed reports at the next meeting.

7. HEALTH SOCIAL CARE AND WELLBEING SCRUTINY COMMITTEE FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME

Mrs Emma Sullivan (Interim Scrutiny Officer) presented the report which detailed the forward work programme for the Health, Social Care and Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee going forward.

Members were advised that as agreed with committee members the report on Members Rota Visits had been moved to the meeting of 12th September 2017. There had been no subsequent changes to the work programme since its publication.

The Officer reminded Members that the workshop to consider and agree the committee's forward work programme for the year ahead would be held at 5.00pm on Thursday 13th July 2017 in the Sirhowy Room, Penallta House, and asked that Members make every effort to attend. Any requests for reports to be considered could be forwarded to the Officer ahead of time or taken at the time of the workshop.

The Chair emphasised the importance of Members' attendance at the workshop and asked that further information on Task and Finish Groups, what they do and what they look at be included in the workshop discussions.

Having fully considered its content the Health, Social Care and Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee noted the report and agreed the forward work programme as attached in Appendix 1 of the report.

8. CABINET REPORT

The Cabinet report listed on the agenda had not been called forward for discussion at the meeting.

REPORTS OF OFFICERS

Consideration was given to the following reports.

9. OVERVIEW OF SOCIAL SERVICES AND PUBLIC PROTECTION

Dave Street (Director of Social Services) introduced the report, which provided an overview of the Council's Social Services and Public Protection functions, including the diverse nature of these functions and the challenges being faced by these divisions over the next few years.

It was explained that Social Services in Caerphilly has an annual budget of £80.9m, cares for around 8500 people at any given time and has a workforce of over 1500 staff. In addition to providing services directly, the section also commissions a large number of services from independent and voluntary sector providers.

Members were advised of the ongoing financial pressures faced by Social Services arising from increased demand within both Children's Services and Adult Services. Proposals are due to be brought forward to help the Authority deal with these pressures. Social care is facing challenges due to the introduction of the Social Services and Wellbeing (Wales) Act (SSWBA), which will bring about a change in the way services are delivered. The Act also places a focus on partnership working and has introduced the concept of Regional Partnership Boards (RPBs) with the clear aim of facilitating a greater level of joint and integrated working between local authorities and health boards. These Boards will become increasingly influential moving forward, with one of the first major pieces of work being around the pooling of budgets. Two other initiatives which could also impact on the future shape and operation of social care, and the way services are delivered in the future, are Welsh Government's current Parliamentary Review into Health and Social Care in Wales, and proposals on Local Government reform.

The Scrutiny Committee were also provided with an overview of Public Protection, which consists of four service groups (Environmental Health, Catering Services, Corporate Policy, and Trading Standards, Licensing and Registration). Public Protection (which moved to the remit of the Health, Social Care and Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee in 2015) has a net annual revenue budget of £8.6m and a workforce of 1100 staff. It is very much a public-facing service which aims to make local communities safer, cleaner, fairer and healthier, and to protect and promote well-being in a number of ways.

Further information relating to the range of services provided by Adult and Children's Services, Public Protection, and the business support functions provided by Social Services, were detailed in the report and its appendices.

In response to a Member's query, it was explained that increased demand on Children's Services has arisen from more complex behaviours being experienced, which is a problem at a national level. A Member queried the effectiveness of pooling budgets and Officers acknowledged the uncertainty surrounding the prospect of regional partnership working, and the need for the Authority to ensure that suitable social care standards and measures are in place, prior to the implementation of any collaborative arrangements.

The Assistant Directors for Children's and Adult Services and the Head of Public Protection were then invited to present an overview of their respective divisions and to respond to queries from the Scrutiny Committee

Gareth Jenkins (Assistant Director - Children's Services) provided an overview of the wide range of teams within Children's Services. A summary of each team and their responsibilities was appended to the report. He explained that recent legislative changes have led to a greater emphasis on "front-door" services such as the Council's Information,

Advice and Assistance Service (IAA) for Social Services, which responds to initial enquiries, provides information and advice to reduce the need for statutory services, and provides appropriate assistance to individuals based on their needs. Mr Jenkins made particular reference to the robustness of safeguarding across the Council, as evidenced by positive reviews from the Care and Social Services Inspectorate Wales (CSSIW) and Wales Audit Office (WAO). The strategic objectives and principles for Children's Services were also described to Members, with a copy of these tabled at the meeting.

Queries were received regarding the Families First programme and funding reductions for certain providers. Officers explained that they had assessed user needs against a revised set of priorities, which had led to the loss or reduced usage of some providers. Members discussed a need to recruit additional foster carers, and Officers explained that a prominent advertising drive has been carried out via radio and with posters placed around the county borough. A number of fostering enquiries have been received to date and this recruitment approach will continue.

In response to a Member's query, it was confirmed that there are between 70-100 young carers within the county borough. A Member referred to challenging behaviour in young people and queried the number of out of county care placements. It was confirmed that there are currently 325 looked after children in Caerphilly, including 23 residential home placements. Social Services have seen a significant increase in these numbers over the last 12 months, with a trend towards younger children being placed in residential care (around 8-9 years old compared to a previous average of 13 years old) as they are displaying more complex behaviours. The service places an emphasis on providing the right support at the right time, with 23 out of county placements currently in effect.

Jo Williams (Assistant Director - Adult Services) referred Members to the overview of the Adult Services teams as detailed in the report. She referred to the challenges and implications arising from the Social Services and Wellbeing (Wales) Act and of the cultural change this will have for the public and staff. Members were advised of the fragility surrounding the domiciliary care service, which is currently the focus of consultation with care providers. The Scrutiny Committee were also advised of regional working groups currently in existence and of the challenges in bringing about collaborative working with the local health board.

Members were informed that in 2015/16 Adult Services saw improvements against their all-Wales rankings (up to 10th place). However the Joint Hospital Discharge Team is facing challenges around delayed transfers of care as this is one of the top priorities and indicators of performance for Welsh Government. Adult Services are also experiencing issues relating to Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards. Members were reminded of the difficult decisions that will have to be made regarding services in the near future, arising from the current need to make significant savings whilst delivering a balanced budget.

A Member sought information on the number and costs of adult out of county placements. Officers confirmed that this relates primarily to mental health cases and that they would circulate this information to Members following the meeting.

Rob Hartshorn (Head of Public Protection) provided an overview of the range of services within Public Protection as appended to the report. Members were advised that a number of these services have received good satisfaction ratings from the public. Several teams carry out a regulatory role to ensure that businesses and the public are adhering to legislation (such as Trading Standards, Environmental Health and Licensing), and all services are delivered in a programmed way. The Community Safety Warden Team provide a reassuring presence in communities and the CCTV Control Room provides an array of services on a 24/7 basis. Public Protection are currently undertaking formal consultation in respect of new Public Space Protection Orders which will strengthen the approach to addressing irresponsible dog ownership. Catering Services deliver a service across a range of sectors

and achieved the Silver accreditation in the Investors in People Standard in February 2017. It was explained that there has been a move to regional working in some aspects of Public Protection work (such as community safety partnership activity) which brings opportunities but also its own set of challenges. In addition, Environmental Health, Trading Standards, and Licensing were identified in Welsh Government's local government reform White Paper for mandated regional delivery. In its response, Caerphilly Council opposed mandated regional delivery, arguing that any regional working arrangements should be subject to a sound business case setting out demonstrable benefits to the residents of Caerphilly. The Cabinet Secretary's response to the White Paper consultation is awaited.

A Member suggested that there was a reduced Community Safety Warden presence across some parts of the borough. It was explained that the service area had recently experienced some staffing issues but that several new wardens will be recruited later this year.

Having fully considered the overview of the Council's Social Services and Public Protection services, the Scrutiny Committee noted the contents of the report.

10. 2017/18 SOCIAL SERVICES REVENUE BUDGET

Mike Jones (Interim Financial Services Manager) presented the report, which provided Members with details of the 2017/18 revenue budget settlement for the Directorate of Social Services.

Members were reminded of the need for the Council to make £36.6m of required savings between 2014/15 to 2016/17 in response to funding reductions and a number of inescapable cost pressures. Whilst the Council's financial strategy has provided a degree of protection for Social Services from the impact of these savings requirements, the Directorate has contributed £7.2m of savings over the same 3 year period.

It was explained that the financial position for 2017/18 remains challenging, and although the Welsh Government (WG) settlement was better than originally anticipated, the Revenue Support Grant cash uplift has been reduced, and the Authority has new responsibilities, inflationary pressures and inescapable service pressures. This has necessitated a savings requirement of £9.046m for the Authority in order to balance its budget for the 2017/18 financial year and the Directorate have contributed £563k towards this target through vacancy management and back-office reviews.

Members were advised that additional funding totalling £3.5m was allocated to Social Services in the 2017/18 budget to cover increased demand for social care services for both adults and children. This is only sufficient to fund the existing increase in demand and does not allow for any further increases that are likely to accrue throughout 2017/18. The Directorate is also faced with significant increases in fee levels from independent sector social care providers as a result of further changes in employment law. It is hoped that the additional WG funding of £10m across Wales will help to address these pressures, with Caerphilly's allocation confirmed as £600k in May 2017.

In addition to these savings and pressures, the budget for 2017/18 agreed by Council took account of a number of other funding adjustments, and resulted in a total Social Services net budget for 2017/18 of £80.9m. Further details of the budget setting process was contained in the report and its appendices.

The Council recently approved a Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP) which assumed a cash flat settlement for Caerphilly for 2018/19 to 2021/22. This recognises the need for additional funding of £1.5m per year to respond to increasing demands on Social Services, and highlighted potential savings of £28m required over this period. Social Services have been protected from the worst of these cuts and have been given an initial target amounting

to 5% of budget over the four years, which equates to £3.767m, and may be subject to change as budget proposals are firmed up for future years. However, all easier savings options have now become exhausted and it is likely that some very difficult decisions will be necessary in order to deliver any further savings. A list of savings proposals will be compiled by Senior Officers and presented for Members consideration at the earliest opportunity.

A Member sought clarification on the types of posts that had been deleted in order to deliver the £7.2m saving target. Officers confirmed that this had been achieved via the deletion of some social worker posts, together with a number of back-office and managerial roles. Discussion also took place regarding the financial pressures faced within the social care section. It was explained that WG announced a further £20m of funding in March 2017, which it is hoped will help to address further increased demand. However, confirmation of Caerphilly's share is being awaited, together with any conditions that may be attached to this funding.

Following consideration and discussion of the report, it was moved and seconded that the following recommendations be supported. By a show of hands, this was unanimously agreed.

RESOLVED that for the reasons contained in the Officer's report: -

- (i) the 2017/18 budget for the Directorate of Social Services as set out in Appendix 1 be noted;
- (ii) the implications of the Council's 2018/19 to 2021/22 Medium Term Financial Plan that apply to the Directorate of Social Services be noted, and it be recognised that options for delivering savings with little impact on front line services have been exhausted over the preceding four year period.

The meeting closed at 7.20 p.m.

Approved as a correct record and subject to any amendments or corrections agreed and recorded in the minutes of the meeting held on 12th September 2017, they were signed by the Chair.

CHAIR