



SOCIAL SERVICES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD AT PENALLTA HOUSE, TREDOMEN,
YSTRAD MYNACH ON TUESDAY, 4TH FEBRUARY 2020 AT 5.30 P.M.**

PRESENT:

Councillor L. Binding - Chair
Councillor J. Bevan - Vice Chair

Councillors:

A. Angel, M. Evans, J. Gale, D.C. Harse, L. Jeremiah, Mrs A. Leonard, S. Skivens, C. Thomas and W. Williams.

Cabinet Member: C. Cuss (Social Care and Wellbeing).

Together with:

D. Street (Corporate Director - Social Services and Housing), J. Williams (Assistant Director - Adult Services), G. Jenkins (Assistant Director - Children's Services), M. Jones (Interim Financial Services Manager), C. Forbes-Thompson (Scrutiny Manager) and A. Dredge (Committee Services Officer).

Councillor K. Etheridge (Non Social Services Scrutiny Committee Member).

Users and Carers – Mrs M. Jones and Mr C. Luke.

Also Present – Dr S. Aitken, Executive Director of Public Health (ABUHB).

1. WELCOME

The Chair welcomed Councillor W. Williams to his first meeting of the Social Services Scrutiny Committee.

2. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence had been received from Councillors C. Bezzina, D. Cushing, A. Gair, V. James and B. Owen.

3. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

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

4. MINUTES – 3RD DECEMBER 2019

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting of the Social Services Scrutiny Committee held on 3rd December 2019 (minute nos. 1 -7) be approved and signed as a correct record.

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. SOCIAL SERVICES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME

The Scrutiny Manager introduced the report that informed the Committee of its Forward Work Programme planned for the period February to April 2020. Members were asked to consider the work programme and to make any amendments or request additional agenda items to be included for future meetings.

Members noted that Aneurin Bevan University Health Board (ABUHB) will be delivering a presentation at the next meeting on the 17th March. It was explained that the Youth Forum who had previously delivered their Priority Issues to the Scrutiny Committee will be invited to observe that meeting for them to see how the Committee has passed on the issues raised. The Committee were asked to send questions addressed to ABUHB to the Scrutiny Team in advance of the meeting.

Following consideration and discussion, Members unanimously agreed that the Forward Work Programme appended to the report be published to the Council's website.

REPORTS OF OFFICERS

Consideration was given to the following reports.

7. BUILDING A HEALTHIER WALES (PRESENTATION BY ANEURIN BEVAN UNIVERSITY HEALTH BOARD)

Dr S. Aitken delivered a presentation in relation to Building a Healthier Gwent and explained that the public sector has a crucial role to play in what ABUHB are aiming for. She referred to the wellbeing goals set out in the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 and gave examples how services will be delivered in respect of the Sustainable Development Principle. Comparisons were made in respect of life expectancy and the percentage of life spent in 'good health' in the least and most deprived areas in Wales. Percentages were provided for the 3 major illnesses that are related to risk factors namely, cardiovascular diseases, cancers and chronic respiratory diseases.

The results of the Involvement Programme that was held across the 5 Local Authorities in Gwent were summarised. This included 50 face to face engagement events with professionals, the public and seldom heard groups that also included a survey being undertaken. The ambition in moving forward is that by 2030, the places where we live, work, learn and play make it easier for people in all our communities to live more of their lives in good health. Emphasis was placed on the need for healthy homes, places and spaces, healthy communities and promoting health services. A result of the survey was that the top priority and the highest percentage of both professional and public responses would be to prevent mental health illness. In concluding, Dr Aitken advised that the themes from the

involvement programme have been endorsed by the Gwent Regional Partnership Board, G10 and the 5 Local Authorities across Gwent. The G10 public sector leadership group has asked the Director of Public Health to lead the development of a Healthier Gwent Delivery Plan and the Area Planning Board for Substance Misuse is reviewing its alignment to the strategic partnership structure in Gwent.

A member sought clarification in respect of the ABUHB report due to be completed by 2021 and if this will be made publically available. It was explained that the report will be presented to the Regional Partnership Board (RPB) in the first instance and then could be presented to the Scrutiny Committee. The Director suggested the report could be widely distributed in draft form. Dr Aitken added that the original report could be sent to Members which contains the Delivery Plan. In terms of information available, the Cabinet Member advised that a Members Seminar had been recently provided by ABUHB and unfortunately this had been poorly attended. Dr Aitken advised that there are lots of resources going into communities which should then be able to identify gaps in moving forward and the Programme is about connecting people and developing the Community Network.

The Chair, in summing up advised that in response to the question 'what role do you think your organisation could play' that progress and actions can be monitored via the Council's wellbeing objectives and information sharing.

The Chair thanked Dr Aitken for delivering the presentation and responding to questions raised during the course of the debate.

8. BUDGET MONITORING REPORT (MONTH 9)

The report provided Members with the projected revenue expenditure for the Social Services Directorate for the 2019/20 financial year and the progress made against the savings targets built in to the 2019/20 revenue budget for the Directorate. The report identifies the reasons behind a projected underspend of £976k for Social Services in 2019/20, despite an increase to 24 independent residential placements for children from the 17 placements that were funded at the beginning of the financial year. It also identifies the progress that has been made to date towards achieving the £2.261million savings target that was included in the Social Services budget for 2019/20.

The Interim Financial Services Manager referred to paragraph 5.2 in the report which sets out the current projected overspend of £951k within the Children's Services Division. There is a potential underspend of £261k in respect of management, fieldwork and administrative posts within the Children's Services Division and this was reported to Members in October 2019. This potential underspend has since increased to £321k, largely as a result of temporary vacancies resulting from secondments into the Integrated Care Fund (ICF) grant aided posts. A member queried if there had been any impact on front-line services during this time. Officers advised that ICF has been utilised to expand existing services so the impact has been managed. It was explained that it is important that the right people are employed to meet the needs and challenges of the Service. Difficulties are sometimes encountered with short-term grant funded schemes and filling posts and there is an occasional need to rely on agency staff as a consequence of this.

Members noted that the Adult Services Division is currently projected to underspend its budget by £1,869k. Officers explained that it is difficult to anticipate income generated and an example was provided in relation to self-funding within Care Homes. It was also noted that this is Month 9 in terms of the budget projection and the impact of the difficult and challenging winter pressures of December and January will be reported in the next budget monitoring report. In responding to Members' questions, Officers advised that the 'drop off' in adult care home placements is due to a number of reasons, including more people staying at home and Aneurin Bevan University Health Board funding temporary beds using winter pressures funding. Problems have been identified in domiciliary care and it was explained that recruiting

in this area is a national problem. The Department are working with the Independent Sector, other Local Authorities and 'We Care' campaign which will be televising recruitment in March 2020. This will highlight 'real people who do the job' with an academy style approach across Health and Social Care training which is cross transferrable. Officers are also working with Coleg Gwent and looking at potential incentives/placements/initiatives in moving forward.

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

RESOLVED that for the reasons contained in the Report:

- (i) the projected underspend of £976k against the Social Services budget for 2019/20, inclusive of transport costs, be noted;
- (ii) the progress made to date towards delivering the £2.261million savings target that was included in the Social Services budget for 2019/20, be noted.

9. REGIONAL PARTNERSHIPS BOARDS - UPDATE

The report provided Members with the role and functions of the Regional Partnership Boards (RPB's) that were introduced as part of the implementation of the Social Services and Wellbeing (Wales) Act 2014 (SSWBA). It sets out the increasing significance of the RPB's in the eyes of Welsh Government (WG) and how they are becoming key drivers in delivering "seamless services" in Health and Social Care.

The Committee were reminded that Part 9 of the Social Services and Wellbeing (Wales) Act 2014 required local authorities and Health Boards to establish RPB's. These were established on Health Board footprints with consequently seven Boards being created. The RPB for this area is titled the Gwent Regional Partnership Board. Since their inception in 2016 the RPB have become increasingly influential in developing integrated health and social care services across the region. The Board has also been recipient of significant amounts of grant funding from WG to support and develop integrated services. This report outlines the purpose of the Board, its work programme and achievements to date as well as referencing some of the ongoing challenges for Caerphilly CBC as a member of the Gwent RPB.

The Scrutiny Committee were referred to paragraph 5.3 in the report which sets out the provisions of the Act which RPB's were required to prioritise in relation to the integration of services. The Assistant Directors for both Children's and Adult Services provided examples of the benefits which Caerphilly has received through funding harnessed from the RPB. Members discussed the content of the report and expressed their concerns in that they had not been aware of the funding elements of the services and felt that as a Scrutiny Committee, there had been a democratic shortfall in that regard. Members discussed the membership of the RPB and questioned if public meetings are held. It was noted that the majority of the documents that support the Board can be found on the Gwent RPB website www.gwentrpb.wales and minutes to the meetings held should also be publicly available. A Member queried if the cessation of grant funding would impact on the Corporate Plan 2018-2023. Officers explained that there are a series of Wellbeing Objectives that are assisted by grant funding and should this cease, funding would have to be found elsewhere, in moving forward.

The Chair gave permission for Councillor K. Etheridge to address the Committee to raise a number of questions and concerns in relation to this item. These included information on the priorities, timescales, delivery, action plans, key objectives and cost going forward in relation to Caerphilly CBC. Reference was also made to whether the Council believes Gwent RPB is working effectively and if funding received from Welsh Government (WG) can be broken down into areas. He also queried if the RPB has made representations to WG stating that some of

their requests are unreasonable in terms of short notice turn around for funding bids. In concluding, he requested the RPB minutes in moving forward, be attached to the Scrutiny Committee Meeting agenda. The Chair assured Councillor Etheridge that the Scrutiny Committee would be making a number of recommendations when the debate was concluded.

Officers explained that there are often difficulties encountered with limited turnaround times (sometimes less than a week) for grant funding bids to be submitted. The Transformation Fund has meant more resource to RPB, alongside more funding through ICF. It means that the RPB has a busy and demanding agenda, with more interest from national and regional organisations wanting to 'link up' with the RPB. The RPB has had to look at different ways of working as the 'regional approach' is here to stay.

The challenges for the RPB in going forward were summarised which include an increased level of funding from Welsh Government which comes to RPB's to determine best use, and often this funding is short term in nature – for one or two years. This is against a backdrop of continued pressure on local authority budgets and cuts having to be made to front line services. The increasing rate of requests from WG for information and input to national events, workshops and meetings also places demand on RPB resources – and this is a process that will need careful management going forward. So, there are still significant challenges to be faced, with the knowledge that demands will continue to increase.

The Chair thanked the Officers for presenting the report and responding to questions during the course of the debate.

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

RESOLVED that for the reasons contained in the Report:

- (i) the contents of the report be noted;
- (ii) the Social Services Scrutiny Committee will write to the Welsh Government Minister for Health and Social Services with their concerns regarding the lack of scrutiny arrangements in respect of Regional Partnership Boards in order to seek his views on what options are possible and a copy of the letter will be sent to the other Gwent Local Authorities;
- (iii) the Social Services Scrutiny Committee will write to the other Gwent Local Authorities to explore possible options for joint scrutiny of Regional Partnership Boards;
- (iv) the Social Services Scrutiny Committee to receive quarterly reports on the Regional Partnership Board;
- (v) all future reports to Social Services Scrutiny Committee to identify if any financial elements are funded through Regional Partnership Board grants and the risks attached to future service provision.

10. REBALANCING OF THE SOCIAL CARE MARKET

The report informed Members of the work currently being undertaken between Local Authorities (LA's) and Welsh Government (WG) with a view to determining if the balance in the social care market between Local Authority directly provided services, services commissioned from the Independent Sector and services from the Third Sector is currently fit for purpose.

Members were advised that as part of his manifesto pledge in 2018, the First Minister stated his intentions to “Re-energise Efforts to create cooperative suppliers of social care services in Wales, rebalancing the sector, and bring such services back closer to the public realm.” The report explains the current position in Caerphilly CBC with regard to the current balance of the social care market and the work undertaken to date alongside WG Officials and Colleagues at the Association of Directors of Social Services Cymru (ADSSC). The report also seeks Members views on the issue of the balance within the market for social care services and the current position within Caerphilly CBC.

The Scrutiny Committee discussed the report and noted that the Care Sector is under significant pressure and expressed their concerns as to the loss of staff due to low pay and being under more and more pressure at work. Members discussed the current position in relation to Domiciliary Care and noted that the number of beds in Residential Care for Older People in-house is 19% as opposed to 81% external. Members would like to see an increase in LA provision and the remainder shared between external providers. The Chair added that the Sector does need rebalancing and he would like to see the external providers covering 40% of the market and acknowledged that the position must be sustainable.

Officers advised that they understand the intent of Welsh Government and the direction in which they wish to go and WG are about to send out an update as to their progress made in this area. Members can then be advised of the position.

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

RESOLVED that:

- (i) the work being done alongside Welsh Government with regard to the need for rebalancing of the social care market, be noted;
- (i) Members comments regarding the issue of the balance within the market for social care services and the current position within Caerphilly CBC are contained therein.

11. SOCIAL SERVICES CO-OPTED MEMBER VACANCY

The Committee were informed that Mrs Jill Lawton, Co-opted Member has resigned her position on the Social Services Scrutiny Committee. Members were asked to consider if there is a need to fill the vacancy in accordance with the Local Government (Wales) Measure 2011 Statutory Guidance. The process for recruitment of the appointment of Scrutiny Committee Co-opted Members was agreed by Council in May 2017. It was explained that should the Committee agree that the position be filled, then Members would need to approve the establishment of an Appointments Sub-Committee.

Members considered the report and felt that Co-opted Members provide a valuable contribution to the Scrutiny Committee and supported the post being filled. A Member queried what requirements the Sub-Committee would be looking for in candidates. The Officer advised that skills and knowledge were considered previously and the Sub-Committee would decide if the candidates are suitably qualified and will short-list for interview. Following the interviews the sub-committee will make a recommendation to Social Services Scrutiny Committee for consideration.

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

RESOLVED that for the reasons contained in the Report:

- (i) the Social Services Scrutiny Committee agree to recruit to fill the Co-Opted Member vacancy;
- (ii) Councillors L. Binding (Chair), J. Bevan (Vice-Chair) and D. Harse be appointed to sit on the Appointments Sub-Committee.

The meeting closed at 7.10pm.

Approved as a correct record, subject to any amendments agreed and recorded in the minutes of the meeting held on 24th September 2020.

CHAIR