



SOCIAL SERVICES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

MINUTES OF THE DIGITAL MEETING HELD VIA MICROSOFT TEAMS ON TUESDAY 16TH MARCH 2021 AT 5.30 P.M.

PRESENT:

Councillor L. Binding - Chair
Councillor C. Bezzina - Vice Chair

Councillors:

A. Angel, K. Etheridge, M. Evans, A. Gair, V. James, L. Jeremiah, S. Skivens and W. Williams.

Cabinet Member: S. Cook (Social Care).

Together with:

D. Street (Corporate Director - Social Services and Housing), J. Williams (Assistant Director Adult Services), G. Jenkins (Assistant Director - Children's Services), R. Roberts (Business Improvement Manager), I. Richards (Business Improvement Officer), M. Jacques (Scrutiny Officer) S. Hughes (Committee Services Officer) J. Lloyd (Committee Services Officer), and C. Evans (Committee Services Officer).

Users and Carer – Mrs M. Jones and C. Luke.

RECORDING AND VOTING ARRANGEMENTS

The Chair reminded those present that the meeting was being filmed but would not be live streamed, however a recording would be available following the meeting via the Council's website – Click [Here To View](#). He advised that decisions would be made by Microsoft Forms.

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence had been received from Councillors J. Bevan, A. Leonard and C. Thomas.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

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

3. MINUTES – 2ND FEBRUARY 2021

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting of the Social Services Scrutiny Committee held on 2nd February 2021 (minute nos. 1 - 8) be approved and signed as a correct record.

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. SOCIAL SERVICES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME

The Scrutiny Officer introduced the report that informed the Committee of its Forward Work Programme planned for the period March 2021 to January 2022.

The Committee discussed the Forward Work Programme at length and sought an update on discussions undertaken at the last meeting regarding the request for a cross party Task and Finish Group to consider Mental Health provision. The Scrutiny Officer advised that he would seek advice from the Monitoring Officer on the scope and composition of a future Task and Finish Group and report back to the Committee.

Following consideration and discussion the recommendation in the report be approved. By way of electronic voting this was unanimously agreed.

RESOLVED that the Forward Work Programme as appended to the meeting papers be published on the Council's website.

REPORTS OF OFFICERS

Consideration was given to the following reports.

6. DIRECTORATE PERFORMANCE ASSESSMENT SIX MONTH UPDATE 2020

The report presented Scrutiny with the new Social Services Directorate Performance Assessment (DPA) which is part of the Council's new Performance Framework.

It was noted that the DPA provides information and analysis for the 6-month period April to September 2020. The DPA forms part of the overall Council 'self-assessment' activity, of which members were invited to discuss, challenge and scrutinise the information in DPA.

The Council's Performance Framework had been in its current format for several years and formed a foundation stone of the Council's governance arrangements.

As the Council embarked on its ambitious Transformation Programme, Team Caerphilly, alongside the emergence of new legislation such as the Local Government and Elections (Wales) Bill 2019, it became both timely and opportune that the Framework was redeveloped and enhanced.

The new Performance Framework was endorsed by Cabinet February 2020 and the report introduced one of the key components of the Framework, the Directorate Performance Assessment (DPA). The DPA is a 'self-assessment' of Directorate's progress across a wide range of information types.

It was noted that Directorate Performance Assessments are an opportunity to bring together a range of information and intelligence into one picture to answer the self-assessment question of 'how well are we performing and how do we know?' Appendix A to the report provided the Social Services Directorates Performance Assessment up to September 2020.

The Scrutiny Committee thanked the Officer for the report and discussion ensued.

Members raised several queries within the report around risks and performance and Officers provided the Committee with a detailed background of the performance surrounding the included data.

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

RESOLVED that for the reasons contained in the Officer's report Appendix A and the information within be discussed, challenged and Scrutinised.

7. WHITE PAPER ON REBALANCING CARE AND SUPPORT – PRESENTATION.

The Director for Social Services and Housing provided the Committee with a presentation on the White Paper 'Rebalancing Care and Support', which was published on 12th January 2021 and provided a 12-week consultation period, which is due to expire on 6th April 2021. It was noted that Annex 2 of the report, which was circulated for consideration prior to the meeting provided 12 questions for response as part of the consultation.

The Committee thanked the Director for the presentation and discussion ensued.

The Committee raised several concerns within the document, which included concerns around the Regional Partnership Boards (RPBs) in relation to accountability and governance, which has previously been fed back to Welsh Government. Other concerns raised included contradictions within the document, concerns around the reshaping and level of power awarded to the RPBs and concerns around the role of the Social Services Scrutiny Committee should the proposals be implemented.

The Officer thanked the Committee for the detailed feedback, and supporting many of the points raised, agreed to provide the feedback to Welsh Government as part of the consultation process.

8. SOCIAL SERVICES COVID-19 POSITION STATEMENT

The Scrutiny Committee noted that on 1st December 2020, the Social Services Scrutiny Committee received an overview of the Directorate's response to the coronavirus pandemic. The report provided information on the approach taken to identify, mitigate and manage the risks that emerged during the first phase of the pandemic and identified issues that were likely to remain a challenge in 2021. The report presented at the meeting on 1st December was attached at Appendix 1 of the report.

Members recalled that at the meeting, it was agreed that Members would use the report to identify further areas for "deep dives" on areas of interest or in relation to issues that emerged as the pandemic continued into 2021.

The report provided more detail on some of the issues raised in the December report and subsequent questions raised by Committee Members. The report also provided further service issues that have emerged during the ongoing pandemic.

It was noted that the ongoing pandemic has meant that over the past 12 months the Directorate has had to look at the way it delivers services and deploys its resources very differently. From early on, some services have had to be paused, staff redeployed into new areas of work and resources redirected to deal with priorities that often emerged overnight.

Staff have had to work alongside partners in the Aneurin Bevan University Health Board, Education, Housing, the independent sector and the third sector.

Members noted that a recovery pathway is anticipated shortly, but whilst this is welcomed there is little doubt that the impact in terms of service delivery will be felt for years to come. It was noted that there has been significant learning from the pandemic, both positive and negative and alternative ways of delivering services required will be in the forefront of all plans as people come to terms with the outcome of the pandemic.

The Scrutiny Committee thanked the Officer for the report and discussion ensued. A Member, in noting the critical work being undertaken by the Buddy Scheme and Caerphilly Cares, sought further information on sustainability of services should cuts be required in the future. Officers assured that Committee that there are no proposed cuts to the 2021/22 budget and therefore services will remain. In addition, the Pandemic has afforded the department the opportunity to work differently and utilise community services and schemes for delivering services.

The Committee discussed the vaccination plan and the exceptional work of the NHS and services in delivering the programme.

Discussions took place around the hardship fund and Officers explained that this will be extended for a further 6 months but plans are in place for an exit strategy.

The Scrutiny Committee noted the report.

The meeting closed at 7.22pm

Approved as a correct record, subject to any amendments agreed and recorded in the minutes of the meeting held on the 27th April 2021.

CHAIR