



SOCIAL SERVICES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

MINUTES OF THE MULTI-LOCATIONAL MEETING HELD AT THE COUNCIL OFFICES PENALLTA HOUSE AND VIA MICROSOFT TEAMS ON TUESDAY 24TH JANUARY 2023 AT 5.30 P.M.

PRESENT:

Councillor D. Cushing – Chair
Councillor M. Chacon-Dawson - Vice Chair

Councillors:

C. Bishop, A. Broughton-Petitt, R. Chapman, P. Cook, K. Ethridge, M. Evans, D. Harse, T. Heron, L. Jeremiah, A. Leonard, J. A. Pritchard, S. Skivens.

Councillor: E. Forehead. (Cabinet Member for Social Care).

Co-Opted Members: Vacant.

Together with:

Officers: G. Jenkins (Assistant Director – Children’s Services), M. Jones (Financial Services Manager), J. Williams (Assistant Director - Adult Services), D. Street (Corporate Director for Social Services and Housing), M. Jacques (Scrutiny Officer), J. Thomas (Committee Services Officer).

Also in attendance: M. Palfreman, H. Irwin (Huw Irwin Associates).

RECORDING AND VOTING ARRANGEMENTS

The Chair reminded those present that the meeting was being live streamed, and a recording would be made available to view via the Council’s website, except for discussions involving confidential or exempt items. [Click Here To View](#).

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor D. Price 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 – 22ND NOVEMBER 2022

It was moved and seconded that the minutes of the meeting held on 11th November 2022 be approved as a correct record and by way of Microsoft Forms (and in noting there were 12 for, 0

against and 1 abstention) this was agreed by the majority present.

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting of the Social Services Scrutiny Committee held on 22nd November 2022 (minute nos. 1-5) be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

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

Mark Jacques (Scrutiny Officer) introduced the report that informed the Committee of its Forward Work Programme planned for the period January 2022 to July 2023.

It was agreed that an invitation be sent to the Chief Executive of the Citizen Voice Body for Health and Social Care to attend and make a presentation at a future meeting.

Following consideration of the report, it was moved and seconded that the recommendations be approved. By way of electronic voting (and in noting there were 12 For 0 Against and 1 Abstention) this was agreed by the majority present).

Subject to the inclusion of the aforementioned item it was RESOLVED that subject to the Forward Work Programme as appended to the meeting papers be published on the Council's website.

6. CABINET REPORTS

It was confirmed that there had been no requests for any of the Cabinet reports listed on the agenda to be brought forward for discussion at the meeting

REPORTS OF OFFICERS

Consideration was given to the following reports.

7. NOTICE OF MOTION – FOSTER FAMILY CARERS

Consideration was given to a Notice of Motion received from Councillors E. Forehead and T. Heron and supported by Councillors N. George, P. Leonard, C. Andrews, S. Cook, C. Morgan, J. Simmonds, E. Stenner, J. Pritchard, S. Morgan. The Notice of Motion requested that Members consider making Caerphilly County Borough a Foster Family Friendly Employer, giving staff that foster children extra support in balancing their work and care responsibilities and make an appropriate recommendation to Council.

The Scrutiny Members noted that the Council should recognise the need for flexibility at work to meet the needs of foster children. There is a commitment to supporting colleagues who are foster carers.

The Cabinet support the motion for our foster carers, as well as those who care for children of family or friends, such as a grandparent caring permanently for their grandchild to be offered up to 5 days paid leave to attend training or meetings relating to their role as a carer.

Scrutiny are also requested to consider allowing additional unpaid time off work to deal with unexpected emergencies, such as welcoming a child into their home at short notice.

Becoming a foster friendly employer will strengthen the links that are needed to ensure the Council, show a strong corporate social responsibility.

In response to a Members query, the Scrutiny Committee were advised that currently no Caerphilly County Borough employees were foster carers.

Having fully considered the Notice of Motion, it was moved and seconded that it be supported and by way of Microsoft Forms it was unanimously agreed.

RECOMMENDED to Council that the Notice of Motion be supported.

8. PRESENTATION ON DAY SERVICES

The Cabinet Member for Social Care, welcomed representatives of Huw Irwin Associates (HICO) and confirmed that the presentation would detail the culmination of the work they had undertaken reviewing Caerphilly Day Opportunities. The Cabinet Member acknowledged that it had taken some time to get to this point and there was still a considerable way to go to achieving and implementing the most suitable module that would be flexible enough to meet the needs of stakeholders and stand the test of time.

The Scrutiny Committee were advised that the findings of the review, together with the comments from Members would be used to inform and create a model of day services which would then be subject to input from users and carers prior to being brought back to Scrutiny and then on to Cabinet.

The Presentation provided a high-level overview of the day opportunities for older people and adults with learning disabilities currently provided by Caerphilly and more importantly detail the feedback received from the range of stakeholders who had engaged with the review.

Members noted that process started with a desk top review of current arrangements in Caerphilly and the presentation outlined provision pre and post pandemic. HICO also considered the legislative and policy context in which day opportunities needed to operate and looked at day opportunities in other parts of Wales to identify notable practice. From there people using services and carers were asked what was important to them and the kinds of day opportunities that would help them achieve their personal outcomes and other Stakeholders were invited to share their perspectives on recent changes and these had affected their own practice.

In terms of Stakeholder engagement, Scrutiny noted that 57 people who use day services had taken part through voluntary, informal conversations and a written survey. 43 carers had taken part through facilitated group sessions and a written survey and 40 day services staff were engaged, some whilst delivering sessions and others in group discussions. Other stakeholders engaged with included Cabinet Member, Chair of Scrutiny, senior and middle managers and the carers lead. 16 Social Workers and clinicians and managers from the Aneurin Bevan University Health Board were engaged with via on-line workshops as were Independent Supported Living providers and Advocacy Organisations.

Members noted that participation was considerably higher among adults with learning disabilities and their carers than it was among older people, but it was highlighted that moving forward ongoing engagement with older people would be crucial to ensure that opportunities meet needs across the different communities. It was further noted that whilst HICO could not gauge the views of those who didn't want to meet, the views expressed by those who did there was a broad consensus regarding current arrangements and the future direction of the service.

Feedback from individuals, staff and unpaid carers were detailed and the main themes arising were highlighted, the response from carers were noted and the comments raised in relation to transport and support considered. The presentation confirmed that the shift from resource-based support had been welcomed by service users but there were concerns about the lack of clarity over some changes and their perceived impact.

Moving on to findings and recommendations, the engagement process had confirmed that there was an acceptance amongst many stakeholders of the need to modernise the day opportunities and the return to pre-pandemic arrangements was neither feasible nor desirable. Stakeholders recognised the potential benefits for a more person-centred approach. Stakeholders also appreciated the financial constraints in which the Council was operating and agreed that opportunities provided need to be proportionate and affordable. The Scrutiny Committee Members noted that the findings identified that the new arrangements were in their infancy and were not currently delivering benefits some carers and staff associate with resource centres, such as a greater range of activities and more robust social networks.

The Scrutiny Members were advised that HICO recommended that the Council issue a broad and comprehensive statement of future intent to stakeholders acknowledging the findings of the exercise carried out including explaining how the new model will be implemented. Finding also highlighted the impact on carers and in particular those caring for people with more intensive or complex needs, needed to be taken into account and address as a priority alongside the implementation of any new model. Members also noted the need to future engagement and consultation to be consistent in order to regain the trust and buy-in some carers and other stakeholders.

Regarding recommendations, the presentation detailed four areas to take forward which included a comprehensive statement of future intent, reviews for individuals and carers with the highest level of need, a medium-term plan for full implementation of emerging Day Opportunities model, which should be co-produced with all relevant stakeholders and that the needs of all unpaid carers should be recognised and alternative options for delivery of support be developed.

The recommended Day Opportunities model was presented, along with its underpinning principles and recommendations on how it could now be taken forward.

Mr Palfreman on behalf of HICO expressed his sincere thanks to all the service users, carers, staff and other stakeholders that had taken part in the engagement process. The support of staff in particular had allowed them to have meaningful conversations with service users.

The Scrutiny Committee thanked Mr Palfreman for the presentation and praised the content for its impartiality.

Several Members expressed concern regarding the impact of services changes on families and whether any had suffered financially as a result of the reduction in provision. Mr Palfreman advised the Scrutiny Committee Members of those he had spoken to, no one had specifically commented on having to give up work, however what they had heard from conversation with carers was how they had to make significant changes to their other commitments to look after individuals who previously benefited from attending day centres, five days a week and this was something that the review process was taking very seriously and very careful attention needed to be given to ensure the appropriate support for carers and services users is in place as their cannot be view independently of one another.

Members also raised concerns in relation to third sector stakeholder support and the needed to ensure that the voluntary sector were appropriately financed going forward, so that they could continue to opportunities.

Several Members raised concerns about the reigniting and maintaining friendships which had been formed in the day centres pre-pandemic. Members were assured this was an area that had been highlighted as highly important throughout the engagement process and would be a fundamental part of the future model. Officers highlighted initiatives already in place, such as Caerphilly Cares, Supporting People and My 'Mates' which were currently helping to maintain and develop friendships, utilising different community settings and different opportunities so that friends can meet up and maintain these vital relationships.

Members considered transportation issues that could impact on an individual's ability to access services and Officers confirmed that transportation needs would form part of the review and assessment process.

In response to a Members query, the Corporate Director assured the Scrutiny Committee Members that assessments and reviews had been on going and will continue to be undertaken as required. Members were also assured that all individuals and their families had been invited to contribute to the work carried out by HICO. However, participation was not mandatory and was completely different to the Social Services assessment and review processes which are statutory requirements. The Scrutiny Committee Members were also assured that before a new model is implemented there will be a consultation with all stake holders. The Corporate Director also highlighted that many people are happy with the services they are receiving.

Members agreed that a move away from a static service provision in a single building to one that offered variety of provision that better met the needs of the individual service users was the way forward. Particularly as new people come into the service with different expectations to those who had previously received day services. Officers confirmed that this was an ever-increasing challenge and agreed the presentation had illustrated that in some cases the balance hasn't been right, and work was needed to ensure this was the case moving forward.

Members were advised some formatting work was still required but a full report of the review and its findings and recommendations would be made available as would this evening's presentations slides as soon as possible.

Following consideration and discussion, the presentation was noted.

9. BUDGET MONITORING REPORT (MONTH 7)

The report informed Scrutiny of projected revenue expenditure for Social Services for the 2022/23 financial year and its implications for future financial years.

The report identified the reasons behind a projected overspend of £1447K for Social Services in 2022/23, inclusive of transport costs. It also considered the implications of the projected overspend on Social Services reserve balances and for future financial years.

The report sought to ensure Members are apprised of the latest financial position of the Directorate.

The Chair thanked the Officer for the report and discussion ensued.

A Member raised their concerns in relation to the overspend in Children Services and also noted the underspend shown within the report in relation to Adult Services. Concerns were raised that due to these factors, the Services being provided by Caerphilly may be suffering and the services that are being provided may not be at a satisfactory level.

In response to the concerns raised the Head of Children Services, Gareth Jenkins advised Members that the overspend was due mainly to the high levels of children within residential care and that this type of care is extremely expensive. The Officer advised Members that

Caerphilly is in the process of expanding its in-house provision for residential care. However, this will take time to employ staff in order to make the homes operational. The officer assured Members that the service area is hoping to get the number of children within this type of care service down. However, for a lot of the children in residential care, the fostering system has not worked and there has been a break down due to the challenging behaviour and unfortunately this type of care is the most appropriate at this time.

The Officer assured the Scrutiny Committee Members that he was confident that the overspend is not affecting the quality of services elsewhere.

The Head of Adult Services, Jo Williams advised the Scrutiny Committee Members, the underspend in domiciliary care relates specifically to the 630 hours that cannot be commissioned. The Members were assured that the staff that Caerphilly employ are retained and the losses in staff is due only to retirement. The Officer advised the Members again that the main problem is the recruiting of new staff. However, the Officer was pleased to advise the Members that the targeted recruitment campaign that took place over Christmas has been a success and 15 people have been interviewed. There are 15 people for supported living and respite and several people interested in residential. The Members were advised that there is currently work to be carried out Nationally in terms of whether there should be a standard rate of pay for domiciliary care or fees for agencies.

Following consideration and discussion, it was moved and seconded that the recommendation within the report be approved. By way of electronic vote this was unanimously agreed.

The meeting closed at 7.23PM

Approved as a correct record, subject to any amendments agreed and recorded in the minutes of the meeting held on the 7th March 2023.

CHAIR