

SOCIAL & HEALTH CARE OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
20 JULY 2023

Minutes of the meeting of the Social & Health Care Overview & Scrutiny Committee of Flintshire County Council held as a hybrid meeting on Thursday, 20 July 2023

PRESENT: Councillor Hilary McGuill (Vice-Chair in the Chair)

Councillors: Marion Bateman, Mel Buckley, Tina Claydon, Gladys Healey, Dave Mackie and Linda Thomas

APOLOGIES: Councillors: Jean Davies, Carol Ellis, Debbie Owen and Arnold Woolley

CONTRIBUTORS: Councillor Christine Jones (Deputy Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Social Services and Wellbeing); Chief Officer (Social Services); Senior Manager Children and Workforce; Senior Manager - Integrated Services and Lead Adults; Early Years and Family Support Service Manager and Supporting People Contracts & Compliance Officer.

IN ATTENDANCE: Social Care and Environment Overview & Scrutiny Facilitator and Democratic Services Officer

11. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST (INCLUDING WHIPPING DECLARATIONS)

Councillor Mackie - Item 5 Para 2.2 - Trustee of an After School Club.

12. MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 8 June, 2023 were approved and moved by Councillor Dave Mackie and seconded by Councillor Gladys Healey.

RESOLVED:

That the minutes be approved as a correct record.

13. FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME AND ACTION TRACKING

The Social Care and Environment Overview & Scrutiny Facilitator presented the current Forward Work Programme as set out in the report, adding two additional items - update on the Audit Wales Report into Older Peoples Care Homes - Care Home Commissioning in North Wales and the Domiciliary Care Framework Refresh. She reminded Members that a training session on Corporate Parenting would be held the following day on Zoom which would be recorded. In response to a question from Councillor Gladys Healey, the Senior Manager Children and Workforce gave assurance that the Corporate Parenting Session the following day would be very detailed and would set out what Corporate Parenting was and what the responsibilities of elected Members were and that once the Corporate Parenting Strategy had been revised, that in-person workshops would be held to compliment the training.

Councillor Marion Bateman suggested that some of the young people should meet Councillors as they did a few years ago. The Senior Manager Children and Workforce confirmed that young people would help to design the workshops and would also attend them when they are held in the Autumn.

The Vice-Chair requested that a date be set with Betsi Cadwaladr University Health Board as the new board had been set up a few months ago.

The recommendations within the report were moved by Councillor Dave Mackie and seconded by Councillor Gladys Healey.

RESOLVED:

- (a) That the Forward Work Programme be noted;
- (b) That the Facilitator, in consultation with the Chair of the Committee be authorised to vary the Forward Work Programme between meetings, as the need arises; and
- (c) That the Committee notes the progress made in completing the outstanding actions.

14. CHILDCARE SUFFICIENCY ASSESSMENT (CSA) 2022-26 ANNUAL UPDATE

The Early Years and Family Support Service Manager presented a broader context of the report on how they were meeting the statutory duty for the local authority under the Childcare Act (2006). She explained that their focus was always on the two key elements of the Childcare Sufficiency Assessment which were:-

- Providing sufficient, sustainable, and flexible childcare that was responsive to parents' needs.
- Providing information, advice and assistance relating to childcare to parents, prospective parents and those with parental responsibility or care of a child.

She highlighted key points within the report and gave a wider context within the service and with other key partners.

In response to a question raised by the Vice-Chair concerning postcodes and the access to childcare, the Early Years and Family Support Services Manager explained that they were working hard for that not to be the case but that they were influenced by Welsh Government and had to follow their lead. She said that they were given the number of children that they could take on and if this number was not met then they were able to roll out further.

The Vice-Chair also questioned whether there was provision or crèche facilities for small children to mix with immigrant children while their parents were being taught English. In response, the Early Years and Family Support Service Manager advised that there were facilities at Ty Calon that would allow for childcare to run alongside parenting programmes but would check about the crèche provision; also she was not aware of any demand in relation to small children mixing with immigrant children but would look into it.

In response to the questions raised by Councillor Mackie on the different involvement of organisations, it was decided that due to their complexity that it would be better to wait until the workshop to explain them. In answer to the other question he raised on the word 'disruptor' being used in paragraph 1.12, the Early Years and Family Support Services Manager said that it was in relation to the differences between Early Entitlement and Childcare Offer especially around the fees. She explained that Flintshire made sure that the disruptor was positive and piloted a rate working with Welsh Government to contribute to the Early Entitlement Programme which she advised had now been increased nationally to match the Childcare Offer so that both programmes were now paying the same rate. She added that Flying Start had also been aligned to the same rate.

The Vice-Chair accepted the offer of a workshop and asked that it be added to the Forward Work Programme which was agreed by Members.

Councillor Gladys Healey asked if there was any training for Childminders to help communicate with non-speaking English parents and children. The Early Years and Family Support Services Manager said that she would forward her a copy of the Childminders' curriculum so that she could see what was covered. She also advised that under legislation, equality was covered as part of the childminders registration process and agreed that there should be no language barrier in welcoming parents and children. She advised that they ran language programmes called Eclan, which can be adapted to any language and Makaton as they find that a lot of children sign to each other which parents can also join in with.

The recommendations within the report were moved by Councillor Tina Claydon and seconded by Councillor Gladys Healey.

RESOLVED:

- (a) That the Committee supports the effectiveness of the Council's strategic response to securing sufficient, sustainable, and high quality, childcare within the county that is responsive to the needs of children and their families;
- (b) That the Committee supports the on-going work and commitment to the delivery of the Childcare Sufficiency Assessment every five years and the annual Progress Report; and
- (c) That a workshop for Members of the Committee be arranged for a future date to be held at the Westwood Centre, Buckley.

15. COUNCIL PLAN 2022-23 YEAR-END PERFORMANCE

The Chief Officer (Social Services) introduced the report which summarised the performance of areas relevant to Social & Health for 2022-23 at year end Quarter 4. Although some of the areas in the report were outside Social Services, there was an 80% match so he felt it was important to look at the overall sub-priority of the Council Plan most relevant to this portfolio. He was pleased to report an overall good level of progress made in activities across the

areas as outlined in 1.04 of the report and that he had spoken to Vicky Clarke in Community & Housing prior to this meeting concerning the red activity as shown in 1.05 of the report, advising Members that she was willing to provide any areas of assurance to them concerning this. He went on to give an overview of the other areas listed below that were relevant to this Committee:-

- Independent Living
- Safeguarding
- Direct Provision to Support People Closer to Home 2022/23

In relation to a question raised by Councillor McGuill concerning the number of providers of Micro-Carers compared to the number of service users, the Chief Officer (Social Services) advised that the figures in the report were correct as Micro-Carers provide care to more than one person. In response to a further question, the Senior Manager - Integrated Services and Lead Adults advised that a team of people co-ordinated a rolling program for the recruitment of Micro-Carers and by word of mouth around the care sector to encourage people coming forward.

The Senior Manager - Integrated Services and Lead Adults responded to questions raised by Councillor Mackie and explained that the All Wales Pathway for Dementia was part of a wider pathway that was being developed by Flintshire and the Health Board in relation to hospital discharges. Part of this enabled people who had been diagnosed with Dementia to have a comparable service wherever they lived in Wales throughout their journey and that support and advice would adapt as their needs changed. The Chief Officer (Social Services) added that the Health Board had the lead role around the Dementia Strategy and that as suggested, with Member support, they would invite Health Board colleagues to a future meeting. The Vice-Chair requested that it be put on the Forward Work Programme.

Councillor Gladys Healey stated that it was not appropriate for Mental Health to be under the same umbrella as Dementia and Drug Users as there were different criteria of mental health and patients should not be in the same hospital wards. The Chief Officer (Social Services) stated that it was a fair point and that there was room for improvement around mental health services and that Flintshire worked very hard to maintain a strong local authority mental health service. He advised that they still had community based teams in combination with the Health Service which most authorities in North Wales had moved away from. He assured Members that they made every effort to provide a good mental health service but recognised that there was still a long way to go.

Councillor Gladys Healey also asked about the team that helped with housing for people with mental health issues. The Senior Manager - Integrated Services and Lead Adults stated that within Social Services there was an Adults at Risk Team who were very experienced and worked with the Homeless Team within Housing who supported people that did not fit anywhere, which unfortunately some people with mental health issues fell under, to prevent them from being homeless.

The recommendations within the report were moved by Councillor Dave Mackie and seconded by Councillor Gladys Healey.

RESOLVED:

- (a) That the Committee supports the levels of progress and confidence in the achievement of priorities as detailed within the Council Plan 2022/23;
- (b) That the Committee supports overall performance against Council Plan 2022/23 performance indicators/measures; and
- (c) That the Committee is assured by explanations given for those areas of underperformance.

16. TRI FFORDD & GROWING PLACES RE-LOCATION PROJECT (MAES GWERN DEVELOPMENT)

This item was considered to be exempt by virtue of Paragraph(s) 14 of Part 4 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended). Exclusion of the press and public was moved by Councillor Dave Mackie and seconded by Councillor Gladys Healey.

The Senior Manager - Integrated Services and Lead Adults gave an overview of progress on the Maes Gwern development. Reference was made to the current facilities at Tri Ffordd in Bretton (a day service that provided activities in a horticultural environment for adults who had learning disabilities) and Growing Places in Shotton (which provided a similar service for adults with mental health needs) being unable to expand for service development. The Supporting People Contracts & Compliance Officer gave background to the financial implications.

Following the presentations, officers responded to questions that were raised by Members.

The recommendations within the report were moved by Councillor Gladys Healey and seconded by Councillor Tina Claydon.

RESOLVED:

That the Committee notes the progress made for the Maes Gwern development for the construction of the new development providing the Welsh Government grant is approved.

17. MEMBERS OF THE PRESS IN ATTENDANCE

None.

(The meeting started at 10.00 am and ended at 11.48 am)

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Chair