

JOINT HOUSING AND SOCIAL AND HEALTH CARE
OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
6 FEBRUARY 2014

Minutes of the meeting of the Joint Housing and Social and Health Care Overview & Scrutiny Committee of Flintshire County Council held at Llys Jasmine, Jasmine Crescent, Mold CH7 1TP on Thursday, 6th February, 2014

PRESENT:

Councillors: Marion Bateman, Amanda Bragg, David Cox, Adele Davies-Cooke, Rosetta Dolphin, Andy Dunbobbin, Carol Ellis, Jim Falshaw, Veronica Gay, Alison Halford, Ron Hampson, Ray Hughes, Hilary Isherwood, Mike Lowe, Dave Mackie, Hilary McGuill, Gareth Roberts, Ian Smith and David Wisinger

APOLOGIES:

Councillor Peter Curtis, Ron Davies, Glenys Diskin, George Hardcastle and Brian Lloyd.

ALSO PRESENT:

Councillor Haydn Bateman attended as an observer

IN ATTENDANCE:

Cabinet Member for Social Services, Cabinet Member for Housing, Director of Community Services, Head of Housing, Head of Adults Services, Intake and Reablement Service Manager, Community Support Services Manager, Supporting People Manager, Operations Manager and Housing Renewal Manager

5. APPOINTMENT OF CHAIRMAN

The Housing and Learning Overview & Scrutiny Facilitator sought nominations for a Chairman for the meeting. Councillor David Mackie proposed Councillor Carol Ellis which was duly seconded.

RESOLVED:

That Councillor Carol Ellis be Chair for the meeting.

6. ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE CHAIR

The Chair welcomed the opportunity for the Committee to be able to visit Llys Jasmine, which she felt was an excellent facility, and said that there was a need for more facilities in Flintshire.

She also referred to recent a recent press article in which Councillor Arnold Woolley had not been complimentary about Overview and Scrutiny Committees. She said that in her experience on the Social and Health Committee, Members had worked hard to scrutinise issues and she congratulated Members of both the Housing Overview & Scrutiny Committee and Social & Health Care Overview & Scrutiny Committee for their hard work.

7. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST (INCLUDING WHIPPING DECLARATIONS)

No declarations of interest were made.

8. EXTRA CARE PROVISION IN FLINTSHIRE

The Director of Community Services introduced a report to provide Members with a brief update regarding:-

- Current Extra Care provision within Flintshire
- Detail regarding the most recent development in Mold at Llys Jasmine
- Potential future developments

There were 61 apartments at Llys Jasmine which included 15 dementia units and the facility had proved popular since it opened in October 2013. The scheme had been nominated for a national UK award for the development of the year and a ceremony was due to be held in April 2014 in London. Llys Jasmine had been developed in partnership with Wales & West Housing Association and lessons had been learnt from the provision of the facility at Llys Eleanor in Shotton. The Director of Community Services explained a mix of needs was catered for and the definition of those needs was reported in appendix 1. It was proposed that two future schemes would be provided in Flint and Holywell but a business case would be required for the proposals due to the schemes costing approximately £7m each with no grant funding being provided. It was proposed that the future developments would include apartments for younger adults with a physical and/or learning disability in addition to provision for older people and older people with a diagnosis of dementia.

Councillor David Mackie suggested that the recommendation be altered to include congratulations to those involved in the scheme and that the thanks of the Committee be passed onto the Cabinet Member, the officers, the partners and the management for their involvement and hard work. Councillor Rosetta Dolphin welcomed the provision of the facility which she felt provided a greater level of care than if residents lived in their own homes. She also asked how the scheme could be extended to provide further provision in the county. Councillor Gareth Roberts suggested sites for the proposed facility in Holywell and referred to Flintshire County Council owned land in the town centre which would become available following the provision of a new high school.

Councillor Hilary McGuill referred to the cost of building the facility. She queried whether there was a waiting list and also asked for information on the costs of the scheme and the resident's costs. The Intake and Reablement Service Manager advised that residents were assessed and offered accommodation based on need and that she would provide details of the numbers on the waiting list to Members. The Director of Community Services confirmed that a one bedroom apartment cost £125 per week with a service charge of £59 and a two bedroom was £140 per week with a service charge of £60. The Intake and Reablement Service Manager explained that these costs included heating and water and one meal per day and that there would also be additional care costs depending on the care package chosen by the resident. She advised that information could be provided and forwarded to Members.

In response to a question from Councillor Hilary Isherwood, the Intake and Reablement Service Manager advised that the majority of residents were from the Mold and Buckley area. The Head of Housing advised that she would provide information on the number of tenancies that had been freed up because the tenants had moved to Llys Eleanor or Llys Jasmine.

Councillor Isherwood welcomed the provision of the facility but felt that it was important to have an infrastructure in place to provide transport, for family members who were unable to drive or did not have a car, to visit their relatives in the facilities.

The Intake and Reablement Service Manager advised that only those over the age of 60 could apply for an apartment but the Director of Community Services indicated that it was anticipated that age limits would be considered more flexibly in the development of future proposals.

Councillor McGuill asked what had been done to ensure that there was not an influx of older patients re-registering with local doctors to allow them greater access to the scheme as had happened when Llys Eleanor opened. The Intake and Reablement Service Manager said that the same issue had not occurred at Llys Jasmine.

The Director of Community Services acknowledged the comments made about the good value of the care provision and the need to provide further developments in the County and said that the Council had a priority to make it happen. It made a difference to people's lives and was an affordable way for the Council to provide the required services.

RESOLVED:

- (a) That the progress made in developing further extra care provision in Flintshire be noted;
- (b) That the Cabinet Member, the officers, the partners be congratulated on the excellent development and facilities provided at Llys Jasmine.

9. TELECARE

The Head of Adults Services introduced the report to provide Members with an update regarding the:-

- progress of the regional call monitoring arrangements (Galw Gofal)
- current level and nature of Telecare provision within Flintshire
- regional progress regarding the roll out of telehealth and current partnership working in the context of a call for bids towards national fund monies

He detailed the background to the report and referred to the Telecare roll out at Llwynegrin Lodge in 2006 and the temporary Telecare Officer post which had now become permanent. He provided details on Galw Gofal, which was hosted by Conwy County Borough Council, including the volume of calls for

Flintshire and the numbers of compliments and complaints received. In 2013/14 Galw Gofal had piloted small projects in order for the partnership to consider the benefits of widening the remit from call monitoring. The partnership considered the cost benefit of any more permanent developments and how these linked with the regional priorities of the North Wales Regional Telecare Board. The Head of Adults Services also provided information on the number of telecare installations that had taken place across Flintshire and details of the regional telecare and telehealth working and the work which was ongoing in this area which included bids that were to be submitted.

Councillor Alison Halford asked for details on the cost of the service as this was not reported and comment on the concern raised when the service moved from Flint to Conwy. The Head of Adults Services confirmed that he would circulate information on the costs to Members.

Councillor Rosetta Dolphin said that a family member who used the service and not experienced any disruption and no difference to the service even though it had moved from Flint.

Councillor Hilary McGuill asked who funded the Telecare service for residents in Llys Jasmine and the Intake and Reablement Service Manager responded that it was funded partly by Supporting People and partly by base budget and health funding. Councillor McGuill also referred to the move of the service from Flint and the concerns raised when it initially moved and asked whether an electronic mapping service was used to identify where residents were when they contacted the service. The Intake and Reablement Service Manager said that difficulties had been experienced early in the transfer to Conwy but explained that the service had been exceeding the standards set. The Community Support Services Manager explained that the technology was in place but that she would ensure that it was being used. The Head of Housing said that there had been some initial problems but that she was not aware of any issues in the last 18 months.

In response to a question from Councillor Marion Bateman the Intake and Reablement Service Manager said that family members were contacted in the event of those using the service being deaf or blind. The Chair asked whether a risk assessment was undertaken prior to the telecare equipment being installed in user's homes. The Head of Adults Services confirmed that a risk assessment would be undertaken.

RESOLVED:

That the update of local and regional telecare and telehealth developments be noted.

10. DELIVERING HOME ADAPTATIONS

The Director of Community Services introduced a report to provide Members with an update on the delivery of home adaptations, including Disabled Facilities Grants (DFGs) and minor adaptations and to seek support for the Home Adaptations Action Plan and for a new policy to guide decision making for the provision of major adaptations in family houses and upper floor flats.

He detailed the background to the report and explained that the delivery of disabled adaptations was a challenge for the Council given the scale and complexity of demand. Flintshire's performance at September 2013 for DFGs against the national performance indicator was 207 days. This met the local improvement target and was a significant improvement on the 2012/13 performance for 391 days for all DFGs. However, guidance for the calculation of this performance indicator (PI) had been revised to allow for more accurate national benchmarking. The PI for 12/13 had also been recalculated using the new guidance which provided a figure of 283 days for 2012/13 against the current performance for 2013/14 of 207 days. The Director of Community Services welcomed the improvement of 76 days that could be seen from the last financial year. The waiting time for occupational therapy assessments had also significantly decreased and the figures for Flintshire were lower than the national average wait for an assessment. The Modernisation of Social Services Board, which the Director and Cabinet Member for Social Services were members of, had driven the development of reablement and preventative services and highlighted the need to develop locality teams to ensure that Social Services worked more closely with health colleagues.

The Chair congratulated the Members of both Committees for their work in the workshops in pursuing the issue of DFGs and home adaptations and gave thanks to the officers for their work.

The Housing Renewal Manager said that work had been undertaken to look at the Council's housing stock and identify the best solution to adaptations to properties. A new policy had been developed on the issue of adaptations of family houses and upper floor flats for people living with a disability. Since 1 April 2013, 111 requests for level access showers had been actioned by the in-house adaptations team. These remained the most common adaptation that took place but with the cost at approximately £6k to install the shower within a property, the total spend was £666k so far in 2013/14. Approximately 25% of these level access showers were in family houses and a further £150k was expended annually on stairlifts, with a straight stairlift costing £3.5k and up to £6k for a complex curved stairlift. Over £1m was spent on major adaptations to the Council's own housing stock and the proposals in the policy considered doing the right type of adaptation for the right property for current and successive tenants. Paragraph 3.05 listed the points to consider when assessing the needs of the tenant and whether relocating them to a different property was a better option. The Housing Renewal Manager also referred to the possible use of adapted pods which would reduce the number of major adaptations taking place in Council housing but could increase flexibility due to being able to retrieve and recycle when the pod was no longer required. The capital cost for the pods would not be any different to the costs for major adaptations but would be advantageous due to their flexible nature. The pods would also reduce costs of remedial works too in certain circumstances. The Housing Renewal Manager advised that he would submit reports to future meetings when further evidence on the use of the pods was available.

Councillor Marion Bateman welcomed the suggestion to use pods which would save the Council money in the longer term. She felt that it was an exciting opportunity and queried whether planning permission regulations could be

relaxed to speed up the process to permitting any such applications and asked whether the Planning Strategy Group could consider the suggestion.

Councillor Hilary Isherwood referred to independent living for those with disabilities and suggested that a facility such as Llys Jasmine could provide the assistance to enable those with disabilities to live independently. The Director of Community Services said that the proposals for the further enhanced care schemes would be more flexible to include people with disabilities to support them to live independently but added that there were currently a range of supported living schemes in place for people with disabilities. Councillor Isherwood felt that the cost of such a scheme should be considered as she felt that younger people with disabilities would benefit from a facility such as Llys Jasmine.

Councillor Rosetta Dolphin referred to the adaptations carried out in properties and queried whether all schemes were carried out by in-house teams as she felt that it was important to ensure that the best value for money was achieved. In referring to the in-house teams, the Operations Manager said that a robust interview process had taken place to identify the right people for the right jobs. He added that the work they undertook was outstanding and he had been proud to watch them collect a Team of the Year award. The Head of Housing advised that a report had been considered by the Housing Overview & Scrutiny Committee on evaluation of the work undertaken and the cost improvements and added that the timescales were reducing and value for money was being achieved. She indicated that she would re-send the information to the Members for their information.

Councillor Alison Halford thanked the officers for the progress made. She referred to the level access showers commented on by the Housing Renewal Manager and asked whether access to the adaptation was easily available to tenants and whether they were more cost effective than the bath/shower combination advertised in newspapers. The Housing Renewal Manager said that the aim of the policy was to try and address the issues identified. An occupational therapy assessment would be undertaken to establish the best solution and once the request for an adaptation had been received, a decision would need to be made about the best option for the tenant and potentially save installation and future removal costs. This may mean offering to move the tenant to an already adapted property instead of adapting their house or flat. The Head of Housing explained that help could be provided for removal costs and could result in a family sized home being freed up for other tenants but she added that each case would be looked at on its own merits to identify the best solution. Councillor Halford suggested that an update be provided to a future meeting of the Committee.

Councillor Hilary McGuill sought assurance that tenants would not be pressurised to move to another property. She also referred to the use of pods which were easy to install and remove and referred to the significant cost saving. The Housing Renewal Manager said that a range of companies nationally produced the pods which were an attractive option which provided flexibility. The Cabinet Member for Housing gave assurance that families would not be forced to move to another property.

In response to a query from Councillor Veronica Gay about lifts to upper levels in properties, the Housing Renewal Manager advised that any lifts would be provided on the inside of a property, not externally.

Councillor McGuill referred to property adaptations for children and young people and Councillor Gareth Roberts spoke of the facility at Llys Edward in Holywell which provided help to youngsters to assist them in independent living. The Cabinet Member for Social Services also referred to supported living schemes near Deeside Hospital and added that there were a number of other shared living facilities in Flintshire. Councillor Amanda Bragg felt that there was a gap locally for children with learning disabilities and referred to Cornerstone which was a project which was trying to fund a purpose built facility to allow children over 16 to live independently. In response to a question from Councillor Bragg about support for the parents of disabled children, the Cabinet Member for Social Services explained that the Transition Team worked closely with families with disabilities.

On the issue of pods, Councillor Marion Bateman suggested that a representative from a manufacturer of the pods provide a presentation to the Committee. The Director of Community Services confirmed that he would arrange for enquiries to be made.

Councillor Isherwood queried why it cost £6k to install the level access showers and then a further £6k to remove them when they were no longer needed. The Housing Renewal Manager explained that the £6k was not just for the shower but also provided a wet room for the tenant which would need to be returned to a normal bathroom when the shower was no longer required. The Head of Housing advised that details on the costs could be circulated to Members following the meeting.

In summing up, the Chair referred Members to the recommendations in the report, the circulation of information on the costs of installing/removing level access showers and the request from Councillor Halford for updates to future meetings on adaptations.

RESOLVED:

- (a) That the reduction in waiting times for Occupational Therapy assessment and improved timescales for the delivery of home adaptations be noted;
- (b) That the action plan and the workstreams contained within be supported;
- (c) That the proposed policy regarding the adaptation of family homes and upper floor flats within the Council's housing stock be supported;
- (d) That updates on adaptations be provided to a future meeting of the Committee; and
- (e) That a breakdown on the cost of installing and removing the level access showers be provided to Members.

11. SUPPORTING PEOPLE

The Community Support Services Manager introduced a report to update the Committee on the Supporting People Programme in Flintshire and seek support for the Local Commissioning Plan.

It was reported that the Local Authority was required to develop a three year Commissioning Strategy that would inform the priorities within the Regional Commissioning Strategy. However, Local Authorities in North Wales had developed 12 month Commissioning Plans to cover the transition period and allow time for reviewing of existing services, new developments and appropriate targeting of reductions. Welsh Government had been supportive of this approach, recognising that the level of reductions in North Wales made longer term planning at this stage more of a challenge. The Programme was facing significant reductions in funding year on year and it had been indicated that funding would reduce by approximately 5% in 2014/15 and 2015/16. An approach was being considered of how to respond to the reduction in funding which could include remodelling projects or working with providers on leaner processes but it was important not to apply a blanket cut approach to services. The Community Support Services Manager advised that the Flintshire Supporting People Team had led on a number of successful local and sub regional developments over the last twelve months which included Flintshire 'Nightstop' Service, Body Positive and the Support Gateway and she provided further details on the schemes/projects. It was also reported that there were opportunities for some short term developments to make best use of funding that was available now but could not be committed long term which included a two year mental health low level floating support service and one year additional funding to Age Connects. Reductions from the service were also reported and included a reduction of £98,280 from Betsi Cadwaladr University Health Board (BCUHB) Learning Disability Services which were not eligible to be funding by Supporting People Programme Grant.

In response to a question from Councillor Carol Ellis about the total amount of the grant, the Supporting People Manager said that it had been indicated that the grant would be approximately £6.8m for 2013/14, £6.4m for 2014/15 and £6.1m for 2015/16. She also confirmed that the six North Wales authorities were also seeing reductions in their funding but that some Councils, including those in South Wales, would be receiving an increase in the grant.

Councillor Alison Halford referred to the opportunity for a two year mental health low level floating support service and said that as mental health could affect anyone whether they be young or old, that funding be treated as a priority. Following a question from Councillor Rosetta Dolphin about whether funding was being withdrawn from the Acquired Brain Injury project in Greenfield, the Community Support Services Manager advised that funding had been realigned but that this would not have an impact on the project. In referring to mental health issues, Councillor Hilary Isherwood said that mental health was the 'cinderella' of the health care service. She added that it was crucial that funding was provided and referred to rural locations which could be affected by transport issues and said that it was important to ensure that those in rural locations were not forgotten.

The Cabinet Member for Social Services indicated that she was the Mental Health Champion for Flintshire County Council and that the Strategy and team that were in place would ensure that Mental Health was taken seriously. The Chair referred to the significant challenge facing the service due to the Flintshire Community Mental Health Teams reporting a 70% increase in the number of referrals from Care Coordinators requesting floating support for service users. The Chair also highlighted the two year pilot project which was being developed which would provide low-level floating support to those people who were not eligible for statutory mental health services, and/or those who were ready to move-on from statutory services and required some level of on-going support within the community.

Councillor Halford referred to the Cabinet Member for Social Services role as Mental Health Champion and asked for further information. The Director of Community Services responded that the Mental Health Commissioning Strategy had been considered by the Social and Health Care Overview & Scrutiny Committee and had been approved by Cabinet; he indicated that he would share this with the Members of the Housing Overview & Scrutiny Committee. He also acknowledged the work of the Social and Health Care Overview & Scrutiny Committee on the issue of Double Click and the proposals for it to become a social enterprise. He also referred to a report which had been submitted to Cabinet on the 'Time to Change' campaign in Wales about challenging mental health services and the provision of a Mental Health champion; the Director of Community Services indicated he would also share the report with the Committee.

Councillor Marion Bateman referred to section in the report on new investment where it was reported that BCUHB were withdrawing funding from a service from April 2014. She said that this would put additional pressure on the local authority and that it should be noted that this appeared to be a continuing and worrying trend by BCUHB.

Councillor Hilary McGuill raised concern about looked after children and asked what was in place for looked after children when they were moved out of foster care and moved on as the current system did not appear to be working. She said that there was concern that they would become homeless before being re-housed and could be put into a form of sheltered accommodation. Councillor McGuill also queried how the Support Gateway could be accessed by clients and requested further details on the project. In response, the Head of Housing spoke of the work undertaken by officers with people in care but said that there had been a gap in communication. The Community Support Services Manager said that meetings were set up with Housing Support and Housing Options officers at a very early stage to establish a plan and obtain a result that was suitable for the young person. The Supporting People Manager advised that she could circulate the policy on the Support Gateway to Members. She also commented on referrals and advised that if a young person presented as homeless, officers would be able to identify quickly where vacancies were depending on the needs of the young person to ensure the best outcome.

Councillor Veronica Gay asked whether stakeholders in England were consulted due to possible cross border issues as she was concerned that people may 'fall through the gap'. The Community Support Services Manager

responded that they were not consulted and that Flintshire County Council's stakeholders were on an accredited partner list. The Supporting People Manager also spoke of work with hospitals in England and Wales which had been undertaken as part of the Body Positive project and said that lessons on consultation could be taken forward when developing future projects. The Director of Community Services acknowledged the comments and asked that Members notify him of any specific issues that they were aware of and that were causing them concern.

The Chair asked that figures be provided about the 5% reduction in funding each year and that the recommendation be amended to include regular updates to Members on the progress of the grant and the progression of the draft Flintshire Local Commissioning Plan to the final document.

RESOLVED:

- (a) That the reductions to the Supporting People Grant be noted and the proposed approach to managing reductions be supported;
- (b) That the progress of the Supporting People team in the last twelve months be noted;
- (c) That the Draft Flintshire Local Commissioning Plan be supported;
- (d) That regular updates on the progress of the grant be reported to Committee; and
- (e) That progression of the draft Flintshire Local Commissioning Plan to the final document be reported to Committee.

12. MEMBERS OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC IN ATTENDANCE

There were no members of the press or public in attendance.

(The meeting started at 2.00 pm and ended at 4.08 pm)

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Chair