

SOCIAL & HEALTH CARE OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
25 JANUARY 2018

Minutes of the meeting of the Social & Health Care Overview & Scrutiny Committee of Flintshire County Council held at Llys Jasmine, Jasmine Crescent, Mold on Thursday, 25 January 2018

PRESENT: Councillor Carol Ellis (Chair)

Councillors: Mike Allport, Marion Bateman, Andy Dunbobbin, Cindy Hinds, Andrew Holgate, Kevin Hughes, Rita Johnson, Mike Lowe, Dave Mackie, Hilary McGuill, Martin White, Ian Smith and David Wisinger

APOLOGIES: Councillor Gladys Healey

CONTRIBUTORS: Councillor Christine Jones, Cabinet Member for Social Services; Chief Officer (Social Services); Senior Manager, Children and Workforce; Senior Manager - Safeguarding and Commissioning; Senior Manager – Integrated Services and Lead Adults, Service Manager Disabilities, and Finance Manager

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

41. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor Ian Smith declared a personal interest in relation to agenda item 5 – Social Services Revenue Budget 2017/18.

42. MINUTES

(i) The minutes of the meeting held on 16 November 2017 were received.

(ii) The minutes of the meeting held on 13 December 2017 were received.

Matters Arising

Minute number 37: In response to a request from Councillor Hilary McGuill, Officers agreed to provide further information on the contact number for Children's Services.

RESOLVED:

That the minutes be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

43. NORTH WALES POPULATION ASSESSMENT REGIONAL PLAN

The Chief Officer (Social Services) introduced the report to review and approve the draft North Wales Population Assessment Regional Plan. He provided background information and advised that local authorities and Health Boards were required to produce a joint area plan in response to the population assessment by 1 April 2018.

The Chief Officer reported on the main considerations as detailed in the report concerning the regional priorities, response to population assessment chapters and core themes, and the overall findings. He gave a presentation on the North Wales Regional Plan which covered the following key areas:

- Children and young people
- Older people
- health, physical disability and sensory impairments
- learning disabilities
- Mental health and substance misuse
- Carers
- violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence
- secure estate
- Veterans
- housing and homelessness
- Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD)

The Chair thanked the Chief Officer for his presentation and invited questions.

Councillor Hilary McGuill asked what support was available for families who found themselves in a crisis situation because they were caring for an older relative who was suffering with dementia and was neither in hospital or a nursing home. She also referred to ASD and the need for early intervention and asked at what age children could be medicated. The Chief Officer advised that a medical assessment was undertaken on the individual and but there was no specific age when this was carried out.

The Chief Officer explained that the Authority proactively supported people with dementia and referred to the respite provision and domiciliary care support services provided to help families to cope. The Senior Manager – Integrated Services and Lead Adults advised that the Authority also funded the North East Wales Carers Information Service which provided Crisis Careline Information for carers and referred to the ‘bridging the gap’ scheme.

Councillor Carol Ellis commented on the developing issue of homelessness and commented on the shortage of suitable accommodation, the impact this had on the behaviour of children, and the mental health of parents.

In response to a concern raised by Councillor Kevin Hughes regarding an increase on the number of children on the Child Protection Register, the

Chief Officer explained that the 9% increase referred to in the report was regional and that there was a national increase in Wales. The Senior Manager, Children and Workforce, advised that the increase was due in part to a greater awareness amongst agencies around safeguarding and child protection issues and to early intervention. He also referred to a project which was about to commence to support mothers who had repeat pregnancies and were unable to care for their children.

Councillor Kevin Hughes commented on the issue of online bullying and the need to inform and work closely with schools to support pupils. He also referred to the need to work with schools to promote healthy living and address the issue of obesity. Councillor Christine Jones and the Chief Officer gave an assurance that both matters were addressed within the Authority's Safeguarding policy. The Senior Manager – Integrated Services and Lead Adults also commented on the work undertaken with professionals in the Health sector regarding tackling obesity in young people and early intervention with parents. She also confirmed that childhood obesity was a Public Health priority.

Councillor Cindy Hinds commented on the need for a broader knowledge about autism and mental health issues and earlier recognition within Education settings.

Councillor Andy Dunbobbin referred to the action to support older people with complex needs and conditions including dementia and commented on the need to also support veterans. The Chief Officer acknowledged the point made and explained that support was provided for people under the age of 65 and that Flintshire was the only Authority in North Wales to offer such support services.

In response to a query by Councillor Rita Johnson officers advised that the out of hours service provided mental assessment services and emergency out of hours contact and support services for mental health issues.

Councillor Hilary McGuill expressed concerns on the impact that the local prison service had on local hospitals and cited increased delays in waiting times for appointments and treatment at Wrexham Maelor as an example. Councillor Carol Ellis commented on the need for additional funding to be provided to meet the cost of treating individuals from the prison service. The Chief Officer agreed to raise the Committee's concerns regarding the impact on Flintshire residents with Betsi Cadwaladr University Health Board.

RESOLVED:

- (a) That the Committee recommends approval of the draft North Wales Population Assessment Regional Plan; and
- (b) That the Committee meets the challenges of delivering services in the current financial climate

44. SOCIAL SERVICES REVENUE BUDGET 2017/18

The Chief Officer (Social Services) introduced the report to review and scrutinise key variances in revenue expenditure. He provided background information and advised that the report provided an explanation of the current budget position, the influences in relation to overspend by service area, and the planned actions to manage the overspend through possible budget realignment to meet known service pressure and other measures. The Chief Officer gave an overview of the financial monitoring within the following three areas of adult services, as detailed in the report.

Mental Health/residential care placements

Councillor Dave Mackie queried the cost of a mental health placements and the figures within 1.05 of the report. Officers explained that the cost of mental health placements would fluctuate depending on the level of support required and included a range of placements both short and longer term. Officers referred to the success with rehabilitating individuals, resulting in reduced costs for packages. Officers also explained that joint funded placements with the Health service could be complex. Work was done on a recovery model to support individuals to less restrictive and supervised independence. The Service Manager, Disabilities, reiterated the success of working with people to enable them to make progress. The Chief Officer advised that the budget was insufficient to meet current service demands and to address the variances in the mental health budget consideration was being given to a budget realignment. He added that due to the growing demands on the service and the complex needs one placement could significantly impact the budget.

In response to a question from Councillor Hilary McGuill regarding crisis situations and whether Health took ownership, the Senior Manager Integrated Services and Lead Adults confirmed that feedback was that Health and Social Services both acted as quickly as possible.

The Chief Officer referred to areas of corresponding underspends and said that the department would seek to align this matter.

Councillor Carol Ellis expressed her concerns regarding the further budget savings identified of £0.450m at Stage 1 and 0.982 at Stage 2.

The Committee recognised that the implications of pressures on Health was also an important factor, with placements being funded jointly between Health and Social Services. In addition there was an increase in the numbers eligible for support as a result of the Social Services and Well-being Wales Act. Councillor Carol Ellis commented that the Mental Health/residential care placements could put the Council in a similar position to the one with Out of County Placements a few years ago.

The Committee accepted the budget position as a result of the above explanations.

Resources and Regulated Services

Councillor Dave Mackie commented on the overspend which he felt was not significant and said that due to the Social Services and Well-Being (Wales) Act there had been an increase in the number of people who were eligible for support. He also commented on the delay in the transfer of the day and work opportunities service in moving to an Alternative Delivery Model which was also a contributing factor to the overall budget pressure. He said that the current figure of 1.62% seemed a reasonable variance considering the size of the budget.

Councillor Carol Ellis reiterated that the impact of the Social Services and Well Being (Wales) Act should be recognised as a significant factor as there were statutory requirements but no additional funding.

Safeguarding Unit

The Chief Officer referred to the increase in the number of Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards (DoLS) which had resulted in an annual overspend. He said that the DoLS service were also extending their workload to encompass Community DoLS and that whilst demand continued to rise the service had taken action to streamline processes and reduce headcount. Projected overspends were being addressed by way of budget pressure submissions and he advised that a budget pressure of £100k had been put forward for 2018/19 which was subject to approval as part of the budget considerations.

Councillor Carol Ellis expressed concern that there was no additional funding for the increase in provision of the DoLS service which was a statutory requirement.

Councillor Dave Mackie commented that the Service had recognised the need for additional funding at an early stage and had raised the issue with Cabinet although it had been difficult to estimate accurately how much funding would be required at that time.

Referring to the Child Protection Register and pre-birth conferences, the Senior Manager, Children and Workforce advised that funding had been secured from the Welsh Government to work with and support women who had repeat pregnancies which then resulted in the child being placed for adoption within the County.

RESOLVED:

- (a) That the information provided in the report be accepted; and
- (b) That the Committee reports back to the Corporate Resources Overview & Scrutiny Committee and to Cabinet.

45. TRANSITION TEAM

The Senior Manager – Integrated Services and Lead Adults introduced a report to provide information on the function and purpose of the Transition Team for young people with Disabilities in Flintshire. She advised that the report used case examples to illustrate how the Team worked and to demonstrate positive outcomes delivered for young people. The report also identified key challenges for the Service where there are increasing numbers of younger people with complex needs. The Senior Manager invited the Service Manager, Disability, Progression and Recovery, to present the case studies.

Councillor Dave Mackie queried the costs for residential and non-residential placements and expressed concerns around the proposed increase in placement costs in the future. He referred to the information provided in the report which gave an example of college placement costs and asked if a comparative data on local residential and non-residential provision could be provided. Councillor Mackie also asked about respite provision. The Senior Manager – Integrated Services and Lead Adults explained that if a young person went to a local college respite could be provided through a variety of ways.

In response to a question from Councillor Hilary McGuill concerning the payment of Direct Payments to young people who attend a residential college, the Service Manager, Disability, Progression and Recovery, explained that the only Direct Payment the young person received was for respite during the Summer holiday period.

Councillor McGuill asked if the Service was working with Northop Horticultural College and Deeside College to provide out of hours activities and fund this as an internal service. The Service Manager, Disability, Progression and Recovery, explained that the Service was working with Northop College to develop ways to reduce costs and advised that the College had agreed to employ a person which would reduce the amount of personal care which the Service would have to provide to support students.

In response to a further question from Councillor McGuill regarding sex education, the Service Manager, Disability, Progression and Recovery, explained that Community Nurses generally had the expertise and resources to provide sex education to young people in colleges and schools.

Councillor Marion Bateman commented that there should not be a financial benefit for young people to go to residential college.

Councillor Andy Dunbobbin commented on the 21st Century Schools programme and said there was a need to look at the education strategy alongside the transition strategy.

In response to the comments and concerns raised by Members the Chief Officer explained that the Authority had done all it could to encourage young

people, parents, to use the local colleges and facilities but ultimately individuals had freedom of choice.

RESOLVED:

- (a) That the purpose of the Transition Service be noted; and
- (b) That the Committee recognised the action taken to reduce local college costs and encourage further efforts to achieve more resilience within the 21 Century Schools Programme.

46. ROTA VISITS

Councillor Kevin Hughes provided feedback on his positive visit to Marleyfield House and drew attention to a recent article which had appeared in the local press which had highlighted the homely and friendly environment and community spirit enjoyed by service users.

RESOLVED:

That the information be noted.

47. FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME

The Facilitator presented the Forward Work Programme and advised that Out of County Placements would be an agenda item for consideration by the Committee at the meeting to be held on 29 March 2018. She also advised that it had been agreed that a joint meeting of the Social & Health and Education & Youth Overview and Scrutiny Committees had been arranged on 24 May 2018.

In response to a request from the Committee, the Facilitator agreed to contact the Facilitator for the Community & Enterprise Overview & Scrutiny Committee to arrange a joint meeting before the departure of the Chief Officer (Community and Enterprise) at the end of April 2018.

RESOLVED:

- (a) That the Forward Work Programme be updated accordingly; and
- (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.

48. MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC AND PRESS IN ATTENDANCE

There was one member of the press in attendance and no members of the public.

(The meeting started at 2.00 pm and ended at 4.48 pm)

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Chair