

**SOCIAL & HEALTH CARE OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**  
**7 SEPTEMBER 2023**

Minutes of the Social & Health Care Overview & Scrutiny Committee of Flintshire County Council held as a hybrid meeting on Thursday, 7 September 2023

**PRESENT: Councillor Arnold Woolley (Chair)**

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

**APOLOGIES:** Councillor Jean Davies, Chief Officer (Social Services) and the Senior Manager - Safeguarding and Commissioning

**SUBSTITUTE:** Councillor: Bill Crease (for Debbie Owen)

**CONTRIBUTORS:** Councillor Christine Jones (Deputy Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Social Services and Wellbeing); Senior Manager Children and Workforce; Senior Manager for Adults; Programme Manager (East) - Community Services; Service Manager for Children with Disabilities and Adults Under 65 years; and Complaints Officer for Social Services

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

**18. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST (INCLUDING WHIPPING DECLARATIONS)**

None.

**19. MINUTES**

The Social Care and Environment Overview & Scrutiny Facilitator responded to Councillor McGuill's question about when the Member workshop at Westwood Centre, Buckley was to be held as outlined in the minutes of 20<sup>th</sup> July 2023 by advising her that it would be covered in the next item.

The minutes of the meeting held on 20 July, 2023 were approved, as moved by Councillor Dave Mackie and seconded by Councillor Marion Bateman.

**RESOLVED:**

That the minutes be approved as a correct record.

**20. 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. She added that arrangements were being made with Betsi Cadwaladr University Health Board (BCUHB) to attend the meeting in November or December. She stated that she had received some good responses from Members in relation to the items they wanted to

cover in that meeting. Members were also advised that the workshop to be held at the Westwood Centre, Buckley was being progressed.

Councillor Bateman asked if the item that she had suggested on E-Consult in Surgeries was to be discussed at the BCUHB meeting. The Facilitator agreed that it would be included on the list. She confirmed that the items she had received so far were:-

- Access to Dental care
- E-Consult
- Making appointments with GPs
- Current position regarding the Health Board
- Hospital infections
- Conflict between Elected and Emergency Admission Surgery

In relation to the matter raised by Councillor Bateman on E-Consult, Councillor Ellis recommended that she take up any complaints with Mark Isherwood MS. Councillor Bateman thanked her for her advice.

Councillor McGuill added to the list of questions as follows:-

- how the Health Board operated their Hospital at Home System E-Consult
- how they distributed information to people who would benefit from the Service
- link to NEWCES so that people were aware of how to access the equipment as it was very difficult to access unless via a Social Worker

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

### **RESOLVED:**

- (a) That the Forward Work Programme be approved;
- (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.

## **21. COMMENTS, COMPLIMENTS & COMPLAINTS**

The Senior Manager for Children and Workforce gave background to the report stating that Social Services was a people-based service that supported thousands of Flintshire residents and while some residents welcomed support and gave positive feedback, others did not which resulted in complaints. He handed over to the Complaints Officer to explain the statistics.

The Complaints Officer for both Adult Social Care and Children's Social Services gave a brief overview of the report for both areas covering:-

- Overview of complaints
- Stage 2 (Independent Investigation)
- Ombudsman
- Lessons Learned

He summed up by saying that across the service there had been 212 compliments and that complaints had fluctuated but had been steady.

Councillor Mackie agreed that the report was similar to previous reports and that complaints were being handled appropriately. He also stated that people were more likely to complain and was pleased that so many compliments had been received. Councillor McGuill agreed with Councillor Mackie and was impressed on how practices were altered as a result of complaints received.

The recommendation was moved by Councillor Linda Thomas and seconded by Councillor Hilary McGuill.

**RESOLVED:**

That Members welcomed the effectiveness of the compliments procedure with lessons being learnt to improve service provision.

**22. C2A UPDATE (TO INCLUDE AROSFA ADDITIONAL PLACEMENTS)**

The Senior Manager for Adults advised Members that she was keen for the Child to Adult Team to share with them some of the fantastic work that they had undertaken.

The Service Manager for Children with Disabilities and Adults Under 65 years gave background to the report as to where the service started from, how they had learnt and continually developed and where they were today. She highlighted that also contained within the report was information about the Action for Children facility that had been commissioned in Arosfa which was based in Mold and provided respite care.

Councillor Mackie thanked them for the report which covered and explained the service and wanted thanks to be given to the staff for the work that they did. He questioned why the age split was at 14 years and was told that it was because a different skill set of staff was needed at that age to plan for their future into adulthood concerning further education and employment as well as benefits and supported living.

Councillor McGuill asked how they helped people aged 21-22 years of age moving into the area and who they had no knowledge of. The Service Manager for Children with Disabilities and Adults Under 65 years advised that they would probably refer them to adult services as the Single Point of Access (SPA) team take the enquiries and with the information they gathered would pass on to the appropriate team. She confirmed that respite provision would also be provided if needed (but not by Arosfa as they were only registered to provide the services until the age of 18) but that there were two Adults' short-term care houses within Flintshire. She added that direct payments for respite whereby people could pay a family friend or relative to look after the person to give their family a break was also an option.

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

**RESOLVED:**

- (a) That Members are informed about the work undertaken within C2A Team;
- (b) That Members are informed about the provision of respite based at Arosfa in Mold; and
- (c) That a letter is sent on behalf of the Committee to the staff of the C2A Service congratulating and thanking them for the work undertaken by the Team.

**23. STRATEGIC CAPITAL PLAN PRIORITISATION**

The Senior Manager Children and Workforce gave background to the report stating that the six regions within Wales had been tasked by Welsh Government (WG) to develop a 10 Year Strategic Capital Plan (SCP) to summarise the key development required by health and social care partners with other key stakeholders to meet primary and community health and social care needs, specifically where WG funding would be needed to support those developments. Each region had to have a Regional Partnership Board (RPB) where strategic leaders in public services, third sector and the independent sector came together to create an effective service for the people within that region. It was the RPB which would need to oversee the implementation of the plan. He explained that new funding programmes had been set up and that this report provided an update on the 10 Year plan and how it was going to be taken forward. He handed over to the Programme Manager (East) - Community Services to explain how they ensured that the capital developments complimented, supported and met the needs of Flintshire residents.

The Programme Manager (East) - Community Services first gave apologies on behalf of the report author who was the Flintshire lead officer for the Regional Integrated Fund. She explained that the Regional Integration Fund (RIF) had replaced the Integrated Care Fund (ICF) in 2022 and that it contained both revenue and capital funding elements. She reminded Members that this report was to update them on the new process to develop a 10 Year SCP for capital developments that met the needs of the Health and Social Care agenda for North Wales which were based on the funding from the following capital funds:-

- Housing with Care Fund (HCF) - WG grant fund for capital projects that increased the stock of housing provision to meet the needs of people with care and support needs
- Integration and Rebalancing Capital Fund (IRCF) - WG grant fund for capital projects that delivered integrated health and social care community hubs and centres service hubs or rebalanced the care market by investing in community settings and residential care premises.

She clarified that the report was not to seek agreement for capital development or funding but was for Members to understand the new process and requirement to develop a 10 year plan. She advised that the Flintshire schemes that were identified to go into the plan had already been approved and part of the capital asset programme.

Councillor Christine Jones confirmed to Councillor Woolley that, as stated in the report, it had not been to Cabinet and that discussions today would be reported at the next Cabinet meeting.

Councillor Mackie raised concerns and sought clarification about the Regional Plan being based upon the North Wales Population Needs Assessment and the difficult process that was needed in order to bring forward Capital Projects based upon the 10 Year plan. Councillor Christine Jones agreed that the process was complicated and that it was an item on the agenda for the North Wales Regional Partnership Board the following day. The Programme Manager (East) - Community Services added that the North Wales Population Needs Assessment was already in place with a rolling programme to keep it updated and that any partner wishing to include a development within the SCP had to identify how the development would contribute to the needs identified within the Population Needs Assessment. She clarified that when the report referred to "the plan" it referred to the SCP and that multiple documents were not required, only this one SCP. Emphasis was given to the fact that there was a strong intent to have a 10 Year SCP in each region which would, in time, start to include some of the other elements that were referenced in the report. However, at this point, partners were not in a position to make 10 year commitments and so were working on the basis of adding what they could to the emerging and then live plan with a focus primarily on the first three years. She stated that although they were already into Year 1 of the current 3 year funding round, officers had been working on capital plans in previous years so there was no need to wait for the SCP to be signed off to be working through the process of submitting applications for funding from WG which was now actively in progress.

In response to Councillor Gladys Healey, the Programme Manager (East) - Community Services advised that the Council were already committed to funding contributions to each scheme listed within the Capital Asset Programme. She added that the SCP had to be developed over a period of time in order for them to go through the future process of applying for WG funding under this programme. The request in today's report was not to seek approval for any capital schemes or funding, but for the Council to participate in the development of the SCP. She agreed that Members needed to be clear on what they were agreeing to but the reality was that everyone was trying to devise what was happening next and steps had been put in place to maximise what could be done now with the intent to have a 10 Year plan over time. She stressed that there was a clear message from Flintshire to regional colleagues that nothing would go into the SCP that had not been through the Flintshire process, so there was no risk in agreeing in participation of developing SCP. However, if the Council did not take part in the process, it would start to lockdown future opportunities looking for funding. She suggested, with agreement from the Chair, that they were very clear with the Regional Programme Manager on the points raised and that Members would be seeking additional information over time as the scope of the SCP develops.

The Senior Manager for Children and Workforce added that this was about an intention for them to think more long term across partnerships about capital investment and that they were at the very early first stage of that. He stated that they did not have all the answers, but this was not about buildings; it was about the need of partnerships to make things work within them.

In response to a question from Councillor McGuill concerning a wish list for capital development to meet Flintshire's population needs, the Senior Manager for Children and Workforce confirmed that they had an emerging list and what they were putting forward now had already been in progress over the last three years and it was now time to decide what was needed in 3 years' time.

The Programme Manager (East) - Community Services responded to Councillor Bill Crease's understanding of the process by saying that over time, the 10 Year plan should start to take into account different grants beyond the ones that had been discussed today. She confirmed that the HCF and IRCF funding were currently only for 3 Years. Adding to what Councillor Crease had said, Councillor Carol Ellis did not see how they could plan 10 years ahead without any funding in place and could not agree to something that she did not have a firm understanding of.

The Senior Manager for Children and Workforce suggested that Members consider that there were three years of relative certainty of money that was aligned in terms of capital for current commitments in Flintshire. Whilst they needed to be working towards a 10 year plan, the reality was that they would do that incrementally over time as there was more certainty about funding available and priorities for the Council.

Councillor Christine Jones referred to recommendation (b) of the report which asked Members to approve participation in the regional programme - as WG were asking Regional Partnership Boards across Wales to agree to.

Councillor Mackie pointed out that in eight years' time, there may be a different Westminster and WG as well as different Flintshire Members which could bring more changes and to go beyond five years within the political concept which was difficult. He acknowledged that Flintshire had to start gaining financial commitment from WG from year one or they may lose out on gaining funds further down the line.

Councillor Tina Claydon stated that she would be very worried not to develop this strategy and agreed with Councillor Mackie that future funding may be restricted if the Council did not participate.

Recommendation (a) within the report was moved by Councillor Dave Mackie and seconded by Councillor Tina Claydon.

As suggested by the Chair, Members agreed that recommendation (b) be amended as below, which was moved and seconded by Councillors Mackie and McGuill.

**RESOLVED:**

- (a) That Members notes the requirement for a ten-year Strategic Capital Plan for North Wales and the associated prioritisation and business case processes required to secure Welsh Government funding; and
- (b) That the Committee recommends Cabinet approval for participation in the plan and its strategic intent.

24. **MEMBERS OF THE PRESS IN ATTENDANCE**

None.

(The meeting started at 2.00 pm and ended at 3.45 pm)

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**Chair**