

SOCIAL & HEALTH CARE OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

18 JULY 2024

Minutes of the Social & Health Care Overview & Scrutiny Committee of Flintshire County Council held as a hybrid meeting on Thursday, 18 July 2024

PRESENT: **Councillor Sam Swash (Chair)**

Councillors: Mel Buckley, Tina Claydon, Carol Ellis, Gladys Healey, Dave Mackie, Hilary McGuill, Billy Mullin and Debbie Owen

APOLOGIES: Councillors Andy Hughes and Roz Mansell

SUBSTITUTIONS: Councillor Gina Maddison (for Councillor Fran Lister)

ALSO PRESENT AS OBSERVERS: Councillors Alasdair Ibbotson 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 - Safeguarding and Commissioning; Commissioning Manager (for agenda item 14 and 17) Planning and Development Officer and Planning And Development Officer – Partnerships, Development and Performance) (for agenda item 16)

IN ATTENDANCE: Overview & Scrutiny Facilitator and Democratic Services Officer

12 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST (INCLUDING WHIPPING DECLARATIONS)

None were received.

13. FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME AND ACTION TRACKING ([Link to recording](#))

The Overview & Scrutiny Facilitator presented the Committee's current [Forward Work Programme](#) and [Action Tracking](#) report for consideration and welcomed any questions from Members.

Following a request for an update on the Mockingbird Project and Foster Care it was suggested that a report was brought in October with a separate report also provided on the Safeguarding Hub.

Following a request to restart visits to meet frontline staff working in Childrens Social Care in Flintshire, as recommended by the inquiry who looked into the death of Victoria Climbié, it was suggested to look at this in September

/ October. This would enable time to liaise with operational services to arrange a visit.

The recommendations within the report together with the additions were supported.

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.
- (c) That the progress made in completing the outstanding actions be noted

14. SOCIAL SERVICES DIRECTOR'S ANNUAL REPORT 2023/24 (FINAL) ([Link to recording](#))

The Chief Officer (Social Services) introduced the [Annual Report](#) which summarised the local authority's social care functions and priorities for improvement as legislated in the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014 and the Regulation and Inspection of Social Care (Wales) Act 2016 (RISCA). The Annual Report was presented to the last committee meeting for comment, with the final draft presented today prior to publication by the 31st of July 2024.

Following a request for regular updates on Out of County it was agreed that these would commence once the Member Workshop had taken place in the Autumn.

The recommendations within the report were supported.

RESOLVED:

That Committee review and support the Social Services Director's Annual Report 2023/24 and priorities identified for the 2024/25 financial year.

15. CHILDCARE AND EARLY YEARS CAPITAL PROGRAMME 2022-2025 ([Link to recording](#))

The report was presented by the Chief Officer (Social Services) who explained that the Welsh Government (WG) [Childcare and Early Years Capital Programme](#) looked at enhancing and developing buildings and settings for Childcare and Early Years. Phase 1 was completed in March 2024 with Phase 2 due to complete in March 2025. An outline of the tight timescale for the delivery of Phase 2 for the two sites in Flint and Treuddyn was provided.

It was agreed to circulate the updated Childcare Sufficiency report to committee Members.

Following a question on whether all schools had been contacted and offered the opportunity to apply, the Chief Officer agreed to contact Gail Bennett and provide a response.

The recommendations within the report were supported.

RESOLVED:

- (a) That the Committee support the submission to the Childcare and Early Years Capital Programme 2022-2025 for the Cornist Park in Flint scheme to proceed from the 'starting a project' stage and to request agreement to the 'design and build' phase of the programme from Welsh Government.
- (b) That the Committee support a Direct Award process to appoint an experienced contractor to meet the WG deadline of 31 March 2025. The award would be through the existing Pagoba framework.
- (c) That the Committee note the identification of the Ysgol Terrig/Ysgol Parc Y Llan, Treuddyn as a potential second project, subject to further work with partners. If options were viable within the timescales prescribed by Welsh Government approval would be sought from Cabinet to proceed based on the timelines, costings and partnership agreement.

16. CHARGING FOR APPOINTEESHIP ([Link to recording](#))

The Senior Manager for Safeguarding and Commissioning introduced the [report](#) which related to a suggestion of charging for Appointeeship for cases which were administered through the Local Authority's Assessment and Charging Team. An outline was provided of the two options being an Appointee of the Department of Work and Pensions (DWP) or a Deputy of the Court of Protection (COP). It was explained that this was not around income generation but was to ensure that the costs incurred were covered.

Following the circulation by Councillor Alasdair Ibbotson of a third option the Senior Manager felt that a detailed analysis would need to be undertaken on this option.

The Chief Officer suggested the following set of guiding principles which should be constantly checked when running this scheme to ensure it was:-

- fair and equitable,
- transparent,
- As simple as possible based on ability to pay, cover costs (there could be a future tension where ability to pay meant it could not be fully recovered) it would then come back to committee.

- Reviewed regularly.

It was suggested that if the committee provide the outline, including the additional recommendation around the review, ability to pay and the guidelines which had been suggested, then that would enable the team to move forward. Cabinet could then look at it before the final decision was made.

The Chair felt that the raising of the threshold to £6k would protect those with the least ability to pay. Also linking any increases to universal credit so it did not potentially become unaffordable because of increases in costs to the Council.

The recommendation, including the additional recommendation, were supported.

RESOLVED:

- (a) That the Committee support the implementation of a charging structure for local authority managed Appointeeship cases.
- (b) That the committee support the inclusion of option 3 within the consultation

LOCAL GOVERNMENT (ACCESS TO INFORMATION) ACT 1985 – TO CONSIDER THE EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC [Exclusion of the press and public](#)

The following item is considered to be exempt by virtue of Paragraph(s) 14 of Part 4 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended). The report contains details of a proposed contracts and the public interest in withholding the information outweighs the public interest in disclosure until the contracts have been awarded.

The committee agreed for the meeting to move into Part 2.

17 RECOMMISSIONING OF UNPAID CARERS SERVICES

The report was presented by the Chief Officer (Social Services) and included information on the statutory duties placed on the Local Authority in terms of supporting carers and the services delivered through Flintshire Social Services. It was confirmed that a review of all pathways and services had taken place. Information on the Welsh Government Strategy for Unpaid Carers and the changes made following the review were provided. It was proposed that Carers Services were recommissioned from April 2025 for a five-year period to enable the Council to meet its statutory duties.

The recommendations within the report were supported.

RESOLVED:

- (a) That the Committee acknowledge the feedback received locally with regards to carers services as part of the review.
- (b) That the Committee considered and support the proposals made for the recommissioning of carers services for a five-year period starting from April 2025 as per our Contract Procedure Rules that require Cabinet approval for the award of contracts with a value over £2 million.

18. MEMBERS OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC IN ATTENDANCE

There were **no** members of the press in attendance.

(The meeting started at 10.00 am and ended at 12.06 pm)

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Chair

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