

SOCIAL & HEALTH CARE OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
11 DECEMBER 2015

Minutes of the meeting of the Social & Health Care Overview & Scrutiny Committee of Flintshire County Council held at County Hall, Mold on Friday, 11 December 2015

PRESENT: Councillor Carol Ellis (Chair)

Councillors: Andy Dunbobbin, Veronica Gay, David Healey, Cindy Hinds, Hilary Isherwood, David Mackie, Ian Smith and David Wisinger

APOLOGIES: Councillors: Adele Davies-Cooke, Brian Lloyd and Hilary McGuill

SUBSTITUTIONS: Councillors: Peter Curtis (for Mike Lowe), Ian Dunbar (for Mike Reece) and Paul Shotton (for Carolyn Thomas)

ALSO PRESENT: Councillors: Helen Brown, Kevin Jones, Richard Jones and Mike Peers

CONTRIBUTORS: Councillor Aaron Shotton, Leader and Cabinet Member for Finance, Councillor Christine Jones, Cabinet Member for Social Services, Chief Officer (Social Services), Senior Manager – Commissioning and Performance, Development Officer, Workforce Development Manager and Finance Officer (Social Services)

IN ATTENDANCE: Environment & Social Care Overview & Scrutiny Facilitator and Housing & Learning Overview & Scrutiny Facilitator

43. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST (INCLUDING WHIPPING DECLARATIONS)

No declarations of interest were made.

44. COUNCIL FUND REVENUE BUDGET 2016/2017

The Chairman welcomed the contributors to the meeting.

The Cabinet Member for Social Service explained that the proposals contained within the report set out the main risk areas covered in the business plan for 2016/17. The wider position regarding the funding of social care remained uncertain with recent media reports outlining concerns from the independent sector organisation Care Forum that the funding of the care homes sector was at critically low ebb and specific funding was necessary from UK and Welsh Government.

The Cabinet Member continued to explain that within the budget plans, efficiencies needed to be made, and within the areas the Committee was asked to focus on were changes to improve and develop learning disability services, changes in children's services and voluntary sector services. Although the position did not assume savings for extra care within the 2016/17 financial year, the Committee would also be asked to consider this.

The Leader of the Council provided information on the draft Local Government settlement. He explained that there was a reduction of 1.5% in the Revenue Support Grant (RSG) which was slightly above the average reduction and an improved position against the forecast.

Under the Intermediate Care Funds (ICF), the amounts ringfenced for mental health and older people would require discussion in the New Year on how these could be accessed. There was some protection given for the Supporting People Grant, however the Families First grant had been reduced by at least 10%. The Council was currently working through the implications of these reductions.

Whilst he said that the Council's strong representation to the Welsh Government (WG) on restricting cuts to the RSG had proved successful, more needed to be done on lobbying for a review of the Council Tax Reduction Scheme and greater flexibility on fees and charges. He thanked Members for their support in lobbying the WG.

The Chief Officer (Social Services) gave a detailed presentation which covered the following areas:-

- Purpose of today's meeting
- Corporate overview
- Service business plan proposals
- Local pressures and inflation – social services
- National timetable
- Local timetable

The comments and questions which were raised by Members of the Committee on the presentation, together with the responses given, are detailed in Appendix 1 (attached).

RESOLVED:

That the presentation be noted.

Presentation slides

Comments and questions raised

45. MEMBERS OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC IN ATTENDANCE

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

(The meeting started at 10.00 am and ended at 11.45 am)

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Chair

2016/17 Budget Consultation

Social & Health Care Overview & Scrutiny Committee – 11th December, 2015

Member Comment/Question	Response
<u>Social Services</u>	
<p>Has an alternative site for Glan Yr Afon Day Centre been identified? And has consideration be given to utilising the space available at Deeside Leisure Centre.</p> <p>Would like to see the Glan Yr Afon Day Centre moved to a different location in Queensferry.</p>	<p>A number of suggested sites are currently being considered and no final decision has been made yet. The future site and building needs to have an appropriate design, be fit for purpose and at a location accessible for all service users.</p>
<p>With regard to the proposal to develop a 'progression' model for supported living. During the recent Corporate Resources Overview & Scrutiny Committee meeting held on the 10th December reference was made to a reduced income of £61,000 through Telecare. Could you provide further clarity on this proposal?</p>	<p>The reduction in income does not affect the proposal which is about maximising bespoke technology to be provided by one partner.</p>
<p>With regard to the proposal to consult on the potential to commission provision currently provided by In House Supported Living houses. Is this actively taking place and if so what model are you looking at.</p>	<p>Pro-actively talking to a number of families and this had been taking place for some time to appropriately assess their needs and allow time for them to appeal if necessary.</p>
<p>Recently visited a number of residential care homes across Flintshire where there is great concerns regarding the increase in the National Living Wage which will have a negative impact on their financial situation. There is a need to ensure that residential and nursing care homes are adequately funded as otherwise there is a danger that there could be bed blocking at hospitals and ambulance queues at A&E.</p> <p>Although there is a 2.5% funding increase for residential care, domiciliary</p>	<p>The Council share these concerns which were highlighted at the public engagement events. The UK Government has introduced this without recognition of where the funding is going to come from. This is the thrust of the argument to ministers for additional funding as the pressure impacts the whole network of residential care.</p> <p>Officers have been working with providers to ask what support is needed</p>

<p>care and nursing care, there will still be a funding shortfall when the increase in National Living Wage is introduced.</p> <p>Is there a concern that staff within residential care and nursing care could lose their jobs in Flintshire as a way of finding additional funding to pay for the increased living wage.</p> <p>Have you asked the health service for additional funding to meet the introduction of the National Living Wage as the impact of not providing this funding will have an impact on their budgets through bed blocking?</p> <p>The introduction of the National Living Wage is to be admired but additional funding to meet this pressure is required.</p>	<p>and to show how the introduction of this wage will impact them financially.</p> <p>As an illustrative example, it may be beneficial for officers to provide information on what the total pressure would be if funding was provided to meet the introduction of this wage.</p> <p>This is a real significant concern and we are aware of examples where there are already issues in retaining staff within the domiciliary care service. We are meeting with providers to see what support the Council can give around recruitment, retention and training. We are meeting again early in the new year to assess what measures can be introduced to reduce this financial pressure.</p> <p>The Intermediate Care Fund (ICF) is used to provide support for step up and step down services but there is more work to be done jointly as this is a financial pressure which impacts the health service and local authority. The health service has funded 1 bed at each residential care home with an additional bed being provided for dementia cases. There is a small amount of funding to spot purchase beds if needed but demand continued to be high.</p> <p>Many of the Residential, Nursing and Domiciliary care homes are small family run businesses who want to support local people the same as the Council. The financial challenge is difficult for them to manage. We would like to see an element of the ICF permanently being provided to ease this pressure.</p>
<p>Concern that collaborative projects are not seeking to find reductions and efficiencies within their budgets.</p>	<p>Collaborative projects do play a role in finding efficiencies with significant efficiencies being found as part of the collaborative work around the Commissioning Hub and Duty Team.</p>
<p>How far is the service redesign in children's services going to go?</p>	<p>Following the inspection of children's services officers have been considering how to improve and strengthen the</p>

	<p>service with a clear aim to strengthen early intervention and reduce the different number of social workers one child has to enable greater outcomes. The redesign of the service will be based on feedback from inspectors, staff and children.</p>
<p>With regard to the proposal to manage the Childcare market, there is a need for greater collaboration between 3rd sector providers to ensure greater coverage of services across the County.</p>	<p>There is a need for greater co-ordination of 3rd sector providers. Officers are meeting with the Flintshire Local Voluntary Council (FLVC) to facilitate greater co-ordination and introduce different ways of working in order to share resources.</p>
<p>With regard to officer comments on the introduction of the Permanency Plan what savings can be made given the increase in demand and adoption figures increasing?</p>	<p>A great deal of detailed work is being undertaken following the introduction of the Social Services Wellbeing Act which states that foster carers cease to receive payment for foster children when they reach the age of 18. If the foster child wants to remain with the foster family they can continue to receive a smaller payment. Therefore any savings found will need to be used to pay for the new arrangements.</p>
<p>Concern that a consultant is being brought in to look at Adult Social Care Services when trying to save money. This should be re-considered as there should be the expertise within the Council's own workforce.</p> <p>Further explanation needed on the rationale to bring in a consultant. What is the cost of the consultant?</p> <p>The use of consultants needs to be cost neutral with the consultant needing to find the same level of efficiencies as the cost has been to the Council.</p> <p>The comments/concerns of the Committee need to be taken back by the Leader, Cabinet Member and Chief Officer with further information being provided to the Committee at a later date.</p>	<p>Cabinet have agreed the use of a consultant to carry out a crucial appraisal of Adult Social Care to ensure all efficiencies have been found.</p> <p>£50,000</p> <p>Noted.</p> <p>Further information on the use of a consultant will be brought back. Officers have undertaken a great deal of work and senior officers have been challenged to ensure that all efficiencies are being brought forward. The consultant from a specialist field will be tasked with identifying all efficiencies</p>

	without having affecting the service in a negative manner.
Concerns over the proposal to bring in an umbrella organisation to manage all 3 rd sector organisations. Each organisation is a specialist in their worn right and an umbrella organisation may not understand the complex needs of disabled people and recognise day to day problems.	Under the new Social Services and Wellbeing Act the Council will work with the 3 rd sector to discuss what co-providing services in the future could look like. This will be managed by the FLVC and the organisation will be informing that debate and ensuring dialogue between the 3 rd sector providers.
A rationale on how the figures for each of the proposals is arrived at is needed. Further detailed explanations needed for the proposals for service redesign in children's services and managing the childcare market.	A commitment has been given to provide further detailed explanations within the factsheets to be provided to Members during the January, 2016 Overview & Scrutiny budget meetings.
<u>General comments/questions</u>	
Concern that the Council has received a better budget settlement as there is a Welsh Government election in May 2016. Could an assurance be given that the Council will continue to challenge the Welsh Government following the election to ensure sufficient funding is provided to Social Care Services in the future?	Discussions still need to be undertaken with member of the public, staff and service users to explain that the Council welcomes the additional protection but there is still a reduction in the funding provided to the Council. The case put forward to Welsh Government from the whole family of local government across Wales which includes additional funding for Social Care Services will continue to be made.
Recognise and welcome the slowdown in budget cuts thanks to the lobbying from the Council and the Welsh Local Government Association. And also support the additional funding given to the Health Service.	Noted.
Could you please explain that if a budget reduction of 3.5% had equated to a £6m reduction how is a budget reduction of 1.5% only a £3.3m reduction. Should this figure be higher given that the percentage is greater than half of what the Council expected?	There is an improved position of £3.3m. Further information on how these figures are calculated and the Aggregate External Finance (AEF) will be provided at the Corporate Resources Overview & Scrutiny budget 'mop up' session.

<p>How are the Councils four specific requests to Welsh Government being progressed?</p>	<p>The first of the four requests to limit the annual reduction in Revenue Support Grant (RSG) has clearly been met. Headway has been made in the second request, to invest 25% or more of the new NHS funding passported to Wales but further needs to be done and further clarity is needed on how the Council can utilise the ICF. The Council will continue to lobby with regard to the third and fourth requests, to remove charging caps and granting the Council the freedom to recover costs of some services and fully funding the Council Tax Reduction Scheme which are not expected to be met at this stage. Given the late announcement of the final budget settlement, this gives the Council a window of opportunity to continue to lobby the Welsh Government.</p>
<p>Thank the Leader of the Council and Welsh Local Government Association for their hard work in lobbying for an improved budget reduction.</p>	<p>Noted.</p>
<p>Can thanks be passed to the Commissioners of Residential and Nursing Care who have excellent knowledge of the financial pressures going forward?</p>	<p>The comments will be passed to the Commissioners.</p>
<p>Thank the Leader, Chief Executive and Chief Officers for their attendance at the public engagement events.</p>	<p>Thanks for comments. During the public engagement events there were a number of concerns raised over future funding to support Social Care Services.</p>