

**SOCIAL & HEALTH CARE OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**  
**22 SEPTEMBER 2020**

Minutes of the meeting of the Social and Health Care Overview & Scrutiny Committee of Flintshire County Council held as a remote attendance meeting on Tuesday, 22 September 2020

**PRESENT: Councillor Hilary McGuill (Chair)**

Councillors: Mike Allport, Marion Bateman, Paul Cunningham, Jean Davies, Carol Ellis, Gladys Healey, Cindy Hinds, Mike Lowe, Dave Mackie, Michelle Perfect and David Wisinger

**CONTRIBUTORS:** Councillor Ian Roberts (Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Education), Councillor Christine Jones (Cabinet Member for Social Services), Chief Executive, Chief Officer (Social Services), Senior Manager: Integrated Services, Lead Adults, Senior Manager: Children and Senior Manager: Safeguarding and Commissioning

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

**1. APPOINTMENT OF CHAIR**

The Facilitator advised that it had been confirmed at the Annual Meeting of the County Council that the Chair of the Committee should come from the Liberal Democrat Group. The Committee was advised that Councillor Hilary McGuill had been appointed to this role for the municipal year.

**RESOLVED:**

That the appointment of Councillor McGuill as Chair of the Committee be noted.

**2. APPOINTMENT OF VICE-CHAIR**

Councillor Wisinger nominated Councillor Gladys Healey as Vice-Chair of the Committee and this was seconded by Councillor Lowe. There were no further nominations. On being put to the vote, this was carried.

**RESOLVED:**

That Councillor Gladys Healey be appointed Vice-Chair of the Committee.

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

None.

**4. MINUTES**

The minutes of the meeting held on 16 July 2020 were approved, as moved and seconded by Councillors Wisinger and Jean Davies, subject to an

amendment by Councillor Gladys Healey that her full name be shown in the minutes.

**RESOLVED:**

That subject to the amendment, the minutes be approved as a correct record.

**5. EMERGENCY SITUATION BRIEFING (VERBAL)**

The Chief Executive explained that the current situation was fluid. He and his Chief Officer colleagues would be ensuring that Members received short up to date verbal briefings at the start of meetings. He also commented that it may yet be necessary to reinstate the situational briefings which had been delivered to Members during the first six months of the emergency.

In response to a question from the Chair, the Chief Executive gave an update on testing which was not the responsibility of the Council. There had been a significant increase in requests for tests in Wales and discussions were taking place on priority testing for key workers.

**RESOLVED:**

Noted.

**6. TERMS OF REFERENCE OF THE COMMITTEE**

The Environment & Social Care Overview & Scrutiny Facilitator presented the report to receive the revised terms of reference for the Committee as agreed by Council. At the Council's Annual Meeting, Chairs had been appointed to the five Overview & Scrutiny committees within the new structure with amended terms of reference. Changes to the remit of this Committee included some topics on which the Committee had previously been involved in developing.

The Chair highlighted the importance of topics such as Early Years and Family Support being considered jointly with the Education, Youth & Culture Overview & Scrutiny Committee. The Facilitator assured Members that such wide-ranging topics would continue to be held as joint meetings with the appropriate committee.

The recommendation was moved by Councillor Mackie and seconded by Councillor Jean Davies.

**RESOLVED:**

That the terms of reference, as agreed by Council and appended to the report, be noted.

**7. RECOVERY STRATEGY**

The Chief Executive presented a report to provide the Committee with oversight of recovery planning for its portfolio areas as part of the strategy for the resumption of full democratic governance. Feedback from each of the Overview

& Scrutiny committees on the risk registers, recovery priorities and revised performance indicator targets for their respective areas would be reported to Cabinet prior to publication of a full Recovery Strategy.

A presentation showing the handover from response to recovery covered the following points:

- Recommendations from Cabinet
- Objectives of the Recovery Strategy
- Response Objectives
- Examples of local achievements in Response
- Recovery - handover arrangements
- Regional and Local Recovery Structures
- Recovery Objectives - Services
- Recovery Activities
- Community Recovery
- Council Plan and Performance
- Democratic Governance of Recovery

Amongst the key achievements during the response phase was the distribution of personal protective equipment, thanks to the efforts of Vanessa Johnson, Steve Featherstone and their team. On Community Recovery, reports on collaborative work on Inequalities, Children and Young People and Mental Health and Well-being would be brought back to the Committee for consideration. On performance, whilst it had not been possible to adopt the Council Plan for 2020/21 due to the emergency situation, work had continued on the rolling Plan to extract key priorities for adoption to support recovery. Overview & Scrutiny committees were being asked to rebuild their forward work programmes for the remainder of the 2020/21 year with a specific focus on recovery planning to support the restoration of full democratic governance.

In response to a question from the Chair on fostering and adoption services, the Senior Manager: Children gave assurance of continued work and investment in those services which formed part of the core business for the portfolio.

Councillor Gladys Healey thanked the Chief Executive and officer team for their work. In response to a question, officers provided information on the continuation of services for young carers and the initiative to develop an ID card for priority access to services as part of their role.

The Chief Officer (Social Services) gave a presentation on the risk register for the service portfolio which covered the following:

- Social Services Risks
- Financial
- Workforce
- External Regulation
- Adult Services
- Children's Services
- Adult and Children's Services

The overall risk position was positive with a reduction in the number of red risks since June and an increase in the number of risks that were decreasing or closed. Whilst spend on out of county placements remained a priority area, joint working with partners and the development of alternative solutions had helped to reduce spend during the period. Some risks were identified as key to recovery, such as meeting the needs of clients discharged from hospital which showed an improved trend as hospital discharges were now being processed effectively by colleagues in Health. In Children's Services, the team continued to work with Education to support those impacted by Adverse Childhood Experiences which remained a red risk, however the reduction in safeguarding referrals for children was noted.

The Chief Executive suggested that Members consider risks of ongoing concern and how best to report them to the Committee to inform the forward work programme.

The Chief Officer and Senior Managers provided an overview of the immediate strategic priorities for recovery which were recommended for inclusion in the Recovery Strategy. These included plans to extend provision of direct domiciliary care and improving the accommodation offer for care leavers by joint working with Housing colleagues.

In response to a comment by Councillor Hinds, officers spoke about the continuation of the Mockingbird project and a new initiative to identify future housing demand to support the transition of care leavers into communities.

As requested by the Chair, the Senior Manager: Safeguarding and Commissioning provided an update on testing at care homes in Flintshire and the process for allowing visitors which followed national guidance. She said that regular multi-agency meetings with care providers were well-attended and effective in sharing information and best practice. She went on to provide details of the task group on the transformation project to develop respite facilities at individual care homes in response to a question from Councillor Hinds.

The Committee was asked to support the recommendations including the immediate recovery priorities identified in the report, alongside agreeing with the risk analysis and mitigating actions. These were moved by Councillor Wisinger and seconded by Councillor Gladys Healey.

**RESOLVED:**

- (a) That the full set of immediate strategic priorities for recovery of the portfolio as set out in the report be agreed, together with the risk analysis and mitigating actions both live and planned; and
- (b) That a forward work programme for the Committee be rebuilt for the remainder of the 2020/21 Council year with recovery planning at its core.

**8. CARE INSPECTORATE WALES (CIW) ANNUAL PERFORMANCE REVIEW LETTER 2019/20**

The Chief Officer (Social Services) introduced a report on the content of the recent Annual Performance letter issued by the Care Inspectorate Wales (CIW) on 2 July 2020. The letter was based on evidence and performance data submitted by the authority throughout the year, together with the outcomes from inspections, focussed activities and self-evaluation returns. Due to the national emergency, it had not been possible for an annual performance review meeting to take place between CIW and officers.

Amongst the highlights in the report, the Senior Manager: Integrated Services, Lead Adults spoke about the success of 'Project Search' which was an employment support programme for young people with a learning disability.

The Chair asked about the potential for online reviews with looked after children using a platform such as 'Zoom'. The Senior Manager: Children said that digital meetings were being used more often and were well received by the children themselves.

Councillor Mackie referred to an earlier question and confirmed that the fostering panel was continuing as normal. On the findings of the Annual Performance Letter, he welcomed the positive feedback and congratulated the team on the quality of services. In response to queries, the Senior Manager: Children assured Members on the strength and quality of advice given by the Legal team on which he had no concerns. He also spoke about the placement of children in unregulated settings which had become an increasing national issue during the emergency period. He gave examples where such a situation was unavoidable due to all other options being exhausted and the lack of availability at the time, and that safeguards were put in place to support the individual. Discussions were currently taking place with Welsh Government on the potential for the Council to establish its own regulated settings to accommodate emergency placements.

The Chair welcomed the comprehensive response given by officers. Following positive feedback from Members in praising the Social Services team, she asked that the Facilitator formally write a letter on behalf of the Committee to thank the Chief Officer and his team.

The recommendations in the report were moved and seconded by Councillors Wisinger and Gladys Healey.

**RESOLVED:**

- (a) That the Committee is assured by the content of the Annual Performance letter and CIW's assessment of the authority's performance during the year 2019/20;
- (b) That the pause in the CIW Performance Review Plan for 2020-21 be noted and that CIW will notify the authority once the programme of inspection re-commences; and
- (c) That a letter of thanks be sent on behalf of the Committee to the Chief Officer (Social Services) and his team of officers for the positive outcomes from the report.

**9. 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 3.35 pm)

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**Chair**