

SOCIAL & HEALTH CARE OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
17 DECEMBER 2015

Minutes of the meeting of the Social & Health Care Overview & Scrutiny Committee of Flintshire County Council held in the Delyn Committee Room, County Hall, Mold on Thursday, 17 December 2015

PRESENT: Councillor Andy Dunbobbin (Vice-Chair in the Chair)

Councillors: Veronica Gay, Hilary Isherwood, Brian Lloyd, Mike Lowe, Hilary McGuill, Dave Mackie, Mike Reece, Ian Smith and David Wisinger

APOLOGY: Councillor Carol Ellis

CONTRIBUTORS: Councillor Christine Jones, Cabinet Member for Social Services; Chief Officer (Social Services); Senior Manager: Commissioning and Performance; Senior Manager: Integrated Services, Lead Adults; Workforce Development Team Manager; Information Officer; Occupational Therapist Senior Practitioner, First Contact team; and Third Sector Co-ordinator, Flintshire Local Voluntary Council

IN ATTENDANCE: Environment & Social Care Overview & Scrutiny Facilitator and Committee Officer

46. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor Dave Mackie declared a personal interest in the following items as he was a member of the Community Health Council and the Fostering Panel:

- Agenda Item 4 - Social Services Wellbeing Act Update
- Agenda Item 5 - Q2 Mid Year Improvement Plan Monitoring Report

Councillor Hilary McGuill declared a personal interest on Agenda Item 5 as a family member had been the recipient of a Disabled Facilities Grant.

47. MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 5 November 2015 had been circulated with the agenda.

Accuracy

On Declarations of Interest, the Chairman clarified that he was a member of the Adoption Panel and that Councillor Dave Mackie was a member of the Fostering Panel.

Matters Arising

Councillor Hilary McGuill asked that the criteria for the new national eligibility framework be shared before March 2016, along with the current criteria. The Senior Manager: Commissioning and Performance agreed to share the current criteria and would circulate the new criteria when this had been received from Welsh Government. Councillor McGuill asked that the two sets of information be provided in the same format to allow for comparison.

On rota visits, the Chief Officer confirmed that visits had taken place to at least three private sector homes and had been well received by Members.

RESOLVED:

That, subject to the amendment, the minutes be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

48. SOCIAL SERVICES WELLBEING ACT UPDATE

The Chief Officer introduced an update on the fundamental changes in the policy and legislative framework which underpinned the Council's work to prepare for implementation of the Social Services and Wellbeing (Wales) Act from 6 April 2016. The legislation was important not only to Social Services but also to wider services and its extensive scope included new responsibilities for councils and health boards on transforming service delivery. The legislation would be implemented through a phased approach and would change expectations between service providers and service users by providing support at an earlier stage to encourage longer independent living.

The Senior Manager: Commissioning and Performance said that the Council was well placed to prepare for the incoming Act and detailed the key principles, as set out in the report, to be implemented on completion of the formal consultations. These were linked to the 'What Matters' assessment, the development of the Single Point of Access (SPOA) system and the new regional Dewis portal. To explain more about the aim of the Act, the Committee was shown a brief animation clip entitled 'What matters to you - matters to us' available on the Social Services Improvement Agency (SSIA) website.

Although some details were still awaited from the Welsh Government (WG), the Council had already begun preparations through a range of training sessions aimed at raising basic awareness with staff with more targeted training for practitioners. The Workforce Development Manager encouraged Members to access details on the Act via the Care Council for Wales information and learning hub, of which a link would be made available. She spoke about the Council's involvement in the SSIA pilot initiative on outcome focussed training and the rollout of nationally commissioned training modules in February 2016.

The Occupational Therapist Senior Practitioner from the First Contact and Intake team delivered a presentation on actions which had been taken to address the increase in referral rates and decreased resources. She described

improvements to the team structure and the trialling of integrated assessment documentation which had been well received, and gave example case studies where the team had worked with individuals to identify and resolve underlying issues to achieve the outcomes expressed by those individuals.

The Information Officer provided details on the Dewis portal which offered a range of information on the requirements of the Act and shared copies of newsletters on the system and SPOA. The Dewis portal had been live since September 2015 and would be publicly launched in February 2016 to coincide with further information on the Act. A link to the Dewis Cymru website was included in the report and Members were offered the opportunity for a practical demonstration after the meeting.

Whilst Councillor Dave Mackie welcomed the layout of the report in clarifying the 11 key proposed changes from the Act, he pointed out that links to background documents should be accessible to allow proper consideration. He felt that presentations should be based on information already given to Members rather than new information, and that the length of time allocated should allow for Members to scrutinise and raise questions.

In acknowledgement, the Chief Officer stressed the importance of presenting different elements of information on this highly complex legislation, especially as Member training on the new Act had not been well attended. In response to comments on the initial enquiry form used for the What Matters assessment, it was explained that this information was input on the PARIS system and had been printed for Members to view.

It was explained by the Facilitator that a longer presentation had been agreed to accommodate the range of the information needed to equip Members ahead of the implementation of the Act.

Councillor Christine Jones felt that the information had been well presented and summarised as much as possible in anticipation of the Act which was extremely comprehensive, however a further session could be arranged if Members wished. On the content of the presentation, she pointed out that information on Dewis had been included in the report and that SPOA had previously been reported to the Committee.

In response to comments on accessing electronic links to embedded documents, Councillor Veronica Gay asked if IT colleagues could be requested to resolve this on Members' iPads. The Facilitator agreed to pass on the comments made as the new report template was still being piloted.

Councillor Hilary McGuill raised concerns about the need for cross-county links and the commitment to respond promptly to crisis situations. The Chief Officer referred to the separation of systems between England and Wales and the need for continued communications on the co-ordination of work with Cheshire West. Councillor McGuill also suggested that the Llys Eleanor gymnasium could be utilised by voluntary organisations to conduct sessions.

In response to concerns about the initial assessment process, the Senior Manager: Integrated Services/Lead Adults gave assurance that rather than just a tick-box exercise, skilled officers carried out this conversation by telephone or in person, as demonstrated in the example case study. In response to positive comments on the effectiveness of the Crisis Intervention Team, officers referred to the integration of the team which was based alongside SPOA which allowed for risks to be identified and the appropriate support to be deployed. On links with the voluntary sector, the Flintshire Local Voluntary Council (FLVC) Co-ordinator, who had been seconded to the Crisis Team, explained more about this joint working including signposting to other organisations to help people live independently. A Red Cross representative within the Reablement Team was also able to work with individuals, thus maximising Occupational Therapist resources.

Councillor Hilary Isherwood felt that there should be a commitment from WG to provide funding to support the new legislation and that there should be education from a young age to encourage everyone to take ownership of their own health, to adopt a balanced healthy lifestyle and to engage with communities on helping older residents. She also felt that the Council could change its way of working to adapt to the needs of older residents, for example within the Housing service, for adaptations to be in place within properties at the start of the process.

Councillor Jones gave assurance that work on the Strategic Housing and Regeneration Programme included the provision of homes for the future. She added that the Council worked alongside the education and health sector on various strands of the Health and Wellbeing Strategy.

The Chief Officer said that although some progress had been made on funding for social care, there were still significant pressures, including those arising from the Act, which demonstrated the need to push for continued funding.

Councillor McGuill reported a problem with the identification of postcodes on the Dewis system, an issue which had previously been raised.

Councillor Mike Lowe thanked officers for the informative presentation and asked about signposting of information. Officers replied that the Care Council for Wales website contained useful information for the public and practitioners and would be promoted through an advertising campaign, although traditional means of communication could also be used to access information. On referrals, Members were advised that GPs were able to email details directly to SPOA.

RESOLVED:

- (a) That the overall assessment that we are well placed in preparing for the implementation of the Act; and

- (b) That the Committee receive regular updates about implementing the Act and gives further consideration to how elected Members can support the core principles and key messages of the Act.

49. Q2 MID YEAR IMPROVEMENT PLAN MONITORING REPORT

The Facilitator introduced the regular update report to consider progress towards the delivery of the impacts set out in the 2015/16 Improvement Plan, focussing on the areas of under-performance relevant to the Committee during the second quarter. The only red risk area was where performance on the average number of calendar days taken to deliver a Disabled Facilities Grant (DFG) for children had slightly exceeded the target.

Councillor Hilary McGuill referred to changing needs over time and felt that a better approach was for more cost-effective responsive intervention by Occupational Therapists to help families with a disabled child. The Chief Officer agreed and said that alternative proportionate options were explored, as opposed to traditional approaches, to respond to the needs of individuals. On the performance outturn, he reported that there had been some improvement despite the number of complex cases.

The Senior Practitioner added that Occupational Therapists tended to adopt a more creative approach as part of their everyday work and shared information with peer groups.

In response to questions from Councillor McGuill, the Senior Manager: Integrated Services, Lead Adults explained that the red risk had not met its target due to legal aspects on property ownership rather than the assessment process. She was aware of a list of DFG adaptations for adults but would check if a similar list was kept for children.

Councillor Dave Mackie asked if future reports could include reasons for where the target had not been met. The Chief Officer agreed to relay this to colleagues. On family support, Councillor Mackie reiterated concerns raised by schools on the need for parents to ensure their children were toilet trained before attending nursery, and the impact this had on school resources. Councillor Jones said that the support available from Flying Start worked well in those particular areas and the Senior Manager pointed out the role of health visitors in supporting parents. In response to further queries, explanation was provided on progress with the integration of teams and availability of confidential working areas in the Flint office.

On safeguarding, Councillor McGuill welcomed the integration of adults and children's services but questioned whether effective communication channels were in place, following an email recently circulated. She stressed the importance of preparing children in care for adulthood to ensure they were equipped with the life skills needed for that transition period so that they were able to cope when support was later withdrawn.

As a kinship carer, the Chairman commended the different elements of support given to him and his family.

The Chief Officer said that the Safeguarding Unit was highly regarded as had been recognised during the recent inspection of Children's Services. He explained that services for adults and children were co-located in the Flint office which enabled easier communication. On Children's Services, he said that the Authority was doing as much as any other to seek improvements and share learning, and that there was a balance of support for children in care to prepare them for the wider world.

The Senior Manager said that pathway planning involved looking at the individual and developing their ability to cope, and that more work on individual resilience would be done as required by the new Act.

On the Dementia Respect Empathy and Dignity (RED) project, Councillor Veronica Gay expressed concern that only two GP surgeries had signed up from Flintshire. The Senior Managers gave assurance that Flintshire GPs were supporting people with Dementia and that the project would need time to achieve its aim of building up a network of volunteers.

RESOLVED:

- (a) That the report be noted; and
- (b) That the comments on the 'red' risk areas be referred to the Corporate Resources Overview & Scrutiny who are responsible for the overview and monitoring of performance.

50. ROTA VISITS

Councillors Dave Mackie and Hilary McGuill gave a positive report on their visits to independent sector care homes. They praised the expertise and knowledge of Nicki Kenealy and referred to the importance of these homes in providing aftercare for people leaving hospital. Councillor Mackie also gave positive feedback on the support provided to people attending the short-term care houses for learning disabilities at Hafod and Woodlee, and on the management of this service (Jayne Appleby).

Councillor Christine Jones spoke in support of her visit to The Cottage Nursing Home in Mold.

RESOLVED:

That the information be noted.

51. FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME

The Facilitator introduced a report to enable the Committee to consider the Forward Work Programme. The following was agreed:

- The CSSIW Annual Report to be prioritised first on the agenda for the meeting on 21 January 2016.
- Confirmation that the Committee would meet to finalise the 2016/17 budget on Monday 25 January 2016 at 2pm.
- Members of the Committee would be invited to attend the Organisational Change Overview & Scrutiny Committee meeting in February 2016 for a report on alternative delivery models.
- The two Children's Services related items scheduled for 3 March 2016 to be combined into one report.
- A working group on the Annual Council Reporting Framework (ACRF) would need to be arranged prior to consideration of this item at the Committee's meeting in April 2016.
- Representatives of Betsi Cadwaladr University Health Board to attend a special meeting of the Committee on Wednesday, 8 June 2016 at 10am.

The Chief Officer advised that this would be the last time that the ACRF would be presented, due to a change to the regulations next year.

RESOLVED:

That the Forward Work Programme be updated accordingly.

52. MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC AND PRESS IN ATTENDANCE

There were no members of the press or public in attendance.

(The meeting started at 10.00am and ended at 12.00pm)

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Chair