

SOCIAL & HEALTH CARE OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
27 APRIL 2023

Minutes of the Social & Health Care Overview & Scrutiny Committee of Flintshire County Council held as a hybrid meeting on Thursday, 27 April 2023

PRESENT: Councillor Hilary McGuill (Chair)

Councillors: Mel Buckley, Tina Claydon, Carol Ellis, Gladys Healey, David Mackie, Debbie Owen and Linda Thomas

SUBSTITUTIONS: Councillors Rob Davies (Marion Bateman) and Teresa Carberry (Paul Cunningham)
Councillor Marion Bateman will replace Councillor Rob Davies for all future meetings

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; Senior Manager Children and Workforce; Senior Manager for Adults; Commissioning Manager and Planning and Development Officer

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

58. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST (INCLUDING WHIPPING DECLARATIONS)

None.

59. COUNCIL PLAN 2023-28

The Chief Officer (Social Services) informed members that the Council Plan had already been considered by other Committees of the Council as well as by Cabinet and their view was subject to any comments made at this Committee. The high-level structure of the Council Plan 2023-28 was agreed in October 2022 and consisted of seven priorities, well-being objectives and a number of sub priorities.

He gave insight to the priorities relevant to this Committee which were:-

- Independent Living
- Safeguarding
- Direct Provision to support people closer to home
- Local Dementia Strategy
- A Well-connected, Safe and Clean Local Environment

In response to the Chair, the Chief Officer (Social Services) said that he wasn't privy to any plans for the use of the Tri Ffordd site and was unsure if a decision had been made but he believed that it did come under the ownership of Flintshire County Council and confirmed that Mocking Bird would remain part of the key plans in terms of fostering services.

Councillor Mackie sought clarification as to why target figures were lower than the baseline figures in the report and in response the Chief Officer (Social Services) agreed that they should be challenging with their targets and confirmed that they were set by himself and his team with views sought by Committee and corporate colleagues when questioned by Councillor Ellis. He said that he would review the figures where the targets were lower than the baseline data with his team and circulate figures to Members by the end of the week.

The recommendation in the report was moved and seconded by Councillor Ellis and Councillor Carberry.

RESOLVED:

That the Committee supports the Council Plan 2023-28 Part 1 and 2 documents that outline the actions, measures and risks that underpin the priorities, sub-priorities and wellbeing objectives of the Council Plan 2023-28 subject to the targets being reviewed and updated information being circulated to Members of the Committee.

60. SOCIAL SERVICES ANNUAL REPORT

The Planning and Development Officer explained that the Annual Report was a requirement of the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014 and Regulation and Inspection of Social Care (Wales) Act 2016. She explained that the report they were currently working on covered the period from March 2022 until April 2023 and set out the Council's Improvement journey over that time and the priorities for the coming year and would be published in the same format as the 2021/22. She informed Members that they were waiting for further information but there was a likelihood that the guidance would change so the format of next year's report may look very different than in previous years. She advised that once the draft report had been prepared it would be presented to this Committee on 8th June 2023 with the aim that it was approved in July 2023 ready for publication and available to the public in both Welsh and English in September 2023.

The Commissioning Manager clarified the concerns of the Members by advising that the meeting today was not reporting on previous priorities. Instead the aim was to establish if they were happy that priorities identified by the Portfolio moving into next year were correct before they were finally written up in the same format as in previous years using the headings that had been proposed which were themed on the population needs assessment, older people, carers, children and young people etc. She reiterated what the Planning & Development Officer had said about the draft report being presented to the meeting in June for Members' approval which would be clearly laid out with what they had achieved alongside the priorities moving into next year, but stressed that amendments could only be made up until when it went to Cabinet in July to meet the publication deadline. She explained that other priorities would be picked up during the normal working practice and would probably be reported in next year's report.

The recommendation in the report was moved by Councillor Mackie and seconded by Councillor Claydon.

RESOLVED:

That following review, Members approved the report outline and priorities for next year with a final draft to be presented to the Committee in June.

61. AUDIT WALES DIRECT PAYMENTS FOR ADULT SOCIAL CARE

The Senior Manager - Safeguarding and Commissioning introduced the report stressing that it was an audit of the general direct payment provision on all 22 Local Authorities in Wales written by Audit Wales in April 2022 and not a report on Direct Payments in Flintshire Adult Social Services. She explained that the report looked into how direct payments had helped people live independently, sustained people's wellbeing and how they had improved a person's quality of life. She emphasised that while the report was generic in some ways, it was specific in others and went through Flintshire's response to the 10 recommendations as set out in the report.

The Senior Manager for Adults responded to an issue raised by the Chair concerning the stigma of direct payments by saying that this was an ongoing piece of work which was high on their agenda and that they were currently pushing for carers to receive the direct payments in their own right to enable them to carry on providing support for their loved ones. She also advised that she was in the process of explaining across the authority how direct payments could be used in the carer's own name as they felt it was important for the person to have the support they wanted from the person they wanted it provided by.

Councillor Mackie stated that Audit Wales had not recognised in the report the work that Flintshire had carried out and said that they should have put forward some of the processes that had been developed by Flintshire staff to show other councils the best approach as one solution did not fit every case. The Senior Manager - Safeguarding and Commissioning responded and added to a further remark from Councillor Ellis about the simplicity of the system that Flintshire had in place. She was unable to comment on what other authorities did but said that there was interest out there as they had been contacted by other authorities about their systems, processes and web pages. She put the success of the service down to what the team had done by listening and putting into practice the feedback they had received from recipients of the direct payments. The Chief Officer (Social Services) added that he also had been contacted by a North Wales Authority who had shown interest in using their direct payment portal.

The recommendations in the report were moved by Councillor Mackie and seconded by Councillor Buckley.

RESOLVED:

- (a) That Members note the recommendations in the Audit Wales report on Direct Payments for Adult Social Care;
- (b) That Members agree the actions in the Flintshire Response to the national report; and

- (c) That Members note that Flintshire County Council are awaiting a response from the Audit Wales to their feedback.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT (ACCESS TO INFORMATION) ACT 1985 - TO CONSIDER THE EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC

Exclusion of the press and public was moved by Councillor Buckley and seconded by Councillor Mackie.

RESOLVED:

That the press and public be excluded for the remainder of the meeting for the following items by virtue of exempt information under paragraph(s) 13 of Part 4 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended).

62. LOOKED AFTER CHILDREN PLACEMENTS

A presentation was provided by the Senior Manager (Children and Workforce) which covered the range of settings that looked after children were supported and the bespoke arrangements that were put in place for children with more complex needs.

Following the presentation, officers responded to questions that were raised by Members.

The recommendations, as amended, were moved by Councillor Buckley and seconded by Councillor Mackie.

RESOLVED:

- (a) That the Committee is assured of the approach in the arrangements to support looked after children; and
- (b) That a further Part 2 report is presented to the Committee with the outcome of the review and impact on the Flintshire County Council local policy practice at a future date.

61. MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC AND PRESS IN ATTENDANCE

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

(The meeting started at 9.30 am and ended at 10.55 am)

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Chair