

SOCIAL CARE & HEALTH SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Wednesday, 22 January 2020

PRESENT: Councillor G. Thomas (Chair)

Councillors:

S.M. Allen, K.V. Broom, I.W. Davies, K.Davies, R.E. Evans, W.T. Evans, A.L. Fox, G.R. Jones, M.J.A. Lewis, K. Lloyd, E.M.J.G. Schiavone and D.T. Williams

Also in attendance:

Councillor J. Tremlett, Executive Board Member for Social Care and Health

The following Officers were in attendance:

A. Bracey, Head of Mental Health and Learning Disabilities
J. Thomas, Interim Head of Integrated Services
R. Hemingway, Head of Financial Services
A. Thomas, Group Accountant
R. Page, Senior Business Support Manager
S. Sauro, Performance, Analysis & Systems Manager
E. Bryer, Democratic Services Officer

Chamber, County Hall, Carmarthen. SA31 1JP. - 10.00 - 11.45 am

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

There were no apologies for absence.

2. DECLARATIONS OF PERSONAL INTERESTS INCLUDING ANY PARTY WHIPS ISSUED IN RELATION TO ANY AGENDA ITEM.

Councillor	Minute No (s)	Nature of Interest
Ken Lloyd	5. Communities Department Draft Business Plan 2019/20 – 2022.	Close family member is a carer in the Shared Lives Scheme.

There were no declarations of prohibited party whips.

3. PUBLIC QUESTIONS (NONE RECEIVED)

The Chair advised that no public questions had been received.

4. REVENUE BUDGET STRATEGY CONSULTATION 2020/21 to 2022/23

The Committee considered the Revenue Budget Strategy 2020/21 to 2022/23 (Appendix A) which had been endorsed by the Executive Board for consultation purposes at its meeting on the 6th January 2020. The report provided Members with the current view of the Revenue Budget for 2020/21 together with indicative figures for the 2022/23 financial years. The report was based on officers' projections of spending requirements taking into account the provisional settlement issued by Welsh Government on 16th December 2019.

The Committee also considered the following detailed budget information appended to the Strategy relevant to its remit:

- Appendix A(i) – Efficiency summary for the Social Care & Health Service
- Appendix A(ii) – Growth Pressures summary for the Social Care & Health Service
- Appendix B – Budget monitoring report for the Social Care & Health Service
- Appendix C – Charging Digest for the Social Care & Health Service

The Head of Financial Services provided an overview of the report. Key points covered included:

The announced provisional settlement represented an increase of 4.3% as an average across Wales on the 19/20 settlement, Carmarthenshire had received an increase in Welsh Government grant of 4.4% (£11.5m) taking the Aggregate External Finance to £274. 159m for 2020/21. New responsibilities and transfers into the settlement included funding for Teachers Pensions and Pay, which were only partially funded within the settlement and accounted for £5.8m or 2.2% of the overall funding increase.

Details of the Welsh Government Service Specific Grants were also provided with many remaining at a similar level. The Committee was advised that the social care workforce grant had been increased from £30m to £40m across Wales (c £600K for Carmarthenshire). Further clarification was being sought to understand whether the increase could be used in full towards unavoidable service pressures.

There was a forecast variance of £3.5m overspend for the Authority with £1m overspend for the Communities Department against the budget areas of Older People, Physical Disabilities and Learning Disabilities.

The budget proposals assumed the full delivery of all savings proposals, together with the identification and delivery of the shortfall in savings proposals for the 2021/22 and 2022/23 financial years. Additional cost reduction would need to be identified and/or larger council tax increases agreed to deliver a balanced budget for the latter two years. Given the scale of the pressures and forecasted budget gap, proposed council tax increases had been maintained at the previous Medium-Term Financial Plan (MTFP) levels of 4.89% in each of the three financial years which offered some mitigation to the savings proposals.

The Head of Financial Services advised that due to delays in receiving the provisional settlement, the consequential impact on Welsh Government's budget finalisation and publication had been equally delayed. Therefore, the final settlement was due to be published on 25th February 2020 and the County Council would set the final budget on 3rd March 2020.

It was also noted that members of the Committee had recently attended budget consultation events which had provided them with an opportunity to ask questions and seek clarification on various aspects of the budget.

The following questions/issues were raised on the report:

- It was asked if the validation figure of 5% cost increase in gas and electricity was realistic.
The Committee was advised that this was an estimate based on trends and the fact the Authority was part of a national procured contract.
- Clarification was sought regarding the workforce grant and when the authority would know if the grant could be used in full.
The Head of Financial Services advised that the Authority was waiting for clarification from Welsh Government and informed the Committee that it was not uncommon to receive specific grants after the start of the financial year.
- To avoid duplication of queries it was suggested by the Committee that it would be useful to be provided with a summary of comments / feedback provided by members during the budget consultation seminars.
The Head of Financial Services advised that he would consider how this could be done for future consultations.

UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED that:

- 4.1 The 2020/21 – 2022/23 Revenue Budget Strategy Consultation be received;**
- 4.2 The Charging Digest for the Social Care & Health Service, as detailed in Appendix C to the report, be endorsed.**

5. COMMUNITIES DEPARTMENTAL DRAFT BUSINESS PLAN 2020 - 2023

[NOTE: Cllr. K. Lloyd had earlier declared an interest in this item].

The Committee considered the Communities Departmental Draft Business Plan 2020 – 2023 in relation to those services falling within its remit:

- Care and Support Services
- Mental Health, Learning and Disability & Safeguarding
- Integrated Services
- Commissioning Services.

It was noted that further work would be undertaken on the draft business plan following comments and engagement by the Committee and Executive Board Members. Additionally, feedback from staff groups to date had indicated greater emphasis would be welcomed on integrated wellbeing actions through divisional plans together with ensuring the sustainability of services through different methods in the face of growing demand.

The following issues/questions were raised on the report: -

- It was asked what work was being done on developing the prevention agenda.
The Interim Head of Integrated Services advised that there was a focus on prevention and promotion of independence and that the Authority was engaged in a significant amount of work in this area. Examples provided included: the use of technology, Community Responders, working with GP

practices, CUSP project, development of StayWell plans in conjunction with service users, re-engagement with the community and the Couch to 5k initiative.

- The Committee asked for further information regarding the CUSP project. The Interim Head of Integrated Services advised that the CSUP project was started about 18 months ago in collaboration with the third sector. The CUSP service aimed to support people over the age of 18 years to maintain independence or become independent. Advice and support was provided on whatever was significant to the individual and could include areas such as financial management and gardening. The CUSP service is provided free of charge however some users may choose to purchase the services of private companies following referrals. The Head of Mental Health and Learning Disabilities advised that there was focus on the preventative agenda and advised that when someone finds themselves in a difficult position, they need to speak to someone as early as possible to prevent escalation. The crisis centre (Twilight Sanctuary) had been opened in Llanelli to help these people.
- It was asked how the public were being made aware of the service provided by the Twilight Sanctuary. The Head of Mental Health and Learning Disabilities advised that there had been a lot publicity and that the service would be advertised wider when the service was fully established. The Committee was also advised that there was a possibility that a centre would be opened in Carmarthen.
- An update was asked regarding how joint working with partners such as the Health Board and the third sector was progressing. The Head of Mental Health and Learning Disabilities advised that historically there had been concerns however, partnerships were now working well. Committee was advised that Carmarthenshire was very involved with the transformation programme and was working closely with the Health Board. While work was continuing, it was not at the pace hoped for however projects were aligned with the transformation vision of a single point of access for Mental Health. Joint funding was challenging but all parties had worked together to resolve. It was stated that significant progress had been made despite the challenges.
- An update was requested regarding the availability of acute beds as current shortage across Wales resulted in increased pressure on patients, carers and staff. The Head of Mental Health and Learning Disabilities advised that acute beds were not always the right place for individuals, however it was acknowledged that there was a need for these beds. This issue was constantly raised with the Health Board and the Twilight Sanctuary was investigating alternative solutions to the problem.
- The subject of the police service dealing with an excessive number of welfare issues was raised. The Committee was advised that figures had reduced and data was available to support this. It was acknowledged that being in police custody was not the most appropriate place however, if they were not in custody it would also cause issues for the individual until more appropriate service could be provided.
- One of the identified risks in the business plan was that the Health Board had stopped contributing to S.117 placements in residential care. The Committee asked how much of a problem this was for the Authority.

The Executive Board Member for Social Care and Health advised that there was a legal agreement across Wales that the Health Boards contributed, however in Carmarthenshire the Health Board had stopped their 50% contribution for residential care for older people services. Negotiations were on-going with the Health Board. The Head of Mental Health and Learning Disabilities advised that the Health Board argue that the support is being provided by visiting nurses and that residential placements was not necessary. It was hoped that this issue could be rectified with taking legal action.

- Reference was made to the Public Accountability Measures and the rate of people kept in hospital while waiting for Social Care. It was asked if this was due to the number of staff vacancies.

The Interim Head of Integrated Services stated that vacancies was not the cause and explained that the timing of how the figures were validated only showed a snap shot for that timeframe. The Committee was re-assured that the Authority had a good patient flow from hospital and currently there was only one patient waiting for care.

- Concern was expressed regarding the satisfaction results for adults satisfied with their care and also for carers that felt supported. The Performance, Analysis and Systems Manager advised that the figures were not bad and that the wording of some of the survey questions were ambiguous. The Q4 Complaints and Compliments report would provide more information regarding the survey results. The recent CIW report also confirmed that users were happy with the service. The Interim Head of Integrated Services advised that Welsh Government had stopped the survey however the Authority would continue with surveys to enable any issues to be monitored and resolved by the Authority. It was also stated that 84.6% was a good satisfaction result. The Committee was reminded that the commissioning team undertook stringent monitoring and review of care provisions.
- Reference was made to a recent Community Health Council meeting, where a presentation was provided on the discharge process. Officers were asked to provide further information regarding the process. The Interim Head of Integrated Services confirmed that progress was being made on the 4 pathways and that further information would be circulated to the Committee.

UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED that the Communities Departmental Business Plan 2020 – 2023 be received.

6. REVENUE & CAPITAL BUDGET MONITORING REPORT 2019/20

The Committee considered the Revenue and Capital Budget Monitoring Report in relation to the Social Care and Health Service, which provided an update on the latest budgetary position as at 31st October 2019, in respect of the 2019/20 financial year.

The Social Care & Health Service was projecting an overspend of £986K on the revenue budget and net variance of £4K against the 2019/20 approved capital budget.

Amongst the questions / observations raised during consideration of the report were the following:

Appendix A – Summary Position

- It was noted that the August figure of £816K overspend had increased to £986K in October. It was asked if there was an indication of the current position.

The Group Accountant advised that there are a variety of factors to consider but that previous years' trends would indicate the possibility of a reduction in the figure.

Appendix B – Main Variances

- Reference was made to the overspend on agency staff and how this was also an issue for the Health Board.
The Head of Mental Health and Learning Disabilities confirmed that this was a particular issue for residential care, however a significant amount of work had been done in this area and that a reduction had been seen. Agency staff would only typically be used if first line services were at risk.
- Reference was made to the increase of Direct Payments for physical disabilities. It was asked how payments were being monitored to ensure that payments remained relevant.

The Senior Business Support Manager advised that care management reviews were undertaken. The Audit and Compliance Team ensured payments were being used correctly and any issues identified raised with care management. The Committee was informed that a direct payments report was in the process of being developed.

- It was asked if there was evidence that direct payments were being misused and if clients were being taken advantage of.
The Senior Business Support Manager advised that Direct Payments was higher risk than engaging with regulated providers, however there were safeguards in place to limit risks.
- Clarification was asked regarding the £1,000 administration fee charged to individuals who were self-funding residential placements.
The Senior Business Support Manager advised that the proposal is yet to be approved by Council. The fee would be an annual fee and that neighbouring authorities were already charging. The fee would be charged to individuals who were self-funding but not confident in procuring the services themselves. Under the Social Care and Well-Being Act when the Local Authority is approached, people are entitled to have their placement commissioned through the Authority. The Authority had agreed sustainable rates with providers however potentially the charges to service users could be more through the Authority than through commissioning directly with service providers.

Appendix F – Detailed Variances

- Officers were asked how the Authority ensured that service users weren't suffering due to the reduction in double handed care.
The Interim Head of Integrated Services advised that multi-disciplinary teams undertook assessments after discharge from hospital as it was found that when service users returned home their needs were different. If it was assessed that the same level of support was still required, then it would remain in place. Advancement with new equipment had also contributed to the reduction of double handed care as often they could be used by one

carer instead of two. Reassurance was given that the care provided was not financially driven and was completely care driven.

The Group Accountant advised that all budget saving proposals suggested by Service Managers were professionally and legally compliant with care standards and go through a process of robust challenge to ensure that they are achievable.

RESOLVED that the report be received.

7. EXPLANATION FOR NON-SUBMISSION OF SCRUTINY REPORT

The Committee received an explanation for the non-submission of the following scrutiny reports:

- Learning Disability Strategy (2018/2023)
- Services and Support for Children and Young People (Multi Agency Forum Update)
- 5-year Capital Programme Budget Consultation

The Committee was advised that the Services and Support for Children and Young People (Multi Agency Forum Update) would be more appropriate for the Education & Children Scrutiny Committee. The Head of Mental Health and Learning Disabilities was waiting for confirmation from the Chair on whether he was happy to add the item to their Forward Work Programme.

RESOLVED that the explanation for the non-submission be noted.

8. SOCIAL CARE & HEALTH SCRUTINY COMMITTEE ACTIONS & REFERRALS UPDATE

The Committee considered the update report detailing progress in relation to actions, requests and referrals emerging from previous meetings.

UNANAMOUSLY RESOLVED that the report be received.

9. FORTHCOMING ITEMS

RESOLVED that the list of forthcoming items to be considered at the next scheduled meeting on the 5th March, 2020 be noted.

10. MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON THE 21ST NOVEMBER, 2019

UNANAMOUSLY RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on the 21st November, 2019 be signed as a correct record.

The Committee was asked to note that the Chair had received excellent feedback regarding the standard of care provided by Y Bwthyn care home.

CHAIR

DATE