

JOINT EDUCATION & CHILDREN AND SOCIAL CARE & HEALTH SCRUTINY COMMITTEE 18th MAY 2015

(NOTE: THESE MINUTES ARE SUBJECT TO CONFIRMATION BY THE COMMITTEE AT ITS NEXT MEETING)

Present: Councillor J.E. Williams (Chair)

Education & Children Scrutiny Committee

Councillors: D.J.R. Bartlett, C. Campbell, J.M. Charles, T. Davies, W.G. Hopkins, P. Hughes-Griffiths, J.D. James, G.O. Jones, P.E.M. Jones, D.W.H. Richards, T. Theophilus.

Social Care & Health Scrutiny Committee

Councillors: S.M. Allen, S.M. Caiach, S.L. Davies, H.A.L. Evans, H.I. Jones, E. Morgan, B.A.L. Roberts, E.G. Thomas, G. Thomas (Chair), J. Williams, J.S. Williams.

Also in attendance:

Councillor J. Tremlett – Executive Board Member for Social Care & Health

The following officers were in attendance:

Mr. J. Morgan – Director of Community Services
Mr. R. Sully – Director of Education & Children
Mr. G. Morgans – Head of Education Services
Mr. A. Rees – Head of Learner Programmes
Mr. S. Smith – Head of Children's Services
Mrs. H. Smith – Executive Support Manager
Mrs. S. Sauro – Performance Review Officer
Ms. B. Dolan – Senior Consultant

Venue: Spilman Street Chamber, Carmarthen (10:00 – 11:05am)

1. TO APPOINT A CHAIR FOR THE MEETING

It was UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED to appoint Councillor J.E. Williams as chair for the meeting.

2. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors I.W. Davies, D.J.R. Llewellyn and Mr. C. Brown (Parent Governor).

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Apologies were also received from Mrs. V. Kenny, the Roman Catholic Church Representative on the Education & Children Scrutiny Committee.

3. DECLARATIONS OF PERSONAL INTEREST

There were no declarations of personal interest.

4. DECLARATION OF PROHIBITED PARTY WHIPS

There were no declarations of prohibited party whips.

5. DRAFT ANNUAL REPORT OF THE STATUTORY DIRECTOR OF SOCIAL SERVICES ON THE EFFECTIVENESS OF SOCIAL CARE SERVICES IN CARMARTHENSHIRE 2014/15

The Director of Community Services presented his annual report on the effectiveness of the Social Care Services in the county. The Committee considered the report which gave an overview of the progress made on areas identified for improvement in last year's report and highlights those areas to be developed in the current year. It noted that there is a statutory requirement for the Director of Social Services to report annually to the Council on the delivery, performance and risks as well as plans for the improvement of the whole range of Social Services. The Committee welcomed the comprehensive report which showed the achievements across the services as well the challenges and priorities for the future.

The following issues were raised during consideration of the report:

A question was asked for the reasons behind the increased expenditure on Adults and Learning Disabilities Services over the years. Concerns were also expressed about year on year over spends and consequent impact on other services and departments. The Director of Community Services advised that there were a number of factors including; the increasing number of people needing services, a greater level of complex and profound disabilities, more complex and changing needs with longer life expectancy, fragmented family circumstances and a higher level of expectation. The new Older People Strategy that would be developed in the coming months was designed to offer options and choices for Members to make decisions whilst understanding the financial consequences. His role was to advise what is needed to meet increased responsibilities and statutory duties going forward.

It was noted that expenditure on Children's Services had decreased in recent years. It was asked if this was impacting adversely on social worker teams. The Head of Children's Services highlighted a significant increase in the level of referrals over

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the last year; up by one third. He advised that an independent consultant had looked at frontline duty services and had concluded that these were being more responsive. 99% of referrals went on for further assessment. More supportive family services were being provided and consequently the number of Looked After Children (LAC) was reducing; leading to reductions in costs.

The drop in Adult Services assessments during 2014/15 was queried, given less than half of referrals had been assessed. The Director of Community Services noted that the report was a draft and that the End of Year data had not yet been finalised. The referral and assessment process had been redesigned to prevent people undergoing complex and lengthy assessments that concluded they were not eligible for services. People were instead signposted elsewhere as appropriate. Assessments were now performed where there was a high level of need. Care plan reviewing was however an area that needed improving as the current systems were not able to deal with the pace of changing need.

It was asked if there was duplication in the regional and local Safeguarding Children Boards (SCB). The Director of Community Services that the regional Board was statutory. CYSUR covered the Mid and West Wales region, a large rural area. The practicalities of providing services across the region had resulted in a local safeguarding arrangement which was chaired by the Head of Children's Services. A Junior local SCB had also been established. He also met with all Lead Members across the region so they could input into the process. The regional arrangement was not however a utopia for decreasing costs across the region.

Clarification was requested about the role of the Relevant Person's Representatives (RPR's) in relation to Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards (DoLS). The Director of Community Services stated that DoLS had developed out of a case law precedent which had increased the level of assessments needed. This had needed to be managed in an absence of national guidance therefore the Authority had developed some working tools. CSSIW had carried out a health check across Wales during the year with a positive report for Carmarthenshire. He would check the precise nature of the RPR's role and circulate to the Committee's following the meeting.

It was asked why Direct Payments (DP's) were increasing and if these could be misused. The Director of Community Services advised that people could employ their care provision directly following assessments. This allowed more choice for the individual and less cost for the Authority. DP's were audited by a third party organisation and any funding that was not used was reclaimed.

Reablement was referred to and further detail requested. The Director of Community Services advised that there were positive outcomes for people benefiting from the service as it helped remove that fatalism and depression that getting older could generate. There was a correlation between hospital admissions and rapid deterioration in older people without some form of reablement. The

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interim Head of Integrated Services was looking at best practice as there was a range of models.

Further information was requested about the Night Care and Rapid Response Service. The Director of Community Services stated that this was intended to organise appropriate support for people to prevent hospital admissions. Early indications were that it was successful in terms of benefits to the individual and in preventing high level care post admission. Significantly more investment in community services was required to expand this provision and prevented the thousands of unplanned hospital admissions.

A question was asked about Dementia Services and the work in rural communities. The Director of Community Services advised that this was a major theme going forward due the huge growth in numbers and the multiple factors associated with the disease. Decisions were needed around the nature of day care provision and how to better support community groups and local carer networks. Strategies were being developed to support Dementia friendly communities such as the one that had been piloted in Pontyberem. Rural areas were more challenging as residential care was not cost effective. Dementia would be a significant theme in the new Older People Strategy going forward.

The options appraisal regarding Domiciliary Care was referred to and it was asked if the impact of the uncertainty on staff was being considered. The Director of Community Services stated that he had spoken to staff about their concerns. The Older People Strategy was an opportunity to consider the options around provision as the status quo was not financially sustainable. Trading Company models retained public ownership of the service and could help reduce costs. All options would be considered and business cases developed.

UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED to endorse the report to the Executive Board.