

SOCIAL CARE & HEALTH SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Wednesday, 27 January 2021

PRESENT: Councillor G. Thomas (Chair)

Councillors:

S.M. Allen, K.V. Broom, D.M. Cundy (In place of A.L. Fox), I.W. Davies, K.Davies, R.E. Evans, W.T. Evans, R. James (In place of K. Madge), M.J.A. Lewis, K. Lloyd, E.M.J.G. Schiavone and D.T. Williams

Also in attendance:

D.M. Jenkins, Executive Board Member for Resources
J. Tremlett, Executive Board Member for Social Care and Health

The following Officers were in attendance:

J. Morgan, Head of Homes & Safer Communities
A. Williams, 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
S. Rees, Simultaneous Translator
J. Corner, Technical Officer
M. Evans Thomas, Principal Democratic Services Officer
M.S. Davies, Democratic Services Officer
R. Lloyd, Democratic Services Officer
E. Bryer, Democratic Services Officer

Virtual Meeting - 10.00 - 11.40 am

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Amanda Fox, Kevin Madge and Louvain Roberts.

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	4 - Revenue & Capital Budget Monitoring Report 2020/21. 5 - Revenue Budget Strategy Consultation 2021/22 To 2023/24	Close family member is a carer in the Shared Lives Scheme.

There were no declarations of prohibited party whips.

3. PUBLIC QUESTIONS

The Chair advised that no public questions had been received.

4. REVENUE & CAPITAL BUDGET MONITORING REPORT 2020/21

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

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, 2020 in respect of the 2020/21 financial year.

The Social Care & Health Service was projecting an overspend of £933K on the revenue budget and net variance of -£157K against the 2020/21 approved capital budget.

The following questions / observations were raised on the report:

- In response to the use of the £157k capital variance the Head of Financial Services advised that this was not unusual and confirmed that there were no accounting concerns regarding this.
- Concern was raised that the overspend would have been higher if some services hadn't closed. It was stated that unfortunately, difficult circumstances had contributed to a positive impact on the budget and with the return of services this would have to be carefully monitored.
- It was asked if care workers would be receiving a second payment from Welsh Government. The Committee was advised that future payments was a Welsh Government decision but that the question would be asked via the WLGA.
- It was stated that complaints had been received that some had been eligible for the carers payment despite only working an hour. The Head of Integrated Services advised that the eligibility criteria for payment was set by Welsh Government.
- Clarification was asked what the term 'rightsizing' meant. The Head of Integrated Services advised that this was ensuring that the level of care packages and support provided was at the right level.
- Concern was raised regarding the availability of funding in meeting the increased demand on Mental Health services. It was stated that the Head of Adult Social Care was monitoring the situation carefully to ensure that funding was allocated to the right budget areas to service the increased demand.
- Concern was raised regarding the vacancies within the Occupational Therapy team and staffing levels in general. The Committee was advised there were very few vacancies and that two Occupational Therapy vacancies had recently been filled. It was also stated that when an underspend is shown at the start of the year, it would remain for the rest of the financial year as there is no back payment of salary cost. The Group Accountant stated additional information could be included within the report to clarify the position.
- It was stated that now was the time to look at developing a workforce development strategy. The Head of Integrated Services confirmed that the Communities Department were already developing a strategy and that various programmes were in place providing opportunities for apprentices to gain qualifications while working. The department was also looking to

link with various colleges to develop new courses. The Executive Board Member for Social Care and Health advised that Pentre Awel would also provide opportunities for on-site training.

- An update was requested on Cwm Aur and the partial delivery of savings. It was stated that costs had not increased and that at the time of setting the contract potential savings had been identified but not delivered but that this was on the workplan to be revisited.
- It was asked how many out of County placement the Authority had. The Head of Integrated Services advised that there were very few placements outside of County but she did not have the actual figures to hand, but would confirm at a later date.

RESOLVED that the report be received.

5. REVENUE BUDGET STRATEGY CONSULTATION 2021/22 to 2023/24

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

The Committee considered the Revenue Budget Strategy 2021/22 to 2023/24 which had been considered by the Executive Board at its meeting on the 18th January, 2021. It was also noted that members of the Committee had recently attended consultation events on the budget which had provided them with an opportunity to ask questions and seek clarification on various aspects of the budget.

The report provided Members with the current view of the Revenue Budget for 2021/22 together with indicative figures for the 2023/24 financial years.

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

- Appendix A – Corporate Budget Strategy 2021/22 to 2023/24
- 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. He stated that the increase in the provisional settlement was 3.8% and that the Aggregate External Finance (AEF) increased to £284.820 million in 2021/22. This included £244k in respect of Teachers pay.

The social care workforce grant had been increased from £40m to £50 million across Wales. The increase was estimated at £600k for Carmarthenshire.

The Committee was advised that the minister's letter which accompanied the provisional settlement stated that Local Authorities should meet any future pay awards from their budgets. It was also stated that while £500K had been set aside in the budget specifically for Mental Health services, it would be difficult to predict the demand.

Due to delays with settlement figures publication of the final settlement would not be until the 2nd March.

The following questions/issues were raised on the report:

- Due to concerns regarding Mental Health, it was asked if any planning had taken place for post Covid and had discussions been had with other statutory services and the third sector. The Head of Integrated Services advised that the community mental health teams were fully integrated and that throughout the pandemic a clear working infrastructure had been established. Specific working groups were in place looking at the way forward and would inform changes to commissioning services ensuring that the level of needs could be met. It was stated that the transformation in mental health programmes had not stopped but there was recognition that requirements were different due to the pandemic.
- It was asked what impact Brexit would have on the Council. The Head of Financial Services advised that it was too early to quantify but that there would be an impact on free movement of goods and potential further increase in inflationary levels.

UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED that:

- 4.1 The 2021/22 – 2023/24 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.**

6. CORPORATE STRATEGY 2018/23 - UPDATE APRIL 2021

The Committee had been advised that the Corporate Strategy 2018/23 - Update April 2021 had been withdrawn and would be considered at the next Scrutiny Committee on the 11th March, 2021.

7. 2020/21 HALF YEAR PERFORMANCE REPORT (1ST APRIL TO 30TH SEPTEMBER 2020) RELEVANT TO THIS SCRUTINY

The Committee considered the Performance Monitoring Report for the period 1st April to 30th September 2020, which focused on the performance measure included in the Corporate Strategy.

The report highlighted that a half year Covid-19 Community Impact Assessment had been produced to enable services to focus on dealing with emergencies instead of the previously set actions.

The Executive Board Member for Social Care and Health highlighted that adult obesity, the exercise referral scheme and the 16 week exercise referral programme were off target. This was due to Covid and the closure of the Leisure Centres, but it was hoped that these would resume soon.

The following observations / questions was raised on the report:-

- It was asked if the potential of providing on-line rehabilitation classes had been explored. The Committee was advised that the leisure department provided a comprehensive number of on-line exercise classes but that some of these would not be suitable for people from the referral scheme.

RESOLVED that the report be received.

8. EXPLANATION FOR NON-SUBMISSION OF SCRUTINY REPORT

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

- Older People's Day Services Recovery Plan
- Services & Support for Children & Young People (Multi Agency Forum Update)
- Dementia Action Plan
- Departmental Business Plan

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

9. FORTHCOMING ITEMS

RESOLVED that the list of forthcoming items to be considered at the next scheduled meeting on the 11th March, 2021 be noted.

10. TO SIGN AS A CORRECT RECORD THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON THE 22ND DECEMBER, 2020

UNANAMOUSLY RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on the 22nd December, 2020 be signed as a correct record.

CHAIR

DATE