

SOCIAL CARE & HEALTH SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Wednesday, 26 January 2022

PRESENT: Councillor G. Thomas (Chair)

Councillors:

K.V. Broom, K. Davies, W.T. Evans, K. Lloyd, B.A.L. Roberts, E.M.J.G. Schiavone, B. Thomas and D.T. Williams

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. Frewin, Senior Manager Community Inclusion
S. Sauro, Performance, Analysis & Systems Manager
M. Evans Thomas, Principal Democratic Services Officer
S. Rees, Simultaneous Translator
J. Owens, Democratic Services Officer
S. Hendy, Member Support Officer
E. Bryer, Democratic Services Officer

Virtual Meeting - 2.00 pm - 3.40 pm

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors S.M. Allen, I.W. Davies, D.M. Jenkins [Cabinet Member for Resources], M.J. Lewis, J. Tremlett [Cabinet Member for Health and Social Care].

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 2021/22	Personal interest – close association with a person who is a carer in the Shared Lives Scheme. Dispensation granted by the Standards Committee to speak but not to vote on specific matters relating to the Shared Lives Scheme.

There were no declarations of any prohibited party whips.

3. PUBLIC QUESTIONS

The Chair advised that no public questions had been received.

4. REVENUE & CAPITAL BUDGET MONITORING REPORT 2021/22

[NOTE: Cllr. K. Lloyd having earlier declared an interest in this item remained in the meeting for its consideration. Cllr. Lloyd had received a dispensation from the Standards Committee to speak but not vote on specific matters relating to the Shared Lives Scheme.]

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 2021 in respect of the 2021/22 financial year.

The Social Care & Health Service was projecting an overspend of £168K on the revenue budget and net variance of -£65K against the 2021/22 approved capital budget.

The Head of Financial Services advised the Committee that some areas showed significant variances compared to the budget set last February and that these variances were due to activities being impacted by the pandemic. The Committee was re-assured that performance continued to be monitored and emergency funding was being used in the best way to ensure that service delivery was maximised.

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

- Concern was expressed that many services had not been provided during the pandemic yet the budget was still showing an overspend.
- An explanation was sought regarding the capital expenditure for Cartref Cynnes.
Officers advised that the money had been there since the beginning of the scheme and that it would remain in the capital budget until the lease agreement with family housing had been signed.
- It was asked if the reduction in double handed domiciliary care packages to 18% by the end of 2021/22 from 25.4% in 2018/19 was the best way forward. Concern was expressed that individuals and families would be negatively impacted because of this.
The Head of Integrated Services advised that a comprehensive review would be undertaken in conjunction with the provider and in conjunction with the individual and their family. More often than not, it would be a simple change such as the use of equipment which would enable an individual to be more independent as opposed to needing two people to support them. It was stated that the Authority routinely reviewed double handed packages of care and looked at alternative options of providing the right equipment. The reviews would normally be an occupational therapist led review and a reduction from double handed care would only be undertaken if it was considered safe to do so.
- Clarification was sought regarding the reduction of the number of clients

receiving domiciliary care packages of less than 5 hours a week in line with recommendations of Prof. Bolton.

The Head of Integrated Services advised that Prof. Bolton was considered an expert in his field and that he had written numerous academic papers around the principles of promoting independence. It was stated that Prof Bolton had worked with Local Authorities and Health Boards across Wales, reviewing the way care packages were delivered to help reduce the dependency on care. It was found that individuals receiving very small packages of care would not require care when small changes were made – such as the use of technology. In some instances, small changes could make the ultimate difference in someone being able to manage independently.

- It was asked if the Authority was on target regarding the increase to the number of people with dementia receiving the Fulfilled Lives service. The Head of Integrated advised that the Authority was on track to meet the target and was reviewing how the Fulfilled Lives service could be sustained going forward.
- It was asked what the Bridging Service entailed. Officers advised that this was a short-term domiciliary care service where care was provided immediately. The short-term service provided the opportunity to assess needs before determining the longer-term package of care.

RESOLVED that the report be received.

5. REVENUE BUDGET STRATEGY CONSULTATION 2022/23 to 2024/25

The Committee considered the Revenue Budget Strategy 2022/23 to 2024/25 which had been considered and approved by the Cabinet as its meeting on the 17th 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 2022/23 together with indicative figures for the 2024/25 financial years.

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

- Appendix A – Corporate Budget Strategy 2022/23 to 2024/25
- 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:

- Committee was advised that the report provided members with an update on the latest efficiency proposals. It considered the budget validations

necessary, the service pressures and it took into account the provisional budget settlement which was issued by Welsh Government to Authorities on the 21st December 2021.

- While the provisional settlement was higher than had been planned the scale of expenditure pressures were at an unprecedented level. Given this the Authority would need to continue to provide efficiency savings with this and future years budget.
- On an all-Wales basis, the local government provisional settlement increased by 9.4% and Carmarthenshire increased by 9.2%. The Aggregate External Finance (AEF) increased to £311.957 million in 2022/23. This would help to provide for inflationary factors, demographics and demand changes to services, not least with social care.
- Welsh Government had also issued details of Service Specific Grants alongside the provisional settlement on 21 December 2021 at an all-Wales level. It was a concern that many remained at a similar level to previous years given the impact of pay awards and general inflation.
- It was stated that the final settlement would not be published until the 1st March 2022.
- The Minister's letter which accompanied the settlement was explicit that Welsh Government expects Council to meet the cost of any future pay awards from the improved settlement.
- It was highlighted that the budget reductions required for 2022/23 was £3.8m which would ensure, based on the current projections that essential services could still be delivered.
- Taking into account the provisional settlement a proposed Council tax increase next year was 4.39%.

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

- It was asked if the review of transport services included making better use of the buses available included services such as Dolen Teify. The Senior Business Support Manager reassured the Committee that the Authority was ensuring that they were making best use of the available resources and would look at the installation of charging points.
- Officers were asked what impact Covid had had on the demographics and also the effect of inward migration into the County. Officers advised that they were uncertain when the census data would be received and that data regarding inward migration was not captured. It was confirmed that data would be fed through, however the timing of this was unknown.

UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED that:

5.1 The 2022/23 – 2024/25 Revenue Budget Strategy Consultation be received;

5.2 The Charging Digest for the Social Care & Health Service, as detailed in Appendix C to the report, be endorsed.

6. DEPARTMENT FOR COMMUNITIES DEPARTMENTAL BUSINESS PLAN 2022/23

The Committee considered the Communities Departmental Business Plan 2022/23

in relation to those services falling within its remit:

- Homes and Safer Communities (Care Homes element only)
- Commissioning and Business Support
- Adult Social Care
- Integrated Services

It was noted that the impact of the pandemic and BREXIT created uncertainty in future planning and that the plan would be subject to change.

The Head of Homes & Safer Communities highlighted that the last twelve months had been extraordinary across all services in general but particularly unique for health and social care.

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

- Concern was raised regarding recruitment and retention of staff and the shortage of social workers and home carers.
The Head of Homes & Safer Communities re-iterated that a 10-year plan was being developed and that staffing and resourcing would be centre stage. The Head of Integrated Services confirmed that work had already been undertaken around recruitment and that all avenues of recruitment were being explored including looking at overseas recruitment.
- It was asked if there were sufficient resources in the teams to manage the additional volume of work, in particular the Commissioning team.
The Head of Homes & Safer Communities advised that the Commissioning Department was currently being re-structured to reflect the changes in commissioning.

RESOLVED that the Department for Communities Departmental Business Plan 2022/23 be received.

7. LONELINESS IN CARMARTHENSHIRE TASK AND FINISH REVIEW UPDATE

The Committee considered the Loneliness in Carmarthenshire Task and Finish Review Update Report.

The report provided Members with an update on the progress with the recommendations emerging from the Task & Finish Review undertaken in the 2018/19 municipal year.

The Head of Integrated Services advised that the pandemic had hindered progress as the priority has been to maintain operational service delivery. Despite this, positive steps had been made including the new Integrated Service Structure which was in the process of being finalised.

As part of the plans for the Integrated Services restructure, it was proposed that a Senior Manager for Prevention would be appointed that would support coordination of the prevention approach for the County. This Senior Manager would be the strategic operational lead for prevention and developing an overall Prevention Strategy for Carmarthenshire and would lead on the task and finish recommendations. A Preventions Group would also be established early in 2022

which would oversee development of the Prevention Strategy and implementation of an Action Plan.

UNANAMOUSLY 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 Autism Update report.

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 10th March, 2022 be noted.

10. TO SIGN AS A CORRECT RECORD THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON THE 20TH DECEMBER, 2021

UNANAMOUSLY RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on the 20th December, 2021 be signed as a correct record.

CHAIR

DATE