

SOCIAL CARE & HEALTH SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Thursday, 19 November 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, M.J.A. Lewis, K. Lloyd, K. Madge, D. Price (In place of D.T. Williams), B.A.L. Roberts and E.M.J.G. Schiavone

Also in attendance:

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

The following Officers were in attendance:

J. Morgan, Head of Homes & Safer Communities
A. Bracey, Head of Social Care
A. Williams, Head of Integrated Services
C. Harrison, Head of Strategic Joint Commissioning
R. Page, Senior Business Support Manager
A. Thomas, Group Accountant
S. Rees, Simultaneous Translator
J. Corner, Technical Officer
M. Evans Thomas, Principal Democratic Services Officer
R. Lloyd, Democratic Services Officer
K. Thomas, Democratic Services Officer
E. Bryer, Democratic Services Officer

Virtual Meeting - .10.00 am - 12.25 pm

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

An apology for absence was received from Councillor D.T. Williams.

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.	Close family member is a carer in the Shared Lives Scheme.
Louvain Roberts	4. Revenue & Capital Budget Monitoring Report 2020/21.	Relative is a social worker for the Authority.
Kevin Madge	4. Revenue & Capital Budget Monitoring Report 2020/21.	Daughter is a social worker for the Authority.

Darren Price	5. Impact of Covid 19 on Carmarthenshire's Adult Social Care Services.	Grandmother is a service user of the Authority.
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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 & CAPITAL BUDGET MONITORING REPORT 2020/21

[NOTE: Cllrs. K. Lloyd, K. Madge and B.A.L. Roberts 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 August, 2020 in respect of the 2020/21 financial year.

The Social Care & Health Service was projecting an overspend of £898K on the revenue budget and net variance of -£155K against the 2020/21 approved capital budget. £100K of this had been vired to the Carmarthen Leisure Centre project within the Communities Department.

The Committee was advised by the Executive Board Member for Resources that the report took into account the additional funding received from Welsh Government.

A number of questions / observations were raised on the report. The main matters were as follows:

- In response to a request for further information regarding the £100K vired to Carmarthen Leisure Centre, it was confirmed that this was underspent project funding that would be vired back to Social Care.
- Concern was raised regarding the vacancies within the Occupational Therapy team. The Committee was advised there was always a 2 – 3 month time lag due to the recruitment process and that recruitment had not been delayed due to financial constraints.
- It was asked if the extra funding from Welsh Government was meeting the increased demand on service provisions. It was advised that quarterly claims were submitted for Covid related expenditure and that to date most of the claims had been paid. It was noted that to date only £100K (subsequently confirmed as £184k) had been deemed ineligible and that dialogue with Welsh Government regularly discussed any eligibility queries.
- In response to concerns expressed regarding the longer term impact of Covid on mental health, the Committee was advised that the Authority was very aware of the impact and that a report was due to be presented to CMT shortly.
- It was asked if Day Care Services would be re-opening sooner now that a vaccine was imminent. It was advised that the distribution of the vaccine would not be as straightforward as portrayed by the media and that there were numerous factors to be considered. However, it was agreed that

should the appropriate vaccine be available re-opening Day Centres would be a priority. It was also confirmed that the Day Centre report would be presented to the Executive Board in January which the Committee would be able to scrutinise.

- Concern was raised regarding how the recent outbreak of Covid had been managed at Amman Valley Hospital. Re-assurance was given that the situation was being actively managed and that the correct procedures for infection control and use of PPE were being followed.
- In response to questions regarding the vaccination programme, the Committee was advised by the Head of Integrated Services that she was working closely with Hywel Dda Health Board and was actively involved in the process on how the vaccine would be deployed and prioritised.
- The issue of vacancies in sheltered housing complexes was raised. The Executive Board Member for Social Care and Health advised that this was a matter for the Communities department, however discussions had taken place regarding the issue and that further information would be provided.
- It was asked if the high cost of agency staff in care homes had improved and if so, how had this been achieved. It was advised that agency payments had reduced this financial year. It was thought that this was due to the reduction in staff sickness and the increase in working hours. It was also noted that the Authority had also re-deployed many of its staff into services such as Care Homes.

UNANAMOUSLY RESOLVED that the report be received.

5. IMPACT OF COVID-19 ON CARMARTHENSHIRE'S ADULT SOCIAL CARE SERVICES

[NOTE: Cllr. D. Price had earlier declared an interest in this item].

The Committee received a report providing a position statement regarding the Covid-19 pandemic's impact on Adult Social Care including Integrated Services, and Commissioning.

The report described how the Authority managed the first phase of the pandemic, lessons learnt and how this informed service priorities going forward.

The Executive Board Member for Social Care & Health advised the priority had been the continuation of support to those who were receiving services and support from the Authority. Maintaining Care Home visits had been challenging however the policy was to ensure that families were allowed visits so that they could be there at the end for their loved ones. Digital solutions also played a part in maintaining communications.

A number of questions / observations were raised on the report. The main matters were as follows:

- In response to a comment on the use of independent commissioned care, the Executive Board Member for Social Care & Health stated that there was a role for both in-house and private sector provision and that it was important to get the right balance.
- It was asked if the Authority was considering quick diagnostic tests which

would enable more care home visits to take place. It was stated that Welsh Government were proposing to trial this approach with three Local Authorities. The Committee was also advised that visits would start again next week in infection free homes and that it would be controlled to ensure robust infection control.

- Assurance was sought that there was adequate PPE provision available. The Head of Homes and Safer Communities confirmed that adequate stocks were available.
- Officers were asked how much was the Authority learning from other regions. The Committee was advised that the Authority was keeping a watching brief on what England and other regions were doing. It was stated that there was a constant dialogue between Heads of Service comparing ideas and sharing lessons learnt.
- It was stated that while we've had to adapt and make more use of technology during the pandemic this wasn't a suitable option for everyone. Officers informed the Committee that the Authority was proactively working with Digital Communities Wales and third sector partners to take a strategic review to digital solutions to support everyone. Funding had also been made available via the ICF capital bid. It was also noted that while technology had been useful, in many cases it could not replace the need for face to face assessments.
- Concern was expressed regarding the effect of working through the pandemic had had on front-line staff. The Committee was assured that the wellbeing of staff was important and that it was recognised how difficult it had been. The department had been working with Occupational Health in developing support mechanisms and various solutions had been put in place ranging from the use of teams where people could discuss their concerns to virtual picnics and quizzes. Regular supervision meetings were being held and managers were also encouraging staff to take annual leave.
- Assurance was sought that all discharges from hospital to care homes would be Covid free. The Head of Integrated Services confirmed that all residents going into care homes must have had a negative test. The only exception would be if the home already had an outbreak of Covid and if the resident already had Covid on admission to hospital. It was also noted that a test was only one level of assurance and that good use of PPE and effective infection control procedures were also required. Additionally, on admittance all new residents were isolated for 14 days to minimise potential transmission.
- It was asked if care home workers had received the £500 payment from Welsh Government. It was confirmed that nearly all in house carers had been paid and that 99% of payments have been made to care agencies. The Head of Homes and Safer Communities highlighted that some staff had donated their payments to foodbanks.

The Committee expressed their gratitude to all front-line staff and officer for their outstanding work and dedication during the pandemic.

UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED that the report be received.

6. SOCIAL CARE & HEATH SCRUTINY COMMITTEE ANNUAL REPORT 2019/20

The Committee received an Annual Report detailing the work of the Committee during the 2019/20 municipal year. The report had been prepared in accordance with Article 6.2 of the Council's Constitution which requires Scrutiny Committees to prepare an annual report giving an account of the Committee's activities over the previous year.

The report provided an overview of the Committee's work programme and the key issues considered during the year. The report also provided details of development sessions and site visits arranged for the Committee as well as attendance data.

UNANAMOUSLY RESOLVED that the Social Care & Health Scrutiny Committee's Annual Report 2019/20 be received.

7. SOCIAL CARE & HEATH SCRUTINY COMMITTEE FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME FOR 2020/21

The Committee considered its Forward Work Programme for 2020/21, which had been prepared in accordance with the Council's Constitution which required Scrutiny Committees to develop and publish annual forward work programmes identifying issues and reports to be considered at meetings during the course of the municipal year.

UNANAMOUSLY RESOLVED that the Forward Work Programme for the Social Care & Health Scrutiny Committee for 2020/21 be confirmed.

8. TO SIGN AS A CORRECT RECORD THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON THE 5TH MARCH, 2020

UNANAMOUSLY RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on the 5th March, 2020 be signed as a correct record.

CHAIR

DATE