

# SOCIAL CARE & HEALTH SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Thursday, 11 March 2021

**PRESENT:** Councillor G. Thomas (Chair)

**Councillors:**

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

**Also in attendance Councillors:**

L.M. Stephens, Deputy Leader of the Council  
J. Tremlett, Executive Board Member for Social Care and Health

**The following Officers were in attendance:**

A. Williams, Head of Integrated Services  
C. Harrison, Head of Strategic Joint Commissioning  
R. Page, Senior Business Support Manager  
M. Evans Thomas, Principal Democratic Services Officer  
S. Sauro, Performance, Analysis & Systems Manager  
S. Rees, Simultaneous Translator  
J. Corner, Technical Officer  
R. Lloyd, Democratic Services Officer  
E. Bryer, Democratic Services Officer

**Virtual Meeting - 10.00 am - 12.20 pm**

**1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors I. W Davies and A.L Fox.

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

Councillor	Minute No (s)	Nature of Interest
Kevin Madge	4. Corporate Strategy 2018/23 - Update April 2021 5.Impact of Covid-19 on Carmarthenshire's Adult Social Care Services	Daughter works in Social Care.

There were no declarations of prohibited party whips.

**3. PUBLIC QUESTIONS (NONE RECEIVED)**

The Chair advised that no public questions had been received.

#### 4. CORPORATE STRATEGY 2018/23 - UPDATE APRIL 2021

Members considered sections of the updated Corporate Strategy 2018-23 relevant to the remit of the Social Care & Health Scrutiny Committee.

The revised Corporate Strategy (adopted in June 2018) reflected the developing priorities and the impact of COVID-19, Brexit and climate change.

It was noted that previously there was 15 Wellbeing Objectives and that these had now been reduced to 13.

The Deputy Leader highlighted the sixteen key challenges facing the Council.

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

- Concern was raised that only half of Carmarthenshire residents felt they lived in cohesive communities. Carmarthenshire was 5th in Wales but is now 14th out of the 22 local authorities. The Deputy Leader advised that the figures were the result of the National Survey of Wales 2018/19. The Committee was advised that significant work had been done in engaging with communities including the work with Community Connectors and it was hoped that the more recent survey results would reflect this.
- It was asked how would residents be empowered - "Encourage communities to be empowered to improve their circumstances". It was felt that this step to improve community cohesion was vague. The Deputy Leader advised that it was key that residents had the knowledge and understanding to enable them to work with the Authority. It was suggested that the wording be changed to "Encourage communities to improve their circumstances by providing constant encouragement and support." The Committee was reminded that this was a strategy document and that the business plans would contain more detail.
- With reference to Wellbeing Objective 9, it was noted that current projections suggested that the population of people over 65 living in Carmarthenshire was growing and that by 2030 this would increase by 60%. It was asked what the actual figures were (not %) and what were the obvious factors that contributed to these figures. The Head of Integrated Services advised that figures would be available from Daffodil (population prediction tool). Due to advances in medical science, there is an aging population, however this would result in the increased demand for managing chronic conditions including dementia.
- With reference to Wellbeing Objective 7, concern was raised regarding the impact of covid on mental health, alcohol dependency and substance misuse. The Executive Board Member for Health and Social Care advised that the Authority was concerned about the impact on mental health and increase in service demand. The budget setting preparations would account for this demand. The Head of Integrated Services confirmed that joint arrangements were in place with the Health Board and that there was a dedicated team in place to manage, raise awareness and undertake preventative work.
- It was asked how the Authority was progressing with the need to continue

to integrate health and social care. The Head of Integrated Services confirmed that her post and the Head of Social Care post were very much integrated with the work of the Health Board. It was stated that while both organisations were committed to working in an integrated way it was acknowledged that there were still areas for improvement.

**RESOLVED to recommend to the Executive Board that the Corporate Strategy 2018-23 update April 2021 be endorsed.**

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

The Committee received a report providing a position statement regarding how adult social care services had continued to be managed during the second wave of the pandemic and highlighting the service priorities going forward.

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

The Executive Board Member for Social Care and Health confirmed that from an Integrated Services and Adult Social Care perspective, the Authority had continued to as far as possible maintain business as usual. The Authority had continued to offer Information Advice and Assistance (IAA) in line with the requirements of the Social Services and Wellbeing (Wales) Act and carried out social care assessments where required.

The Committee was advised that in the second wave, significantly more care home outbreaks had been experienced. There had been an increase in safeguarding activity and an increase in the complexity of referrals.

The Executive Board Member for Social Care and Health highlighted that during the second wave, the workforce has continued to amaze her with their flexibility and resilience. In-house residential staff had been deployed to support independent sector care homes where needed at times of Covid outbreaks. Both the Executive Board Member for Social Care and Health and the committee expressed their thanks for their commitment and outstanding work.

It was noted that the pandemic had a huge emotional and psychological impact on staff, and that the impact should not be underestimated. Reassurance was provided that everything possible was being done to support staff through these challenging times.

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

- Concern was raised regarding the number of vacant beds in care homes and the viability of care home providers. The Head of Integrated service acknowledged that this was a very real concern to both in-house and external care homes as they continue to face challenges. Currently there was dedicated funding in place to alleviate the economic impact on care homes. It was also stated that the current situation had presented an opportunity for the Authority to consider the potential to offer a dedicated step up and step down service provision.

- It was asked what plans were in place to re-open Day Centres and if the waiting list for the service was high. The Head of Integrated Services advised that the Authority was waiting the publication of national guidance before re-opening the service. It was also highlighted that social distancing would impact on the level of service that the Authority would be able to provide. It was stated that there was no waiting list as the service wasn't being provided and that alternative support packages had been provided instead.
- Concern was raised regarding the mental health and wellbeing of children and younger people. The Committee was advised that the Education and Children Department were mindful of the impact and were working through options of support.
- 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.
- Concern was expressed regarding the suspension of the respite service. The Head of Integrated Service said that due to covid families were reluctant to take up the service, however the Authority had looked at alternative ways to support families which included 1 to 1 support at home.

**UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED that the report be received.**

## **6. UNPAID CARERS IN CARMARTHENSHIRE- STRATEGIC , LOCAL AND COVID RELATED DEVELOPMENTS**

The Committee received a report providing an overview of the work that had been progressed by both the Regional West Wales Carers Development Group (WWCDG) and by the Carmarthenshire Strategic Partnership Board for Carers during 2020/21. The report detailed the range of initiatives in place to support unpaid carers, including Covid related services.

It was noted that during 2020 the WWCDG, in consultation with carers published a West Wales Carers Strategy, which was structured around four key priorities:

- Improve the early identification and self-identification of Carers, including Young Carers and Young Adult Carers
- Ensure a range of services is available to support the wellbeing of carers of all ages, in their life alongside caring
- Support carers to access and maintain education, training and employment opportunities
- Support carers to become digitally included

The report stated that during the Covid pandemic the role and importance of unpaid carers had become more evident. The West Wales Carers Development Group had worked together to ensure carers continued to be supported with information and advice.

The Executive Board Member for Social Care and Health highlighted that according to data from the last Census there were approximately 47,000 unpaid carers within West Wales, representing 12.5% of residents. In addition to

those figures it was known there were a number of 'hidden' carers.

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

- It was asked how many carers in Carmarthenshire had benefitted from the £300 hardship grant available from Welsh Government. The Head of Strategic Commissioning confirmed that a considerable number had received the grant. The exact figures were not to hand but would be circulated to the committee following the meeting.
- Concern was raised regarding the potential disparity of carers receiving the vaccination. The Head of Integrated Services confirmed that carers were priority 6 in the vaccination programme. Reassurance was provided that the Health Board was in the process of identifying unpaid carers and that carers would be offered appointments in the next month or so.
- Clarification was sought on the term 'respite'. The Committee was advised that this was the term used where hospitality providers were willing to gift or provide discounted rates to unpaid carers and their families. This could include hotels; holiday lets or meals out.
- The Committee stated that they had not heard of 'Hafan Glyd' and asked for clarification on where they were based and how carers could access the service. The Head of Integrated Services advised that the Head of Adult Social Care would be able to provide further details.

**UNANIMOUSLY 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
- Dementia Action Plan

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

## **8. FORTHCOMING ITEMS**

**RESOLVED that the list of forthcoming items to be considered at the next scheduled meeting on the 20th April, 2021 be noted.**

## **9. TO SIGN AS A CORRECT RECORD THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON THE 27TH JANUARY, 2021**

**UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on the 27th January, 2021 be signed as a correct record.**

---

**CHAIR**

---

**DATE**