

Social Care & Health Scrutiny Committee

Annual Report

2021 – 2022

Scrutiny in Carmarthenshire

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Cyngor **Sir Gâr**
Carmarthenshire
County Council



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Chair's Foreword



In preparing a foreword for the Social Care & Health Scrutiny Committee's Annual Report for the year May 2021 - April 2022 the main challenge facing the Department was dealing with the impact of Covid which has lasted over two years. During lockdown the Social Services Department faced incredible challenges in supporting our Care Homes and ensuring that essential services could continue for the elderly and the frail residents of our County. We managed to develop emergency plans to deal with an unprecedented crisis and we are indebted to officers and staff for responding so quickly to the profound problems facing the department.

During the Covid crisis the relationship between the Local Authority and the Health Service was strengthened as the two organisations worked together to open three "Field Hospitals" within our Leisure Centres and Sport Centres to specifically care for Covid patients. As a Committee we want to pay tribute to all the County's employees for such a positive response, for their tireless work and for their dedication in extremely difficult circumstances. Many staff volunteered wherever they were needed to secure essential services were maintained, and we thank them for their willingness to go the extra mile to ensure the highest quality of care even in the midst of a pandemic.

As usual the Committee discussed a wide range of reports including Revenue and Capital Budget Monitoring, Strategy Performance Reports, Reports regarding Unpaid Carers and Adult Safeguarding. There have also been regular updates on the impact of Covid on our services.

In consultation with the Officers a forward work programme was prepared with an opportunity for all Committee members to contribute as the programme is reviewed during the year. As a Committee we are keen to promote collaboration both with our partners and with the voluntary sector, by working together, we can achieve so much more and ensure the best quality services for the benefit of the people of our County.

In order to reduce the spread of Covid, many of the Council staff worked from home and the Council meetings were held virtually as it was not possible to meet face to face. We thank the Information and Technology Department for preparing training and for making the resources available to run a virtual service. Scrutiny Committee meetings are now available via Webcast, this gives members of the public the opportunity to follow the discussions live or in the following six months. During the year May 2021 - April 2022, the Social Care and Health Scrutiny Committee meetings were viewed by 226 people through the provision of webcasting.

Due to Covid restrictions it has not been possible, as is usual, for the Committee to go out to our communities to visit different organisations, talk to frontline workers and meet our service users. The work of the "Task and Finish" Group which was to look at how to reduce incidents of suicide within the County also had to be postponed. I hope that this important work will be able to re-commence during the next Council term.

As Chair of the Committee I would like to thank my fellow members for their loyal attendance at our virtual meetings and for their valuable contributions during our discussions. Special thanks go to my Vice-Chair, Councillor Ieuan Wyn Davies for his willing assistance and to Councillor Jane Tremlett, Cabinet Member for Social Care and Health for attending our meetings regularly during the year. Thank you very much to Emma Bryer, our Democratic Services Officer for all her preparatory work in advance and for ensuring that our virtual meetings run smoothly. We are very grateful to Emma for being so willing to support Committee members on every occasion. Many thanks also to all the Council Officers who attended our meetings – their contributions, and their advice are always very much appreciated. We'd also like to thank our Officers and Staff for all of their tireless work in ensuring that the County's residents continue to receive the best quality services even during an unusually difficult year. Thank you very much.

As we progress into a new municipal year it is an uncertain time, and the expectation is that demand for social services will continue to increase. We face the challenges of the future with confidence, we must be prepared to take risks and work flexibly to strengthen our services and ensure that the people of our County continue to have access to the highest quality of care.

Councillor Gwyneth Thomas
Chair of Social Care & Health Scrutiny Committee

1. Introduction

The scrutiny function is a key element of the County Council's governance arrangements and decision-making process. Although not a decision-making body, Scrutiny is at its most effective when it grasps the potential to influence and inform decisions made by both the Council and partner bodies affecting the County.

Article 6.2 of the Council's Constitution requires all Scrutiny Committees to "*prepare an annual report giving an account of the Committees activities over the previous year.*"

This report provides an overview of the work of the Social Care and Health Scrutiny Committee during 2021/22 municipal year. It gives Members the opportunity to reflect on the achievements during the year and to identify what worked well and where improvements could be made. This analysis is instrumental in developing scrutiny.

The Committee is chaired by Councillor Gwyneth Thomas and is made up of 14 Elected Members. Support is provided by the Democratic Services Unit and other Council Officers as and when required.

2. Overview of the work of the Committee in 2021/22

2.1 Number of Meetings

The Scrutiny Committee held 6 meetings during the 2021/22 municipal year. The meeting scheduled to be held in March was cancelled as no reports were available and the April meeting was cancelled due to the elections taking place in May.

2.2 The Forward Work Programme

The Scrutiny Committee develops its own Forward Work Programme (FWP). The Committee consulted with officers to identify items to be considered by the Committee for the forthcoming year. This involved the inclusion of standard items such as performance, budget and action plan monitoring reports. Additional reports were also requested by members at meetings throughout the year and the Forward Work Programme was amended accordingly. In the main, meeting agendas were consistent with those outlined in the FWP however concern was expressed regarding the number of non-submissions received. In total, 16 non submissions were received impacting 5 Scrutiny Committee meetings and resulting in one meeting being cancelled.

The concept and development of the Forward Work Programme and the process for its agreement has allowed each Scrutiny Committee to determine its own agenda. The benefit of such an approach has led to an improved level of debate and discussion during Scrutiny Committee meetings.

The Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 places long term sustainability at the forefront of how public services are designed and delivered

and it places emphasis on public bodies to work in partnership with each other and the public to prevent and tackle problems.

The Social Care & Health Scrutiny Committee's key responsibilities are:

- Social Care - care and support services for adults including Learning Disability and Safeguarding Services
- Mental Health;
- Integrated Services - Health

2.3 Performance Monitoring / Strategic Issues

Performance Monitoring Reports - One of the principal roles of Scrutiny Committees is to monitor the performance of services and functions within its remit. They undertake this work mainly through the consideration of performance monitoring reports and various action plan monitoring reports. The performance monitoring reports provide a balanced picture of performance across the relevant service areas.

Carmarthenshire County Council's Annual Report 2020/21 - As part of its performance monitoring role the Committee received relevant information from the Council's key strategies and plans. In July 2021 the Committee considered the Council's Annual Report for 2020/21 which included an overview of performance, progress reports for all 13 Well-being objectives. The report focused on the 3 objectives which were relevant to the Social Care & Health Scrutiny, namely:

- **Well-being objective 9** - Support good connections with friends, family and safer communities
- **Well-being objective 10** - Support the growing number of older people to maintain dignity and independence in their later years.
- **Well-being objective 11** - A Council wide approach to supporting Ageing Well in Carmarthenshire

Draft Annual Report of the Statutory Director of Social Services 2020/21 - There is a statutory requirement for the Director of Social Services to report annually to their Council on the delivery and performance as well as plans for the improvement of the whole range of Social Services. The Committee received the report at its meeting in July.

Outcomes

The Committee requested that the Authority contact the Welsh Government to request that they consider a review of the issues experienced in care homes during the pandemic. The Director of Community Services advised that representations had been made to the Welsh Government whose stance was to be part of the UK wide COVID review at the present time.

[Communities Departmental Draft Business Plan 2022 - 2023](#) – In January the Committee considered the Communities Departmental Draft Business Plan 2022 - 2023 which detailed the department’s aims, objectives and priorities during 2022-23. This provided the Committee with an opportunity to consider and comment upon the priorities outlined for the department. The elements of the business plan that were identified as relevant to the Health and Social Care Scrutiny Committee included Homes & Safer Communities (Care Homes), Commissioning and Business Support, Adult Social Care and Integrated Services.

[2020/21 Performance Reports relevant to this Scrutiny](#) – In October 2021, the Committee considered the performance report detailing the progress as at the end of *Quarter 1* of the deliverables linked to the Corporate Strategy and the 13 Well-being objectives. Quarter 2 report was considered at the meeting in December 2021.

[Actions & Referrals](#) - During the course of the municipal year several requests for additional items are made by members of the Committee to assist them in discharging their scrutiny role. Actions & Referrals updates are presented to Committee which provide an update on progress in relation to these requests.

2.4 Revenue & Capital Budgets

[Budget Monitoring Reports](#) - The Committee received quarterly reports on the departmental and corporate revenue and capital budgets at the meetings held in October and January. These reports enabled members to monitor the level of spend in each area and the progress made in connection with any capital works.

In addition to the reports detailed above the Committee received Budget Monitoring reports via email in May and November.

[Revenue Budget Strategy Consultation 2022-2023 to 2024-2025](#) - As well as monitoring the current budget, the Committee was also consulted on the Revenue Budget Strategy 2022-2023 to 2024-2025. The report provided the Committee with the current proposals for the Revenue Budget for 2022/23 together with the indicative figures for the 2023/24 and 2024/2025 financial years.

2.5 Adult Social Care Complaints and Compliments Report

The Committee was due to consider the above-mentioned report at the Committee meetings in October and March. However, at the request of the Chief Executive the report was combined with the Annual Report.

2.6 Annual Report On Adult Safeguarding And Deprivation Of Liberty Safeguards (DoLS) (2020-21)

The Committee considered the above-mentioned report at the Committee meeting in November which provided information on the role, functions and

activities undertaken by the Authority regarding Adult Safeguarding and the implications of the Social Services and Well Being (Wales) Act 2014.

Outcomes

The Committee received an update regarding Domestic Violence during the Development Session in March 2022.

2.7 Social Care & Health Scrutiny Committee Annual Report 2020/21

The Committee considered the above-mentioned report at the Committee meeting in July which in accordance with Article 6.2 of the Council's Constitution provided an overview of the Committee's activities over the previous year.

2.8 Services & Support for Children & Young People with Mental Health Issues

The Committee was due to consider the above report at its meeting in December, but this was deferred to March 2022. In March the Committee received a verbal update during a general Mental Health development session.

2.9 Covid 19 Updates

At its meeting in October 2021, the Committee received an update on the impact of COVID-19 on Carmarthenshire's Adult Social Care Services. The report included a position statement regarding how adult social care services were being sustained and highlighted the demand and pressures that were emerging as a result of the pandemic

2.10 Mental Health Update Report

At its meeting in May 2021, the Committee received the Mental Health Update report. This provided a position statement regarding the impact of the pandemic on mental health and wellbeing and highlighted the service priorities and future developments. A further report was due in March 2022 but instead the committee agreed to receive a verbal update during the development session.

Outcomes

The Committee requested an update on Autism. This was scheduled to be received in January but deferred to March. A further non-submission was received in March due to staffing constraints, so the Committee were unable to consider the update report this municipal year.

2.11 Domiciliary Care, Social Work Workforce and Market Pressures

At its meeting in October 2021, the Committee received a report detailing current market pressures within the domiciliary care sector and the impact on both Health and Social Care within Carmarthenshire. It detailed Social Worker workforce pressures which was impacting on the ability to meet service user demand. The report also outlined the current position for the in house and commissioned domiciliary care market as well as system pressures and detailed the actions to mitigate risks to ensure the statutory requirements under the Social Services and Wellbeing Act (Wales) 2014 were being met.

2.12 Additional Reports & Information Requested

During the course of the year, the Committee requested reports on the following topics to be included in the Forward Work Programme:-

- Autism Report – Non-submissions received in January and March. To be considered next municipal year.
- Domestic Violence – March Development Session

3. Other Scrutiny Activity

3.1 Task and Finish

“A review of the impact of loneliness in Carmarthenshire”

At the Committee’s Scrutiny Meeting held in July 2019 the Committee approved the above report. This report was then presented to CMT in July and was approved by the Cabinet in September.

The Committee was provided with an update during its meeting in January. It was noted the pandemic had hindered progress as the priority had been to maintain operational service delivery to ensure that social care needs were met as well as protecting the population from harm from Covid. There had been some positive steps forward to tackle loneliness and the new Integrated Service Structure itself was in the process of being finalised. As part of the restructure, a new post would be created that would take a lead in further implementing the recommendations emerging from the Review.

“Early Intervention & Prevention of Suicide in Carmarthenshire”

At the Committee’s Pre-Meeting held in September 2019 the Committee considered a number of potential suggestions and agreed to undertake a Task & Finish review into Early Intervention and Prevention of Suicide in Carmarthenshire. The membership of the Task & Finish Group was as follows:

- Cllr. Gwyneth Thomas (Chair)
- Cllr. Louvain Roberts
- Cllr. Ieuan Davies (Vice Chair)
- Cllr. Ken Lloyd

- Cllr. Emlyn Schiavone
- Cllr. Dorian Williams
- Cllr. Amanda Fox

During the Forward Work Planning Development session on the 7th April 2021, the Committee requested the Task & Finish group review the scope of work. Due to several factors including resourcing constraints, timescales, and the impending elections this was put on hold - it was also noted that significant progress had already been made by both the Local Authority and Welsh Government with regards to intervention and prevention of suicide.

3.2 Development Sessions

The following all-member development sessions /seminars were held during 2021/22, to which Committee members were invited:-

- Microsoft Teams Training for online meetings – numerous sessions in June 2021
- Historic Buildings and Carmarthenshire’s Net Zero Carbon Commitment (May 2021)
- The Circular Economy and Resource Efficiency (June 2021)
- Hywel Dda University Health Board – Covid Briefing (September 2021)
- Planning Services Seminar (September 2021)
- Welsh in Education Strategic Plan Workshop (October 2021)
- Planning Service Phosphates Briefing (November 2021)
- Digital Connectivity Event (January 2022)

In addition to the above, several budget seminars were held during January as part of the Council’s consultation process on the 2021/22 Revenue Budget and the five-year capital programme.

The Committee also received the following Scrutiny Committee specific updates / presentations at development meetings during the course of the year. Many of these items were requested following the scrutiny of reports:-

- Overall approach to supporting discharge to hospital (May)
- Day Services & Respite Service (July)
- Overview of Delta Wellbeing & Social Care Services Delivery (July)
- Shared Lives Placement (December)
- Domestic Violence (March)
- Mental Health Update (March)

3.3 Site Visits

Due to the ongoing Covid restrictions the Committee was unable to undertake any site visits.

4. Challenges

As with the previous year due to Covid, the past year has been a challenging period for the Authority and the Committee has continued to be constructive in its role in scrutinising performance and contributing to policies and decisions. Social Care & Health area was placed under significant pressure during the Coronavirus pandemic, but everyone involved performed over and above expectations to ensure residents were well looked after.

The Scrutiny Committee has also seen an increase in the non-submissions received this year with a total of 16 non-submissions. This has had a noticeable impact on the Forward Work Programme with some meetings having a high number of reports presented and resulting in the cancellation of the final meeting in March.

5. Future Work

The Committee has made significant progress and will continue to concentrate on topics where Members' input will result in positive outcomes to drive forward service improvement. To ensure that the best use is being made of meeting time and with the benefit of the added value of pre-meetings, the Committee is keen to achieve a more streamlined scrutiny process.

The future work of the Committee will be considered as part of the Forward Work Programme planning session scheduled for the 15th June 2022. The FWP will continue to be monitored during the course of the year, together with the Cabinet Forward Work Programme.

6. Support for the Scrutiny Function

Support for Carmarthenshire County Council's Scrutiny function is provided by the Democratic Services Unit, based in the Administration & Law Division of the Chief Executive's Department.

Support for the Scrutiny function includes:

- Formulating, in accordance with the FWP, and despatching agendas for Scrutiny Committee meetings a minimum of 3 clear working days prior to the meeting;
- Providing support and constitutional advice to the Scrutiny Committees and to members of those Committees as well as producing minutes of their meetings and ensuring items arising from those meetings are actioned;
- Giving support and advice in relation to the functions of the Council's Scrutiny Committees to cabinet and non-cabinet members of the Council and its officers;
- Managing the strategic development of Scrutiny in Carmarthenshire through engaging in national and regional Scrutiny networks and initiatives, supporting the Chairs and Vice-Chairs of Scrutiny Forum and meetings of the Scrutiny Chairs and Vice-Chairs with the Cabinet;
- Advising and supporting the implementation of the requirements of the Local Government (Wales) Measure 2011 as and when guidance is published;

- Managing the co-ordination and development of the Scrutiny forward work programmes in conjunction with Scrutiny Committee members;
- Managing and co-ordinating Scrutiny review work, including the administration of scrutiny task and finish groups, assisting in writing reports in conjunction with the groups and assisting in the implementation and monitoring of completed reviews;
- Assisting with the Scrutiny member development programme.

For more information on Scrutiny in Carmarthenshire including forward work programmes, task and finish reports and annual reports, visit the County Council's website at: www.carmarthenshire.gov.wales/scrutiny

To contact the Democratic Services Unit, please call 01267 224028 or e-mail scrutiny@carmarthenshire.gov.uk

7. Attendance

Attendance by members of the Social Care & Health Scrutiny Committee during the 2021/22 municipal year is shown in the table below. A total of 6 meetings were held between 1st May 2021 and 30th April 2022. During the same period a total of 4 development meetings were held.

Scrutiny Committee Member	No. of Scrutiny meetings attended	%	No. of Development Sessions attended	%
Cllr. Sue Allen	5	83%	4	100%
Cllr. Kim Broom	6	100%	4	100%
Cllr. Ieuan Wyn Davies	5	83%	4	100%
Cllr. Karen Davies	5	83%	2	50%
Cllr. Rob Evans	4	67%	1	25%
Cllr. Tyssul Evans	5	83%	3	75%
Cllr. Amanda Fox (Resigned 14/07/21)	0	0%	0	0%
Cllr. Jean Lewis	5	83%	4	100%
Cllr. Ken Lloyd	6	100%	4	100%
Cllr. Kevin Madge	5	83%	2	50%
Cllr. Louvain Roberts	1	16%	0	0%
Cllr. Emlyn Schiavone	5	83%	4	100%
Cllr. Bill Thomas (Appointed 14/07/21)	4	100%	1	50%
Cllr. Gwyneth Thomas	6	100%	4	100%
Cllr. Dorian Williams	5	83%	2	50%
Substitutes	No. of meetings attended			
Cllr. Deryk Cundy	1			
Cllr. John James	1			
Cllr. Dai Nicholas	1			
Cllr. Bill Thomas (Prior to appointment)	1			
Cllr. Dai Thomas	1			
Cllr. Elwyn Williams	1			

Cabinet Member	No. of meetings attended
Cllr. Jane Tremlett	4
Cllr. Linda. D Evans	0
Cllr. David Jenkins	1
Cllr. Mair Stephens	1