

HEALTH & SOCIAL SERVICES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

MONDAY, 18 DECEMBER 2023

PRESENT: Councillor G.H. John (Chair) (In Person)

Councillors (In Person):

A. Evans H. Jones

Councillors (Virtually):

K. Davies M. Donoghue W.T. Evans (in place of B. Davies) M. James
D. Owen P.T. Warlow J. Williams

Also in attendance:

Councillor J. Tremlett, Cabinet Member for Health & Social Services

Also Present (In Person):

J. Morgan, Director of Community Services
A. Bracey, Head of Adult Social Care
G. Morgans, Director of Education & Children's Services
J. Coles, Head of Children and Families
A. Rees, Head of Strategy and Learner Support
G. Adams, Principal Manager - Youth Support Service
A. Jenkins, Social Worker Team Manager
R. Page, Senior Business Support Manager
R. Morris, Members Support Officer

Also Present (Virtually):

M. Evans Thomas, Principal Democratic Services Officer
D. Hall-Jones, Member Support Officer
E. Bryer, Democratic Services Officer

[**Note:** The Chair advised the Committee that, in accordance with Council Procedure Rule 2(3) he was going to vary the order of business on the agenda to enable Agenda Item 7 – Explanation for the Non-Submission of Scrutiny Report to be considered earlier in the meeting.]

Chamber - County Hall, Carmarthen. SA31 1JP and remotely - 2.00 - 3.30 pm

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors B. Davies, B.A.L. Roberts and F. Walters.

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

There were no declarations of personal interest or of any prohibited party whips.

Note: These minutes are subject to confirmation at the next meeting.

3. PUBLIC QUESTIONS (NONE RECEIVED)

The Chair advised that no public questions had been received.

4. ANNUAL YOUTH JUSTICE PLAN 2023/24

The Carmarthenshire Youth Justice Plan for 2023/24 was presented to the Committee.

The Youth Justice Plan outlined the provision of the Youth Support Service and the Youth Justice Team under a single management structure which provided a holistic approach to the delivery of youth support services across Carmarthenshire. The Youth Justice Plan also detailed the performance of the partnership during 2023/24 and also set out the priorities and improvement planning objectives for the forthcoming year in accordance with the overarching 'child first' principles and an ethos of continuous improvement.

The Cabinet Member for Health and Social Services reminded the Committee that there was an overlap in the portfolios and that it was only the Youth Justice Statutory element of the report that was under the remit of this Committee.

An explanation was provided as to how the Youth Justice Team was funded and that the budget showed an increase of 20% for 2023/24. However, it was noted that funding for the Youth Justice and Prevention work was short term and required careful planning and monitoring against the various grant sources.

A number of questions were raised to which officers responded. The main matters were as follows:

- In response to observations regarding the progress status on elements of the self-assessment action plan 2022/24 and if the target dates were realistic, officers advised that the plan was dynamic and geared towards reporting on the Youth Justice response to the HMIP inspection framework and guidance. It was stated that self-assessment remained important as it would drive the business forward. It was noted that the plan was an evolving working document and would be updated with items removed or added to reflect the needs of the service and changes to policy and statutory requirements. Officers informed the Committee that the outcome of the November HMIP inspection was very positive.
- In response to concerns raised regarding a child who was unwilling to be referred to CAMHS, reassurance was provided that other services could be accessed including the Youth Health Team and well trained practitioners. It was also stated that while a child could not be forced to accept medical interventions there were other mechanisms that were available to protect the child such as the Mental Health Act and the police powers of protection.
- In response to a query regarding the Bureau, the Committee were advised that it was a mechanism within the Dyfed Powys Police force

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designed to address offending in a child centred way. The system provided the child with opportunities for diversion from the justice system as out-of-court disposals are used where the police were of the view that a child could be dealt with and diverted away from the court system. The Bureau allows both the children and the victims to have their voices heard.

- Regarding the recruitment of staff the Committee was advised that since the report had been produced additional staff had been recruited but that sustainability needed to be considered when planning due to the current reliance on grant funding such as the Shared Prosperity Fund which would cease at the end of March 2025. The Committee was advised that almost 70% of the service was grant funded but that the team were proactively seeking alternative sources of funding.

UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED that the Carmarthenshire Youth Justice Plan for 2023/24 be received.

5. 2023/24 QUARTER 2 - PERFORMANCE REPORT RELEVANT TO THIS SCRUTINY CABINET VISION ACTION AND MEASURES

The Committee considered the 2023/24 Quarter 2 - Performance Report Relevant to this Scrutiny's Cabinet Vision Action and Measures. The report showed the progress as at the end of Quarter 2 – 2023/24 of the deliverables for the Cabinet Vision.

A number of questions were raised to which officers responded. The main matters were as follows:

- It was asked what were the issues that resulted in the adaptations backlog and what steps were being taken to alleviate the problems. Officers advised that two main causes of the backlog were the pandemic during which time work stopped followed by the chronic shrinkage of contractor availability. Assurance was provided that the number of outstanding smaller adaptations were being reduced quickly and that a new small works framework was being implemented which would allow the authority to work directly with smaller contractors and reduce the dependency on the larger contractors.
- In response to a query regarding access to Mental Health support, officers advised that they were looking at ways of working across adults and children services as it was acknowledged that if mental health issues were addressed early, it could prevent a lifetime of problems. Statistically, approximately 60% of adults diagnosed with mental health issues started before the age of 14 so it was a priority to ensure that people had access to the appropriate service at the right time. The service could be provided by third sector organisation, micro enterprise, the authority's well-being pathway or a child practitioner going in to assist families. It was stated that collaboration with the Health Board had improved along with the establishment of the 111 option 2 number to speak to a dedicated mental health practitioner. It was advised that the only solution was a collaborative working approach and that assisting people with low level anxiety or depression was important to prevent them from suffering with lifelong mental health issues.

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UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED that report be received.

**6. 2023/24 QUARTER 2 - PERFORMANCE REPORT (01/04/23-30/09/23)
RELEVANT TO THIS SCRUTINY**

The Committee considered the Performance Monitoring Report for Quarter 2, which set out the progress against actions and measures linked to the Corporate Strategy and the Well-being objectives relevant to the Committee's remit.

A number of questions were raised to which officers responded. The main matters were as follows:

- In response to a query regarding the off target flying start objective and the engagement with families, officers advised that there was good engagement however there was an expansion underway and that some areas posed a challenge.
- In response to a challenge regarding some of the targets and the monitoring of these target's officers advised that the report was merely a dashboard that provided the opportunity for members to ask questions but acknowledged that more evaluative comments would be appropriate and useful for the Committee.

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.

- 10 Year Social Services Strategy
- Annual Safeguarding Report
- Short breaks/community services for disabled children and their families
- Children Services – Action Plan

The Committee raised concerns regarding the number of late reports and the lack of reason for non-submission. Officers responded by confirming that the short breaks/community services for disabled children and their families report was not received due to an administrative oversight.

The Committee was advised that the Children Services Action Plan was being progressed in three phases and once fully completed would be submitted for scrutiny. The Committee advised officers that this was an area of concern that required monitoring and scrutiny and that a report would be required for the next meeting in January 2024 (Budget Consultation).

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

8. FORTHCOMING ITEMS

Note: These minutes are subject to confirmation at the next meeting.

RESOLVED that the list of forthcoming items to be considered at the next scheduled meeting on the 25th January, 2024 be noted.

9. **TO SIGN AS A CORRECT RECORD THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON THE 28TH NOVEMBER, 2023**

UNANAMOUSLY RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on the 28th November, 2023 be signed as a correct record.

CHAIR

DATE

Note: These minutes are subject to confirmation at the next meeting.