

3. PUBLIC QUESTIONS (NONE RECEIVED)

The Chair advised that no public questions had been received.

4. REVENUE & CAPITAL BUDGET MONITORING REPORT 2023/24

The Committee considered the Revenue and Capital Budget Monitoring Report in relation to the Health & Social Services, which provided an update on the latest budgetary position as at 29th February, 2024 in respect of the 2023/24 financial year.

The Health & Social Services was forecasting an overspend of £9,729k on the revenue budget. The main variances on capital schemes indicated a forecasted variance of -£267k against a net budget of £1,918k on social care projects, and a -£0k variance against the Children Services projects net budget of £716k.

Cabinet Member for Resources highlighted that the forecast budget overspend on Children Services was an area of significant concern to the corporate budget position and that a working group had investigated the reasons so the future demand could be managed and a balanced budget met.

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

Appendix A-C

- In response to a question regarding an update on the development of an in-house agency pilot in Llanelli, the Committee was informed that the pilot had been progressing but that it was still early days. It was noted that a further update could be provided at the next meeting.
- In relation to the £3.5m overspend in Commissioned Residential Placements, it was asked if the future forecast budget had been re-profiled to take into the account the potential savings that would be created by the provision of in-house capacity. The Cabinet Member for Resources stated that this was an area of concern for the Authority. Some cases had very complex needs and there was currently no provision available in Wales to meet the requirements. As an example it was stated that one placement currently cost the Authority £20k per week. Due to the service being demand led it was difficult to forecast. The Head of Children and Families advised that the social worker capacity had not yet been met and there was a further need to increase foster care placements which had dropped due to the pandemic. The emerging strategies would enable the department to manage the demand to support children and their families within the budget set by the Authority. Additionally, the Group Accountant stated that a significant amount had been allocated to Children and Family Services to help balance the immediate need and the longer-term funding as the new strategies come into effect. Through the Transformation Plan the budget would be carefully monitored and reviewed. When asked for confirmation regarding the reprofiling of the budget, Head of Children and Families advised the in-house service was around half the cost of the

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current provision and that it had been profiled into the budget to enable the delivery of a balanced budget.

- In response to a question regarding the overspend in Unaccompanied Asylum Seeker Children, it was asked if the Authority had reached the maximum allocated number of children. The Head of Children and Families advised that the figure had not been reached and that under the ratio provided by the Home Office the maximum was 37 children (under 18). It was noted that the young people would be moving through the system from children (under 18) to adults. This would result in continual intake of under 18s and that the challenge would be to ensure that the in-house support service was in place to support this. It was stated that there was no maximum number of over 18s that the Authority would be required to support.

Appendix E

- In response to a request for an update on the purchase of Plas Y Bryn, Cwmgwili, the Senior Delivery Manager for Long Term Care – Integrated Services, advised that a working group was currently in consultation with English counties and were looking at different models. It was noted that Plas Y Bryn would be a residential care that may potentially provide nursing care. It was asked that both the local community and the committee be kept informed of developments.

UNANAMOUSLY RESOLVED that the report be received.

5. DOMICILIARY CARE PERFORMANCE UPDATE

The Committee considered a report they had requested surrounding the current pressure on domiciliary care and the impact that this was having on hospital discharges. The report was to provide assurance that patients were being safely supported to leave hospital and outlined the pressures and how Carmarthenshire County Council was responding to those pressures.

This report was the fourth update the Committee had received which included the latest available data captured up to the middle of March 2024.

In response to a query regarding the increase in the number of overseas workers applying for sponsorship it was asked why the Authority had not been able to support these applications. Officers present were unable to answer but would advise the Committee following the meeting.

In response to a reference made regarding the robust approach to sickness management and what this meant in practice, officers advised that they would obtain a full response from the Domiciliary Care Manger following the meeting.

Officers were asked to provide examples of how productivity had been increased so that the service was more cost effective. The Senior Delivery Manager for Long Term Care advised that there was a home-based care model with pillars of care such as the Community Assessment Service, Re-enablement Service and the Release in Time to Care Service. With the Re-enablement service (the flow from hospital or prevention of admission to hospital) for people who were new to

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domiciliary care a rehabilitation strategy had been implemented to promote independence.

In relation to Direct Payments, it was asked if there was an estimate available of the number of cases in receipt of direct payments and the proportion of who were waiting for care packages. The Senior Manager for Children's Services and Adult Social Care noted that a similar question had previously been asked by the Committee and suggested that a detailed report in relation to direct payments across the different population groups including the type of support be provided at a future committee meeting.

UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED that the report be received and that a Direct Payment Report be included on the Forward Work Plan.

6. TASK & FINISH GROUP 2023/24 - "AN ACTIVE AND HEALTHY START"

The Committee received a revised report of the Task & Finish Group it had agreed to establish at its meeting on 5th July 2023, to develop an action plan to help reduce the incidence of childhood obesity in Carmarthenshire.

The recommendations contained within the report had been formulated by the Group following the consideration of a range of evidence over a series of meetings held between September 2023 and March 2024.

The Chair and the Task & Finish Group thanked the officers for all the work and guidance provided in developing the report. Thanks also to various organisations that were consulted during the research phase.

The Committee highlighted concerns regarding the impact of inequality had on obesity and stressed the importance of collaborative working in addressing the incidence of childhood obesity.

UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED that the report be approved and referred to the Cabinet for its consideration.

7. FAMILY SUPPORT STRATEGY

The Committee considered a report they had requested regarding the development of the Family Support Strategy.

The Committee was advised that the Family Support Strategy was due to be updated and that it would be replaced by the Early Help Strategy.

The report set out the rationale, approach and schedule for the development of the Strategy.

UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED that the report be received and that updates on the Early Help Strategy be added to the Forward Work Plan.

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

8. TO SIGN AS A CORRECT RECORD THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON THE 21ST MARCH, 2024

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on the 21st March, 2024 be signed as a correct record.

CHAIR

DATE

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