

PARTNERSHIPS SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Minutes of a meeting of the Partnerships Scrutiny Committee held in Conference Room 1a, County Hall, Ruthin on Thursday, 12 July 2012 at 9.30 am.

PRESENT

Councillors Brian Blakeley (Chair), Alice Jones (Vice-Chair), Pat Jones, Margaret McCarroll, Merfyn Parry and Bill Tasker.

Councillors Raymond Bartley, Bobby Feeley (Lead Member for Social Care and Children's Services) and Colin Hughes attended as Observers.

ALSO PRESENT

Assistant Director for Community Partnership, BCUHB (WT); Head of Children and Family Services (LR); Head of Adult and Business Services (PG); Head of Business Planning and Performance (AS); Commissioning and Evaluation Officer (JJH); Strategic Regeneration Manager (MD); Regional Manager, New Work Connections (ME); Senior European and External Funding Officer (SM-J); Regional Finance Officer, New Work Connections (HW); External Funding Claims Manager (AB); Scrutiny Co-ordinator (RE) and Committee Administrator (SLW).

1 APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Ann Davies, Meirick Davies, Peter Evans and Dewi Owens

2 DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

No Members declared any personal or prejudicial interests in any business identified to be considered at the meeting.

3 URGENT MATTERS AS AGREED BY THE CHAIR

No items were raised which in the opinion of the Chair, should be considered at the meeting as a matter of urgency pursuant to Section 100B(4) of the Local Government Act, 1972.

4 MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING

The minutes of a meeting of the Partnerships Scrutiny Committee held on 31st May 2012 were submitted.

RESOLVED that the Minutes be received and approved as a correct record.

5 AGREEMENT OF A JOINT SCHEME FOR THE PROVISION OF LOCAL PRIMARY MENTAL HEALTH SUPPORT SERVICES

The Head of Adult and Business Services (HABS) presented a report (previously circulated) for the Committee to agree a joint scheme for the provision of Local Primary Mental Health Support Services (LPMHSS) in North Wales, as required under Part 1 of the Mental Health (Wales) Measure 2010. HABS introduced the Assistant Director for Community Partnership Development, BCUHB, (AD:CPD) Wyn Thomas who was leading on the scheme on behalf of the Betsi Cadwaladr University Health Board (BCUHB) and the Head of Children and Family Services (HCFS) who was also involved with the scheme.

AD:CPD gave a résumé of the report. The Measure did not deal with compulsory admission and treatment of people, but dealt with the assessing and receiving of care and treatment within primary and secondary mental health services. The Measure was to strengthen the role of primary care in delivering effective mental health care and treatment and set out the requirement that LPMHSS would be provided throughout Wales by October 2012.

The Measure was in four parts:-

- Part 1 – Local Primary Mental Health Support Services (LPMHSS) (October 2012)
- Part 2 – Care co-ordination and care and treatment planning (June 2012)
- Part 3 – Assessments of former users of secondary mental health services (June 2012)
- Part 4 – Mental Health Advocacy (January and April 2012).

The report presented related to Part 1 of the Measure.

Local Authorities across North Wales were working together with BCU on this Measure. A number of questions on various aspects of the information contained in the report were raised by members and officers responded as follows:-

- AD:CPD gave an explanation regarding the levels of staffing. Conwy and Denbighshire already had in place the structure to assist with the Measure but, for example, Gwynedd did not. The guidance was for 1 worker per 20,000 population. Therefore, Conwy and Denbighshire did not require a high number of new staff as the model was virtually in place, whereas Gwynedd required an additional number of new staff.
- AD:CPD clarified that regarding the overall Measure, there had been consultation with various stakeholders, including some service users and the proposed North Wales implementation had been included as part of the consultation. The draft Scheme and its implementation was a requirement of Welsh Government (WG) legislation and the WG had developed a national service model for LPMHSS. There were service users who were members on the Project Board and, therefore, any information could be passed on from those meetings. Future engagement of service users was being investigated and a full review was taking place. The Scheme itself would be reviewed on a quarterly basis by the North Wales Mental Health Collaborative.

- The Head of Children and Family Services (HCFS) stated in his experience there had been service users involved as part of the overall process of drawing up the scheme.
- The emphasis of the Scheme was early intervention aimed at preventing service users being admitted into care and an element of any care plans drawn up would include the involvement of close family members and carers for the service users, as per Part 2 of the Measure. Occasionally, services users did not want family members to be involved. Whereas some service users with wider support, often felt able to cope if family members were more involved. The best care provided was not only professional but also when included family support as it was the family who noticed changes, however slight, with the service user.
- AD:CPD stated in theory the Measure should alleviate some of the pressure on GP surgeries as the Measure should give GPs quicker access to mental health treatment. Workers would spend time within the GP Practice assessing and referring cases. GP accommodation though, could be a problem, as if GP's could not provide the service within their premises, then the service would have to be provided elsewhere. The knowledge of both the GP's and the Practice staff would be improved by working closely with the staff involved with the assessments. Monitoring of the referrals and demands on the LPMHSS and their associated activities would take place as, if demand increased, there would be service implications. The monitoring would be carried out jointly by BCU and the local authority. BCU currently monitor elements within various Measures and the results are reported to the WG.

The Lead Member for Social Care and Children's Services stated overall the Measure was a good one. She could see initially that the Service may identify more people as needing these services, particularly with people living longer and the increase in the number of people diagnosed with Alzheimer's Disease, therefore, she was concerned about the potential cost and how this would be met in future across the region.

The Vice-Chair stated one in four people in the county suffer from mental health problems and GP's would require training on this scheme. In response to a question about the qualifications of the workers carrying out the assessments the AD:CPD confirmed that the Health Board would employ primary health workers. Psychiatric nurses, social workers, qualified therapists etc., who were recruited within defined professions and possessed the required qualifications to carry out the assessments. They would work in GP surgeries part-time, possibly one day per week and assess a person's needs. If a person had more serious mental health needs, a referral would be made.

In response to other questions the AD:CPD advised that:-

- With respect to the take up of beds within the Ablett Unit which was an acute ward, with a limit of six weeks for a service user to have the use of the bed, the occupancy figures were high, 80% and pressure regarding take up of beds did exist.

- Unllais was a voluntary organisation which gave advice, and undertook training for voluntary sector organisations. Unllais also dealt with advocacy services and supported a range of other organisations.
- GP's were being encouraged to prescribe anti-depressant drugs effectively. There was a service in North Wales for people taking prescription drugs to assist them to eventually come off these. Occasionally, drugs were prescribed in the absence of intervention.

The Chair expressed concern regarding the help offered to carers and questioned whether sufficient help was offered. The AD:CPD clarified that the Measure did not directly affect carers but that the Carers Strategies (Wales) Measure 2010 which required NHS authorities in Wales to develop Carers Strategies which have to be approved by WG Ministers by the end October, 2012 should ensure that carers needs are met. The Committee:-

Resolved that :

- (a) *subject to the above observations, to agree with the requirement to have a scheme in place for Part 1 of the Measure and the arrangements to develop and agree the regional scheme which has been established;*
- (b) *the Lead Member keep Partnerships Scrutiny Committee updated regarding the progress with the implementation and the monitoring of the Scheme; and*
- (c) *an update report of the progress with the implementation of the Joint Scheme be presented at future Partnerships Scrutiny Committee meeting in either March/April 2013.*

6 TENDERING AND AWARD PROCESS FOR THE FAMILIES FIRST PROGRAMME FUNDING FROM APRIL 2012

The Head of Business Planning and Performance (HBPP) presented a report (previously circulated) to provide the Partnerships Scrutiny Committee with detail of the tendering and award process for the commissioning of services to support the Families First Programme in Denbighshire and to update the Committee on the current position in relation to the commissioning of Families First Strategic Projects for the 2012-2014 financial period.

HBPP gave some background to the process.

In 2011/2012 funding was secured from Cymorth and the method for its distribution had been decided by the partners of Children and Young People's Strategic Partnerships Programme Board (CYPSPPB) of which Denbighshire County Council was a lead partner. The majority of the funds were given in small grants to groups, some of whom successfully utilised the money. However, 2011/2012 was a transition year between the former Cymorth funding and the new Families First initiative and the projects who successfully bid for funding in 2011/2012 were made aware from the outset that the funding would cease at the end of March 2012. Because of this, each organisation had been encouraged and assisted to develop an exit strategy to assist them to manage the changes ahead. The Welsh Government had closely monitored where the funding had been allocated in previous years and the rules around the new Families First initiative were quite stringent and specific that monies allocated in future would have to be for the

purpose of alleviating and combating child poverty and to support vulnerable families. In the past it had been extremely difficult to monitor a larger number of organisations who had received funding and this had caused major problems.

As lead partner it was Denbighshire's job to switch where funds had been spent over the last 5 years to new priorities. This had been controversial and very difficult to do. It meant some organisations could no longer bid for funding as they did not meet the criteria. To qualify for Families First Programme funding bids had to demonstrate that they would support the delivery of Outcome 4 of the Local Service Board's Single Integrated Plan, the BIG Plan, which was that "vulnerable families in Denbighshire are supported to live a life free from poverty, where they can be independent and flourish."

The CYPSPPB had established a multi-agency Project Board to manage and commission bids for funding. It had decided on the nine funding streams that would help deliver the above outcome. The Board had also decided to use a tendering process for allocation of the funds. There was a clear criteria of what was being done and how the money was to be distributed. Support and information was also given to potential providers to assist them with the tendering process.

A large number of tenders were received and at the end, out of 9 themes/strands, 7 were commissioned and in place by April 2012.

Family Support and Disability service elements were unable to be commissioned at that time as the Panel was not convinced that the tenders received could deliver what was required. Consequently, it was decided to go out to re-tender on the Family Support element to enable the scale of services to be upgraded as this element would continue for another 3-4 years. Funding was available for the upkeep of services until a new service was in place in September 2012. This funding and the service level agreement in place with Denbighshire Homestart would assist with caseloads and working through the transition process. Eligible clients would be moved into new services following the letting of the successful tender. The whole process had been more complicated than originally planned but overall it meant improved value for money and improved services for clients. The whole programme was planned to be in place by September, 2012.

With respect to the Disability element, as the funding was only available up to 2014, the Disability Panel had recently concluded that provision of 4 out of 6 of the original areas could be covered, therefore, the amount paid would be reduced to take into account the interim provision provided by Cyfle Barnardo's Cymru.

In response to members' questions officers advised that:-

- They were working with the Partnerships and Communities Manager to see if the take up of free school meals, which would draw down a premium entitlement, could be improved and worked into the scheme.
- With respect to the decision not to let the 'Family Support' tender to Homestart, which had been a huge disappointment to a number of councillors, £20,000 had been given to Homestart to carry on working for the first quarter and this had now been extended until the end of August to cover

the summer period – the funding would be in place until the tender was let in order to assist with the transition and not to affect or disrupt the lives of the families in need of support.

- The issue with Homestart was that it only dealt with children under 5 and even though it mainly operated using volunteers, its running costs were extremely high. There was a need to work with a whole age range of children not just the under 5's. Homestart had submitted a tender for the work they currently carried out and not for services which were to be commissioned as per the tender specification.
- It was emphasised that every organisation had been given more than one year's notice for the changes. The objective of seeking tenders was to improve the service.
- Measurable outcomes had been devised for each of the contracts and these could be reported on to the Committee in future. The HBPP agreed to attend a future Partnership Scrutiny Meeting in January 2013 to update the Committee.

Following a detailed discussion it was:-

RESOLVED that:-

- (a) *subject to the above observations, the Committee supported the processes and decisions recommended by the Families First Project Board as endorsed at special meetings of the Children and Young People's Strategic Partnership (CYPSP); and*
- (b) *the Head of Business Planning and Performance reports back to the Committee in January 2013 on the progress achieved in implementing and delivering the services commissioned and consequently outcome 4 of the BIG Plan.*

7 NEW WORK CONNECTIONS REPORT

The Regional Manager of New Work Connections (RM) presented a report (previously circulated) and gave a presentation providing information to the Committee regarding the New Work Connections Project. Further information relating to the Project's performance, expenditure profile and risk management measures were circulated to members at the meeting. RM introduced colleagues who were also in attendance:-

- Sian Morgan-Jones, Senior European and External Funding Officer
- Helen Whitear, Regional Finance Officer, New Work Connections and
- Andy Brackley, External Funding Claims Manager

New Work Connections project was supporting a range of disadvantaged people into education, training and employment. The project covered the four local authority areas of Anglesey, Conwy, Denbighshire and Gwynedd (part of the former Objective 1 area and now part of the area entitled to Convergence funding) with Denbighshire as the Lead Sponsor. RM informed the Committee of the context of the project, what New Work Connections were aiming to do and what outcomes they were aiming to achieve.

Within Denbighshire £4,160,000 had been secured from European Social Funding and £2,906,000 match funding. A Partnership Agreement was in place to make sure of compliance with the Welsh European Funding Office (WEFO) rules.

The project's aim was to reduce economic inactivity and to improve employment levels and individuals' skills sets. It helped people overcome barriers and achieve goals for sustainable employment. New Work Connections had an agreement with Job Centre Plus whereby New Work Connections were on the top of their list to work with.

New Work Connections reported to:-

- Welsh European Funding Office
- were included in the Council's Corporate Plan
- Service Business Plan
- North Wales Social Services Improvement Collaborative within Denbighshire and other local authorities.

In response to members' questions officers advised that:-

- the impact of the Department of Work & Pension's "Work Programme" had meant that the project had had to reprofile it's outputs and expenditure.
- the project also fitted in with a number of the Council's regeneration and other priorities e.g. Rhyl Going Forward and Rhyl City Strategy and in recent months the project had been active in the south of the county as well as the north.
- whilst there was always an element of risk that WEFO could clawback some of the grant funding WEFO officials were always keen to stress that this risk was reduced as long as the Project could evidence with data that all reasonable steps had been taken to deliver the fundings objectives i.e. the delivery of better outcomes for individuals;
- an exit strategy was currently under development in readiness for when the funding would come to an end in the spring of 2014, as there was some considerable level of uncertainty on what exactly would come in its place.

Following detailed discussion, it was:-

Resolved that:-

- (a) *subject to the above observations, the Committee was satisfied that all areas listed in paragraph 3 of the report were being complied with; and*
- (b) *the Regional Manager of New Work Connections report back to the Committee in June 2013 on the Project's progress in delivering positive sustainable outcomes for the county's residents and for the Council itself as the project's lead sponsor.*

8 REGIONAL COLLABORATION ON ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

The Strategic Regeneration Manager (SRM) presented a report (previously circulated) setting out the development of a strategy to address the relative performance of the economy of North Wales compared to that of the other parts of Wales and the UK, and the creation by the region's six unitary authorities of a Board which will oversee the delivery of the strategy. The North Wales economy had a low level of productivity (71% of the UK average), low levels of new firm formation and high levels of youth unemployment.

The report looked at how the six unitary authorities engaged with other stakeholders and the voluntary sector. There was a proposal to have a business charter and to reinvigorate the approach to inward investment.

Three themes had emerged from the workshops and discussions held across the region and the proposal was to focus on these themes and incorporate them into an action plan. The themes being:-

- Environment and Energy sector
- Advanced manufacturing
- "Destination North Wales" – how to promote the area

The first job for the Board would be to develop a Business Plan, and by working together the six authorities would have a stronger unified voice. In terms of taking it forward, the report was to be presented at Cabinet on 17th July 2012. The other five local authorities were also presenting their reports to their various Cabinets.

The North Wales Economic Ambition Board would comprise of elected members from each authority and it seemed that the portfolio holder with responsibility for regeneration would be an appropriate member to serve on the Board. Each Council's member on the Board would be expected to communicate information on the Board's work and discussions to their respective authority. If Denbighshire, when deciding on its corporate priorities for the term of the new Council did decide that economic ambition was to be one of its priorities, an internal programme board would most likely be established and there could potentially be scrutiny members serving on that internal board.

The Vice-Chair raised the issue of whether St. Asaph Business Park could be considered a success. She stated that half of the business units appeared to be empty and there were 50,000 square metres of vacant space available to let. Companies had originally moved on to the business park having been enticed by grant funding, but when the grant funding coming to an end, some companies had relocated. There was an urgent need to encourage private companies to the area, encourage the establishment and growth of local businesses and boost youth employment.

The SRM confirmed the approach being proposed would address the following issues:-

- Whether buildings were available and in the most appropriate locations

- Was the required infrastructure available
- Prospective employers needed to know if there were people with the relevant skills etc.

The Committee agreed that it wanted to see a holistic approach developed for economic development, which had regard for local needs, looking at the infrastructure of the region, the skills base and opportunities available in order to build upon them and improve skills (particularly young people's skills and qualifications). Greater emphasis should be placed in future on attracting private sector investment and on nurturing local people/businesses to consider establishing or expanding their businesses so that a much broader range of opportunities were available for people of all ages in the area. In addition a balance needed to be struck between inward investment, ambition, innovation and regulation in order to develop a sustainable economy for the long term. There was a strong feeling that regulation at present stifled private businesses and innovation. It was:-

Resolved that subject to the above the Committee support:-

- the principles of the Economic Ambition – a Strategy of Change document as presented with the report;*
- the proposal to form the Economic Ambition Board and its draft constitution as set out in appendix 2 to the report; and*
- that an update on the Strategy for Change document and the establishment of a Regional Economic Ambition Board be provided to the Committee in early 2013.*

9 SCRUTINY WORK PROGRAMME

The Scrutiny Co-ordinator presented a report (previously circulated) seeking the Committee to review the draft Forward Work Programme which provided an update on relevant issues.

An amended Forward Work Programme had been distributed at the meeting following changes since the previous circulation. The following changes were agreed to the forward work programme:-

27 September:-

- Regional Collaboration Project on CCTV – to be deferred to a future meeting, date to be confirmed.
- Youth Justice Service – to be moved to 8th November meeting.

8 November:-

- N E Wales Hub Food Waste Project – to be moved to 27 September meeting.
- Conwy & Denbighshire Local Safeguarding Children's Board (LSCB) Annual Report - The Scrutiny Co-ordinator to confirm whether this could be moved forward to 27 September meeting

The National Health Service Strategic Reviews were to be published that day (12th July 2012), therefore the Scrutiny Co-ordinator recommended a Workshop Group

as previously agreed by the Committee to discuss the findings. Two dates were agreed:-

- 20th July 2012 @ 3.30pm
- 8th August @ 9.30am

The Scrutiny Co-ordinator informed the Committee that every six months, Partnerships Scrutiny meet with BCU to discuss issues, usually 2 or 3 subjects. It was suggested a special meeting be organised to deal with this in either October or November. All present agreed the date of 11th October at 9.30am for the meeting.

Member representatives for Service Challenge Group were required for 4 vacancies as follows:-

- Adult & Business Services – Councillor Alice Jones volunteered.
- Business Planning & Performance - vacancy
- Finance & Assets – Councillor Merfyn Parry volunteered
- Strategic Human Resources – vacancy

A representative was also required for the Conwy and Denbighshire Collaboration Programme Board for which Councillor Pat Jones volunteered.

RESOLVED that subject to the above:-

- (a) The Forward Work Programme be approved;*
- (b) The above named members be appointed to serve as the Committee's representatives on the Service Challenge Groups and the Conwy and Denbighshire Collaboration Programme Board.*

10 FEEDBACK FROM COMMITTEE REPRESENTATIVES

Councillor Alice Jones confirmed she had been appointed on the North Wales Fire and Rescue Authority and on its Executive Panel. She had also attended a meeting of the Strategic Investment Group (SIG) which had discussed the proposed developments for Ruthin Leisure Centre and Prestatyn Library.

The meeting concluded at 1.20pm