

PARTNERSHIPS SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Minutes of a meeting of the Partnerships Scrutiny Committee held in County Hall, Ruthin on Thursday, 20 December 2012 at 9.30 am.

PRESENT

Councillors Brian Blakeley (Chair), Joan Butterfield, Ann Davies, Meirick Davies, Alice Jones (Vice-Chair), Pat Jones, Margaret McCarroll, Dewi Owens and Bill Tasker.

ALSO PRESENT

Corporate Director: Moderising and Wellbeing (SE), Head of Business, Planning and Performance (AS), North Wales Commissioning Hub Manager (VP), Partnerships and Communities Manager (DH), Performance Planning Officer (EH), Scrutiny Coordinator (RE), Democratic Services Officer (RAH) and Administrative Officer (CW).

1 APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Merfyn Parry and Huw Williams

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

(i) The minutes of a meeting of the Partnerships Scrutiny Committee held on Thursday, 8th November, 2012 were submitted.

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

(ii) The minutes of a special meeting of the Partnerships Scrutiny Committee held on Thursday, 5th December, 2012 were submitted.

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

5 BIG PLAN: PERFORMANCE UPDATE

A copy of a report by the Performance and Planning Officer, which provided an update on the performance of the Local Service Board (LSB) and Partnerships in

delivering The BIG Plan: Part I, 2011-14, and a 'Summary Exceptions Report', supported by more detailed chapters for each of The BIG Plan's eight outcomes, had been circulated with the papers for the meeting.

It was explained that Denbighshire The BIG Plan: 2011-14 (TBP), which was being delivered collaboratively with partner agencies, was the plan driving Partnership working in Denbighshire. The LSB was accountable for TBP and held partner agencies which included Betsi Cadwaladr University Health Board (BCUHB), the third sector, NW Police, NW Fire and Rescue Service, Public Health Wales and Denbighshire County Council, responsible for implementing action plans to deliver The BIG Plan and its eight outcomes. The value of partnership working in delivering The BIG Plan would be examined in more detail in annual and closure reports.

The report provided exceptions information for each outcome which allowed Members to focus on areas of weakness. Partners were halfway through the timescale for delivery and some elements required focus and prioritisation in order to recognise improved outcomes for people in Denbighshire. Areas highlighted included extending support for older people across the County; addressing the challenges facing Rhyl Town Centre; improving support for young carers; suicide and self-harm prevention; protecting vulnerable people from fire and reviewing partners' contribution to the Economic and Community Ambition Strategy. It was explained that a very small number of actions had been planned to start in 2013 with respect to Outcome 8. The Head of Business, Planning and Performance (HBPP) explained that there were extensive, intractable problematic issues which could take a considerable length of time to address. However, they were currently assessing if progress was being made in addressing the problems.

In response to questions from Members, the Corporate Director: Moderising and Wellbeing (CD:MW) confirmed that the indicators of success for rural areas and mental health and wellbeing had not been robust enough. This had resulted in a weaker understanding of the impact of TBP and it was confirmed that the indicators would be reviewed. Some outcomes had not been adequately measured within existing delivery mechanisms and although this had not impacted upon delivery, performance reporting had suffered in some instances, particularly in respect of Outcome 1. This matter would be resolved as local strategic partnership structures, including Health, Social Care and Wellbeing and Children and Young People's Partnership, were confirmed.

The Committee noted the importance of accurate and timely data collection and good quality reporting to enable effective performance management and partnership decision making. Mechanisms were in place for gathering evidence of the impact of the interventions on people's lives, and work was underway to map Partnership resources. Details relating to this information would be included in the annual report and end of plan report. It was confirmed that there had been no major obstacles in delivering TBP to date and the Committee were assured that officers were confident that TBP would be delivered.

Officers explained that the Corporate Plan had been aligned with TBP and that there was synergy between the seven Corporate Plan Priorities and The BIG Plan's

eight outcomes. The BCUHB was currently managing an intensive consultation on NHS changes and these would impact on TBP, particularly in respect of joint working models, service configuration and locality-based healthcare. TBP was an important strategic document which underpinned service delivery quality in a number of areas and any problems with performance may have future implications for the Council's finances

The Partnerships and Communities Manager (PCM) referred to the Summary Exceptions Report and provided a brief précis of the 8 Outcomes. She provided an in depth summary of Outcome 1: "Older people lead independent and fulfilled lives" as an example of the compilation of the information embodied within each of the respective Chapters.

The officers responded to the following questions and issues raised by Members of the Committee:-

- In reply to concerns raised by the Chair and Councillors M. McCarroll and M.LI. Davies the CD:MW and the PCM explained that issues pertaining to low birth weight in the County and poorer attainment of children accessing free school meals were unacceptable, but were improving and plans had been introduced to address these problems. The officers agreed that a note be circulated to Members outlining the Council's current position in respect of the take up on free school meals and outlining the proactive action being taken in this area and to ensure that children in receipt of free school meals were not stigmatised.

- The PCM responded to concerns raised by Councillor J.A. Davies in respect of Outcome 3 and the assessment of achievements of young carers. She explained that the Welsh Government response confirmed that the Carers Measure had been considered to be a proactive strategy which would raise greater awareness and increase the identification of young and adult carers. It was confirmed that in future more robust data would be available to identify young carers and their attendance and attainment at school and there had been an increase in responsibility on Health to identify and support carers through the Carers Measure. Reference was made to the remit of the Regional Carers Strategy Group and that funding provision was currently an unresolved issue.

- Councillor J. Butterfield requested details regarding the number, accountability and Member involvement with regard to the various Boards and structures which had been established. She also made reference to opportunities through Day Care Centres, Benefit Reform and the impact of the Rhyl Going Forward Plan in relation to the effect on businesses and shops on Rhyl High Street. The HBPP outlined the purpose of the report which had been to provide detailed information and guidance for future progress through collaboration with partners. He highlighted the importance of the work undertaken through the various forums and partnership structures which would involve the inclusion of Members of the Council. The HBPP explained that a report in respect of this matter would be submitted to the Local Service Board and could also be presented to the Scrutiny Committee for consideration.

- The PCM made reference to Outcome 4 which addressed a number of the concerns raised by Councillor W.N. Tasker regarding homelessness, supported accommodation and house share provision. The CD:MW referred to the House Share Crisis Intervention Project and the work being undertaken with regard to the possible implications of the Welfare Reforms and the benefit implications for young people. She explained that Denbighshire had been proactive in addressing issues relating to homelessness, particular reference being made to the work undertaken by the Housing Options Team, assistance provided for Supported Housing Projects, the lodging scheme and the Night Stop Project. The HBPP referred to the Corporate Plan and confirmed that “ensuring access to good quality housing” was one of the Council’s main priorities for the next 5 years.

- In reply to questions from Councillor M.LI. Davies, the PCM provided details of the age distinctions for persons identified as older people and the age group classifications for Young Carers. The CD:MW confirmed that there was an awareness regarding the implications of the Welfare Reforms in terms of homelessness and housing issues, particularly with regard to young persons.

- Councillor E.A. Jones explained that many of the issues of concern raised related to historic problems and she emphasised the importance of family values and the need to educate parents. Councillor Jones referred to the poverty experienced in the rural areas and the need to unite and link rural communities. The PCM explained that the Families First report, scheduled to be presented to the Committee in January 2013, would address many of the issues raised in respect of the family focus.

- Reference was made by Councillor M. McCarroll to the success of the ‘Y Dyfodol’/The Future Projects, which provided safe temporary accommodation for young homeless people in need of housing related services. The Project’s aim had been to enable individuals to access employment or training and move on to permanent accommodation and independent living.

- The CD:MW provided a detailed response to questions from Councillor J. Butterfield in relation to the Local Service Board and Multi Agency Boards delivery responsibilities and funding provision. The HBPP emphasised that the report detailed current activity and confirmed that it had been anticipated that service provision could be improved through partnership working utilising existing resources by adopting a coordinated approach.

Following a brief discussion, it was:-

RESOLVED – *that the Committee:-*

- (a) receive and note the contents of the report;*
- (b) agrees that a further progress report be presented to the Committee in six months time, and*
- (c) receives a report from the Head of Business, Planning and Performance outlining the composition and membership of all Programme and Project Boards which the Council host or participate in, their funding structures,*

membership and the elements of all Plans and Strategies which they are charged with delivering.

6 REGIONAL COMMISSIONING HUB FOR HIGH-COST LOW VOLUME PLACEMENTS

A copy of a report by the North Wales Commissioning Hub Manager, which provided information regarding the operation of North Wales Commissioning Hub, had been circulated with the papers for the meeting.

The Corporate Director: Modernising and Wellbeing introduced the report which provided a progress update on the development and operation of the North Wales Commissioning Hub (NWCH) for social care, health and education care home placements. An overview had been included as Appendix 1 to the report.

The North Wales Commissioning Hub Manager (NWCHM) explained that the NWCH was a collaborative project between the 6 North Wales Councils and BCU Health Board, which had been established based on a Full Business Case. The NWCH encompassed children and adults' services, in partnership with the NHS, and was hosted by Denbighshire. It was accountable to a Management Board which was chaired by the Corporate Director: Modernising and Wellbeing.

The following four main functions of the NWCH were summarised by the NWCHM:-

- Ensuring value for money in current high cost placements.
- Sourcing new placements through a transparent process and ensuring value for money.
- Monitoring the quality of services.
- Working with partners to develop the market in a bid to ensure that services were able to meet current and future demand.

The NWCH had developed underpinning systems and processes to enable it to operate effectively. Capacity had been invested in meeting with operational teams of all partners to ensure that the role of NWCH was understood and that internal changes were introduced accordingly. A copy of the work programme had been included as Appendix 2 to the report.

Annual cashable savings of £298,000 had been made which included a saving of £20,000 for Denbighshire, plus cost avoidance of £27,000 across the region. In addition there had been annual savings of £209,000 arising from negotiation on Learning Disability care home placements. It was confirmed that the Council's contribution to the annual running cost of NWCH had been £12,615.

Members were informed that the NWCH had sourced 51 placements between August and November 2012. Other work underway included the development of a regional Approved Provider Framework for children's residential placements and a quality monitoring framework for adult services. Following the development of the Framework the Quality Monitoring Officer now had a schedule of visits to carry out on behalf of Denbighshire.

The NWCHM confirmed that the NWCH contributed to the delivery of Denbighshire's Corporate Priorities and would help ensure that the Council secured good quality and value for money services. The Council's Medium Term Financial Plan assumed cashable savings of £25k could be made this year and £100k for next year. In reply to questions relating to the risk matrix prepared for the Management Board not having been signed off, it was explained that the risk matrix was linked to the full business case and it was confirmed that there were no significant major risks and that it was a matter of refinement.

All partners had been consulted on the Full Business Case and the NWCH was currently commencing engagement with Providers on proposed developments. Members agreed that the Partnerships Scrutiny Committee should periodically monitor and evaluate the HUB's effectiveness in commissioning quality services and realising value for money.

In reply to questions from Councillor P.M. Jones, the NWCHM confirmed that there were currently 30 providers, 9 of which were in North Wales, which were used for children's placements. She explained that children had been placed in neighbouring North Wales county areas, the North West of England and other areas of the UK. However, the number of placements had reduced significantly during the past two to three years. Officers provided details of estimated costs which related to the type of placement and the needs and requirements of service users. It was explained that links were being developed with other commissioning bodies to assist in ensuring best value for money.

The NWCHM responded to issues raised by Councillor M.LI. Davies and provided details of the reviewing process adopted in respect of the service and facility provided for placements. She confirmed that there were instances where the Welsh language needs of Welsh speaking placements outside the county were not always fully met. She explained that in all instances there would be a need to assess the needs of the service user and in some cases it would not be possible to meet all the needs identified.

The CDMW referred to the collaboration process and explained that the work undertaken to date had been very encouraging in terms of the savings being made, quality monitoring and the relationships being developed through partnership working.

In response to questions from Councillor J. Butterfield, the NWCHM outlined the process adopted by the NWCH to address budget issues through the contingency budget. The NWCH assisted in ensuring that best value and quality was obtained when securing placements and the Committee were provided with details of the funding process for out of County placements. It was confirmed that the NWCH worked closely with the Care and Social Services Inspectorate Wales (CSSIW), who were represented on the Regional Quality Management Group, and details of the roles in terms of inspection responsibilities and quality issues were provided for Members. In reply to a request from Councillor Butterfield, it was agreed that an item relating to the costs for residential care provision be included in the Committee's forward work programme. The Corporate Director: Moderising and

Wellbeing explained that a date for the submission of the report would be confirmed following consultation with the Head of Adult and Business Services.

During the ensuing discussion Members agreed that a further update report in respect of the progress of the North Wales Commissioning Hub be included in the Future Work Programme for submission in six months. Following a request from Councillor E.A. Jones it was agreed that the report also include details pertaining to the scoping of high cost dementia placements.

Following a brief discussion, it was:-

RESOLVED – *that the Committee:-*

(a) receive and note the contents of the report.

(b) agrees that a further report on the progress of the North Wales Commissioning Hub, including details of the scoping of high cost dementia placements, be included in the forward work programme for submission in six months, and

(c) requests a report on the cost for Residential Care provision be included in the forward work programme .

7 SCRUTINY WORK PROGRAMME

A copy of a report by the Scrutiny Coordinator seeking the Committee to review its draft Forward Work Programme (FWP) and which provided an update on relevant issues had been circulated with the papers for the meeting. The Cabinet's FWP had been included as Appendix 2 to the report. A table summarising recent Committee resolutions and advising members on progress with their implementation had been attached at Appendix 3 to the report.

Members were informed that, within in their remit, the Communities Scrutiny Committee would be considering a report on the Rhyl Going Forward Project on the 17th January, 2013 and non-Committee Members would be welcome to attend.

Under the Council's scrutiny arrangements the Scrutiny Chairs and Vice-Chairs Group (SCVCG) performed the role of a coordinating Committee. The Group had met on the 13th December, 2012 when it had considered a request to arrange visits in respect of the Community Living Scheme. The Group agreed that the visits should be undertaken adopting a similar format to the current rota visits to Social Care Establishments. Invitations would be extended to the Lead Member, the relevant Social Care Champion and the Local Member(s) for the respective Ward.

Following consideration of an item relating to the Community Safety Partnership by Partnerships Scrutiny, in September 2012, the Committee had asked the SCVCG to determine which Committee should investigate in detail the issue of alcohol related anti social behaviour problems in town centres. The Group had concluded that this item would be within the remit of the Partnerships Scrutiny Committee as it was the Council's designated Crime and Disorder Scrutiny Committee. In reply to a question from Councillor E.A. Jones, it was explained that this issue was a County wide matter and not specifically related to Rhyl. Members agreed that prior to consideration of the issue that the Scrutiny Coordinator should liaise with the

relevant officers regarding the scale of the problem and report back to the Committee in January.

It was explained by the Scrutiny Coordinator that the issue pertaining to CCTV had been considered by the SCVCG, and they had reallocated this item to the Performance Scrutiny Committee for consideration in March or April 2013.

Following receipt of a request from Councillor D. Owens, the Scrutiny Coordinator had liaised with the Senior Engineer: Flood Risk Management regarding the report on the Flood Risk Areas within Denbighshire, scheduled in the Committee's Forward Work Programme for April, 2013. The Corporate Director: Moderising and Wellbeing explained that a number of reports were currently being compiled into the November 2012 flooding incidents in St. Asaph and Ruthin, and that an independent investigation was being commissioned. Members agreed that in addition to the report on the Flood Risk Areas within Denbighshire, which outlined the general statutory responsibility with respect to flood risk management, a report relating to the recent flooding incidents be included in the Forward Work Programme for consideration at the April 2013 meeting. The Committee also agreed that Meic Davies, Regional Flood Risk Manager and a Planning expert from the Environment Agency be invited to attend the meeting.

Members considered the Committee's Forward Work Programme for April, 2013 and agreed that the business items pertaining to "Capacity of the Protection of Vulnerable Adults Unit" and "Potential for Collaborative Domiciliary Care provision with respect to rural areas of the County" be rescheduled to an alternative date.

RESOLVED – *that, subject to the above, the Partnership Scrutiny Committee approves the Future Work Programme as set out in Appendix 1 to the report.*

8 FEEDBACK FROM COMMITTEE REPRESENTATIVES

No updates from committee representatives on the various Council boards and groups were given.

Meeting ended at 12.35 p.m.