

PARTNERSHIPS SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Minutes of a meeting of the Partnerships Scrutiny Committee held in County Hall, Ruthin on Thursday, 31 January 2013 at 9.30 am.

PRESENT

Councillors Joan Butterfield, Meirick Davies, Alice Jones (Vice-Chair), Pat Jones, Margaret McCarroll, Dewi Owens, Merfyn Parry, Bill Tasker, Huw Williams and and Co-opted Members C. Burgess, G. Greenland, D. Houghton, N. Lewis and Dr D. Marjoram. Councillors J.R. Bartley, W.M. Mullen-James, D. Simmonds, E.W. Williams attended as Observers.

ALSO PRESENT

Corporate Director: Modernising and Wellbeing (SE), Head of Legal and Democratic Services (GW), Head of Education (KE), Head of Business, Planning and Performance (AS), Head of Adult and Business Services (PG), Commissioning and Evaluation Officer (JJH), Commissioning Officer (CW), Service Manager: Business and Carers (AHJ), Primary and Community Programme Services Manager (JE) and Carers Co-ordinator (AD) BCU Representatives, Scrutiny Coordinator (RE) and Administrative Officer (CIW).

1 APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Brian Blakeley and Ann Davies

In the absence of the Chair, Councillor B. Blakeley, the Vice Chair, Councillor E.A. Jones took the Chair for the meeting.

The Chair and Members of the Committee wished Councillors B. Blakeley and J.A. Davies a speedy recovery following their recent illness.

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 Special Partnerships Scrutiny Committee held on Thursday, 29th November, 2012 were submitted.

Matters arising:-

5. Update on Locality Working in Denbighshire, Dashboard Length of Stay – At the request of the Chair, the Corporate Director: Modernising and Wellbeing (CD:MW) agreed that further background information, including current and previous figures, with regard to the length of stay could be provided in respect of this issue.

RESOLVED – *that, subject to the above, the Minutes be received and approved as a correct record.*

(ii) The Minutes of a meeting of the Partnerships Scrutiny Committee held on Thursday, 20th December, 2012 were submitted.

Matters arising:-

5. BIG PLAN Performance Update – In reply to questions from the Chair, the Scrutiny Coordinator explained that issues raised pertaining to the take up of free school meals had been addressed in the Information Brief. She also confirmed that the Information Brief provided an update on the work being undertaken by the Rhyl Outreach Project with regard to alcohol related anti-social behaviour problems in town centres and other area in the County. Arising from the information received Councillor J. Butterfield felt it would be useful if a meeting could be facilitated with representatives from the Rhyl Outreach Project to discuss their work, achievements to date and any barriers to further improvement in this field. Consequently, the Committee nominated Councillor Butterfield to meet with Outreach representatives on the Committee's behalf and report back to the Committee in due course.

In reply to concerns raised by Councillor M.LI. Davies, it was agreed that the Scrutiny Coordinator pursue, with the relevant officer, the concerns expressed regarding the problems being experienced in Morley Road car park.

The CD:MW informed the Committee that there would be a formal launch of the North Wales Commissioning Hub on the 28th February, 2013. Members agreed that it was important that the Chair of the Council was also invited to attend such events in addition to the Chair of the relevant Committee and the Council Leader.

RESOLVED – *that, subject to the above, the Minutes be received and approved as a correct record.*

5 REGIONAL SCHOOL EFFECTIVENESS AND INCLUSION SERVICE

A copy of a report by the Head of Education, which detailed the progress with the establishment and running of the Regional School Effectiveness and Improvement Service (RSEIS), and the benefits realised from its establishment, had been circulated with the papers for the meeting.

The Head of Education (HE) introduced the report and explained that Cabinet had, in February 2012, approved the Full Business Case to establish a Regional School Effectiveness and Improvement Service (RSEIS) to be accountable to, and undertake the statutory responsibilities of the six local North Wales Authorities in respect of the duties to monitor; challenge; provide support services for curriculum continued professional development and management of schools, and, in addition, provide services that could be commissioned by schools and Local Authorities. A copy of the report to Cabinet had been included as Appendix 1, with a copy of the full business case as Appendix 2.

The current total cost of delivering the existing statutory and advisory in-scope school improvement functions across the six North Wales Local Authorities had been outlined for Members. A potential all regional saving of £882k had been identified which could be re-invested in Education, or released as a cashable saving, depending on the needs of each Local Authority.

Members were informed that Gwynedd had been appointed as the Host Authority for the RSEIS. The Head of Legal and Democratic Services (HLDS) summarised the legal arrangements introduced to ensure a clear line of accountability to manage the Service and provided details pertaining to the establishment of a Joint Committee, outlining its remit and composition. He outlined the purpose of the Inter Authority Agreement which formalised the arrangements between the respective Authorities and set out clear parameters and boundaries.

Councillor E.W. Williams referred to views expressed by the Minister regarding timescales and emphasised that standards were more important than structures and that Denbighshire had set a good example as an Education Authority.

In response to concerns expressed that the high standards set and achieved by Denbighshire should not be constricted by the establishment of the RSEIS, the HE referred to the challenges and benefits arising from its introduction and provided an assurance that the standards and levels achieved in Denbighshire would not be impeded. She confirmed that the process would be monitored attentively and that the close working relationship and links which had been developed with Headteachers would continue. Concern was also expressed regarding the possible comparisons which could be made between the respective Authorities, particularly with regard to budgetary provision and standards, and the importance of accepting that some Authorities would want to maintain their current high standards and expectations. Councillor E.W. Williams explained that establishment of the RSEIS would increase capacity to cover a wider sphere of the School Improvement Programme and ensure a vast enhancement in education provision.

The HE agreed that further information would be supplied regarding Member input to a review being undertaken by Robert Hill. She explained that roles and functions would be transferred from local authorities with staff redeployed, together with the respective budgets, following the establishment of the RSEIS. The HLDS confirmed that the Partnership Scrutiny Committee would scrutinise partnership working and he explained that the Local Government Wales Measure had introduced the concept of joint scrutiny which could be adopted to monitor the RSEIS. The HE informed Members that Estyn would monitor the process and reference was made to the consortium working inspection and Local Authority involvement in Inspections. The Scrutiny Coordinator referred to the possible

availability of funding from the Welsh Government to undertake the groundwork required to establish joint scrutiny arrangements for projects such as the regional education service.

The HE responded to concerns expressed and provided an assurance that the standards set by Denbighshire would be maintained and progressed. She confirmed that a user group had been established which afforded Headteachers and School Governors the opportunity to meet with senior officers from RSEIS. The HE also highlighted the importance of the Standards of Attainment Report, presented annually to scrutiny, which sought improved outcomes for children. In reply to concerns regarding the timescales involved and the need to ensure that members of staff were afforded adequate time to adapt to any changes, Councillor E.W. Williams felt that such concerns could be conveyed to the respective Minister. Following further discussion, it was:-

RESOLVED –

- (a) to receive the report and note the progress achieved to date in establishing the new service, and*
- (b) that a further report be submitted in January, 2014 on the progress achieved with Service's establishment, problems or barriers encountered, and achievements to date.*

6 NORTH WALES CARERS INFORMATION AND CONSULTATION STRATEGY

A copy of a report by the Head of Adult and Business Services had been circulated with the papers for the meeting.

The report detailed the implementation of the new Carers Strategies (Wales) Measure 2010, the Carers Measure, as set out in the North Wales Carers Information and Consultation Strategy 2012 – 2015, and included an information note on the 24 hour support line for Carers in Denbighshire.

In accordance with the requirements of the Carers Measure the final draft of the Regional Strategy, Appendix 1, had been approved by Welsh Government. The report outlined of how the Regional Strategy would address the requirements of the Carers Measure, and it was explained that each of the six Local Authorities in North Wales would be required to scrutinise and approve the Strategy.

Local Health Boards had been designated as the 'lead authority' in the implementation of the Carers Measure Regulations. The North Wales Carers Leads Strategic Group (NWCSLG) had been established to develop the Regional Strategy. This Group would continue to meet and act as the partnership working group to take forward the actions outlined in the Regional Strategy. BCUHB had established a Carers Strategies (Wales) Measure Project Board, which included representation from Local Authorities and the third sector, to scrutinise the work of the NWCSLG and provide advice and assurance to the Health Board.

The Welsh Government had concluded that the Regional Strategy was proactive with a good focus on outcomes and underpinned by clear thinking about what might

need to be done differently to achieve them. The Strategy had demonstrated strong partnership working between the Health Board, six Local Authorities and Third Sector organisations. Areas for improvement had been highlighted and included the need for a separate chapter on young carers, strengthening some of the Key Actions for Year 3, clarification of how the Strategy would relate to Black and Minority Ethnic communities and other groups with protected characteristics and consolidation of the mental health element of the Strategy.

The effect of the new Measure was likely to result in an increased number of Carers identified and referred on for statutory assessment by the Local Authority. The potential for an increase in referrals would be monitored to consider capacity issues and implications for future services.

The Carers Co-ordinator provided a detailed summary of the salient points and Key Actions contained within the Strategy, Appendix 1 to the report. The Chair explained that Councillor J.A. Davies had recently been reappointed Carers Champion for Denbighshire.

The following responses were provided to issues and questions raised by Members:-

- the Carers Co-ordinator outlined the existing communication links and made particular reference to the remit of the North Wales Carers Leads Strategic Group. She detailed the measures in place to help address problems experienced by young carers and confirmed that further work would be undertaken through the Strategic Group. The CD:MW outlined the work being carried out in Denbighshire Schools and Children's Services to identify young carers and ensure a higher level of awareness, and she confirmed that further work would be undertaken through the regional commissioning of services.

- with respect to the provision of respite care for service users to assist carers, the HABS explained that the method of identifying individual carers could be examined and it was agreed that an item in respect of this matter could be included on the agenda for consideration by the Carers Forum. The CD:MW referred to the measure which encouraged the identification of carers but emphasised the need for resources to meet the demand. The Carers Co-ordinator referred to the remit of the BCUHB in directing users to the Carers Needs Assessment process. She confirmed that they were aware of the problems being encountered and this issue had been highlighted to Welsh Government by Local Authorities across Wales.

- the HABS explained that the overarching assessment of people requiring care, and their respective carers, was undertaken by Social Work Teams, and he confirmed that assessments were required to be undertaken on an annual basis.

- Health Service officers recognised the excessive work loads of nursing staff in Hospitals and confirmed that Health Service Carers Champions on hospital wards would comprise of a cross-section of staff from within the Service.

- the Carers Commissioning Officer provided details pertaining to the number of carers, as identified in the 2011 census. She provided details of the training

programme for social care staff and it was agreed that a copy of the documentation outlining the services provided could be circulated to Members.

- the HABS informed the Committee that the provision of equipment and adaptation work in service users' homes was done via the Disabled Facilities Grants (DFGs) scheme.

- confirmation was provided that all staff attending training sessions would receive a comprehensive standard performance evaluation form which would be examined and assessed.

- the HABS provided details of the composition of the Community Care Care Panel and the process adopted regarding the assessment undertaken by the respective Social Worker.

- In response to concerns raised by members regarding the need to ensure that patients discharged from hospital were accompanied by an adequate care plan, the Carers Co-ordinator explained that discharge planning would be an important element of the establishment of a formal referral pathway through the health journey and this was part of the strategy currently being introduced to improve the process. In reply to a suggestion that patients should not be discharged until they were subject to a care plan, the CD:MW explained that patients should have a discharge plan, which would encompass a care plan, and the proposed improvement of the strategy would ensure that the process would be more robust. The Committee agreed that the concerns expressed that adequate care plans were not always in place be noted, and that the HABS liaise with colleagues in the Health Service to examine possible ways of addressing the issues and concern raised by Members.

The HABS drew Members' attention to the information note which responded to a query regarding a 24 hour support line for Carers in Denbighshire. The Adult Social Care Services commission carer support services with six local third sector organisations which primarily provide information and one to one support to Carers, these included NEWCIS, Alzheimers Society and Hafal. The principal 24 hour call line for Wales was Community Advice and Listening Line (C.A.L.L.), together with, the Wales Dementia Helpline. Details of the services had been included in the Denbighshire Carers Information Pack and it was confirmed that the development of the Regional Strategy would help in promoting the support services for Carers identified by health staff.

It was explained that the cost of running a 24 hour telephone support line would be in the region of £100K annually. More detailed work would be required to assess the potential uptake of a local, county based service, but it would be difficult to justify considering the level of investment, given that there were already services available at national level. Review of the Denbighshire Carers Information Pack would commence in January, 2013 and promotion of existing call lines could be considered as part of the review. The HABS agreed that the costs pertaining to the provision of care lines could be provided to members.

During the ensuing discussion Members supported the view that recommendation 3.2 in the report be amended to read that “the Partnerships Scrutiny Committee notes the information provided with regard to 24 Carer support lines”.

RESOLVED – *that the Committee:-*

- (a) supports the North Wales Carers Information and Consultation Strategy, 2012/2015 and the partnership approach with Betsi Cadwaladr University Health Board (BCUHB) and the third sector in regard to its implementation, and*
- (b) notes the information provided with regard to 24 hour Carer support line, and the services in place to meet this need for Denbighshire carers.*

7 INDEPENDENT CARE PROVISION - COMMISSIONING AND MONITORING

A copy of a report by the Head of Adult and Business Services, which detailed the extent of external care provision commissioned in Denbighshire County Council and the ways in which the quality of that care is monitored, had been circulated with the papers for the meeting.

The Head of Adult and Business Services (HABS) introduced the report which assessed the quality and value of independent social care provision for service users in Denbighshire. It detailed the balance between external and internal provision and Appendix 1 detailed the percentage of internal and external care provision.

He explained that monitoring the quality of the service provided had changed and work continued on developing and agreeing a regional process. The process followed to monitor quality in Denbighshire had been summarised in the report and all contact with providers was utilised to inform contract monitoring. The process of contract monitoring visits was outlined and it was confirmed that Domiciliary Care monitoring was now being developed. It was explained that proactive contract monitoring visits were planned to start before the end of the financial year. In response to concerns raised by Members it was explained that a new electronic system of recording Contract and quality issues had been implemented to ensure that up to date information was readily available to officers as queries were received.

Confirmation was provided by the HABS that consideration would be afforded to the opinions and choice of the Service Users. If the quality of provision standards, or CSSIW regulatory requirements, were not met partnership working to improve the quality of service provision would be implemented as specified in the Welsh Government (WG) guidance in respect of partnership working with providers.

The HABS explained that as the number of care home placements reduced, with more people choosing to remain in their homes the viability of care homes would be threatened. Home closures had impacted on the workload of the team who monitored the process and ensured safe transfers to other care homes in accordance with WG Guidance. The Reviewing Team would be developed in 2013/14 which would involve Community Care Officers and Contract Officers

working together to review care needs and monitor quality provision for all categories of care. Regional work on contracts and service specifications would continue to impact on the way in which contracts were monitored. Details of the consultation process adopted and measures introduced to reduce any risks had been included in the report.

In response to concerns raised regarding the self-assessment process and the importance of ensuring robust monitoring procedures, the Service Manager: Business and Carers (SM:BC) outlined the monitoring processes adopted by Denbighshire, which sought to collate all the relevant information available to assess the level and standard of service provision provided, the examination of CSSIW reports and the action taken through the contract review process to address any identified anomalies. It was confirmed that if providers failed to meet required standards a temporary suspension would be placed on all new cases and existing service users would be reviewed to ensure that their needs were being met.

In reply to a question the SM:BC provided details of the training available for both local authority and independent sector staff. She also responded to concerns raised and explained that it was not always practicable or possible for the same carer to attend to or undertake visits to an individual service user on a regular basis. However, the SM:BC agreed that it would be useful for all councillors to be advised on how to bring any concerns they may have with respect to the quality and level of care provided to residents in their wards by individuals or care providers to officers' attention.

Following further discussion, it was:-

RESOLVED – *that the Committee:-*

- (a) subject to the above observations, receive and note the contents of the report, and*
- (b) support the Service in its partnership working with the Independent Sector Care Providers.*

8 FAMILIES FIRST

A copy of a report by the Commissioning and Evaluation Officer which provided an update on the current position in relation to the commissioned and non-commissioned elements of the Families First Programme (FFP) in Denbighshire for the 2012-2014 financial period, had been circulated with the papers for the meeting.

The Head of Business Planning and Performance (HBPP) introduced the report which provided information regarding the evaluation and monitoring of the successful applicants' progress to date in implementing and delivering their services, the Families First Action Plan and Outcome 4 of Denbighshire - The BIG Plan.

The HBPP summarised the Strategic Overview including link to Denbighshire – The Big Plan, which had been outlined in the report, and referred to the tables

provided which detailed the Non Commissioned and Commissioned Services and the respective funding comparisons for 2012/13 and 2013/14.

Denbighshire had been the first Authority in North Wales to commission 7 of the 9 elements of the Programme. Delays in respect of the Family Support and Disability elements of the Programme had been outlined in the report. The Families First Programme, in its entirety, was nearly in place and the Programme would soon demonstrate its impact for families. A central point of access/referral had been established within Denbighshire through a dedicated Families First Integrated Family Support Co-ordinator. In addition the Families First Panel would consider, on a fortnightly basis, referrals received by the Integrated Family Support Co-ordinator and identify the most suitable service response. As from April 2013 there would be a requirement to use the Joint Assessment Family Framework (JAFF) as the primary referral, assessment and planning tool for working with families supported through the FFP. Work had been undertaken with the multi-agency panels (MAP) within the schools and agreement reached that referrals via the MAPs would be responded to immediately.

The report detailed the benefits and results of implementing the FFP and the adoption of other good practice. The Families First Training Programme, Appendix 1, had been funded through the Workforce Development, Training and Support element together with the Disability Training element. Training topics had been identified as top priority by service providers for the early stages of the implementation of the FFP.

The Commissioning and Evaluation Officer (CEO) explained that the FFP was a key contributor to the Big Plan: "Outcome 4 - Vulnerable Families in Denbighshire were supported to live a life free from poverty, where they could be independent and flourish", and it was confirmed that the Project Board's decision to re-tender for the Family Support and Disability Elements, following consideration of several alternatives brought via an Exceptions Report, had created an impact on delivery of the entire programme. Members welcomed the comprehensive report which focused on integrated, commissioned services.

In response to concerns raised the HBPP outlined the reasons for adopting a formal commissioning approach and explained that there would be clear expectations and recourse for action if outcomes were not realized or achieved. He also provided confirmation that, in addition to Internal Audit Services, the Welsh Government would exercise funding controls and monitor expenditure. It was:

RESOLVED – *that the Committee:-*

- (a) subject to the above observations, receive the report and note the progress to date in the delivery of the Families First Programmed, and*
- (b) receive an update report on the delivery of the Families First Programme at its October, 2013 meeting.*

A copy of a report by the Scrutiny Coordinator seeking the Committee to review its draft Forward Work Programme (FWP) and provided an update on relevant issues had been circulated with the papers for the meeting. Attached as appendices to the report were the Cabinet's forward work programme and a table summarising recent Committee resolutions and advising Members on progress with their implementation.

The Committee considered its draft Forward Work Programme for future meetings, as detailed in Appendix 1, and the following amendments and additions were agreed:-

- an item in respect of the Regional School Effectiveness and Improvement Service be included for January, 2014, and an update report on Families First Programme be included for October, 2013.

- Members agreed that the four business items scheduled for submission to the meeting in June, 2013 be rescheduled for considered at the July, 2013 meeting.

- The Committee agreed that the meeting scheduled for June be held on Monday 10th June, 2013 at 2.00 p.m. This meeting would be the regular six monthly meeting with Health Board representatives. It was agreed that the two items deferred at the November, 2012, meeting with Health representatives - Update on Children's Services and Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) (the progress achieved in addressing CAMHS assessment delays and further progress in relation to CAMHS services) – be considered at that meeting.

The Scrutiny Coordinator was requested to enquire whether a report on Prosthetics, the provision and maintenance of artificial limbs to adults and children (including information on access to the service, any delays encountered or limitations applied and complaints procedures) could be provided and discussed at that meeting.

RESOLVED – *that, subject to the above, the Committee's forward Work Programme be approved.*

Meeting ended at 12.55 p.m.