

PARTNERSHIPS SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Minutes of a meeting of the Partnerships Scrutiny Committee held in Conference Room 1a, County Hall, Ruthin on Thursday, 19 December 2013 at 9.30 am.

PRESENT

Councillors Jeanette Chamberlain-Jones (Chair), Bill Cowie, Ann Davies, Margaret McCarroll, Merfyn Parry and Bill Tasker

Lead Members: Councillors Bobby Feeley and Hugh Carson Irving attended at the Committee's request.

ALSO PRESENT

Corporate Director: Modernisation & Wellbeing (Statutory Director of Social Services) (SE), Head of Children & Family Services (LR), Head of Adult & Business Services (PG), Senior Officer, Strategy & Partnerships (SL), Project Manager (CO), Senior Officer, Housing Options (SC), Scrutiny Co-ordinator (RE) and Committee Administrator (SLW).

1 APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Meirick Davies, Alice Jones, Pat Jones and Dewi Owens

2 ELECTION OF VICE-CHAIR

As there had been no CVs submitted for the Vice-Chair role it was agreed to postpone the appointment until a future meeting.

3 DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

Declaration of a personal interest were made by:

- (i) Councillor Jeanette Chamberlain Jones regarding item 8 – National Adoption Service, and
- (ii) Councillor Bill Tasker regarding Item 7 – Framework for Delivering Integrated Health and Social Care for Older People with complex needs.

4 URGENT MATTERS AS AGREED BY THE CHAIR

No urgent matters had been raised.

5 MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING

The Minutes of the Partnerships Scrutiny Committee held on 7 November 2013 were submitted.

The Scrutiny Co-ordinator confirmed that an update response from the Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service had been shown in the Information Briefing document (previously circulated).

RESOLVED that subject to the above, the minutes of the meeting held on 26 September 2013 be approved as a correct record.

At this juncture, the Chair agreed to change the order of business set out on the Agenda. The items would be heard in the following order :

8. National Adoption Service

7. Framework for Delivering Integrated Health and Social Care for Older People with Complex Needs

6 Single Access Route to Housing – Common Allocation Policy (CAP)

6 NATIONAL ADOPTION SERVICE

Councillor Bobby Feeley, Lead Member for Social Care and Children's Services, introduced the report and appendices (previously circulated) seeking Partnerships Scrutiny's views on the plan to establish a National Adoption Service for Wales, supported by Regional Adoption Collaboratives. Councillor Feeley also looked for support for Wrexham County Borough Council to continue to act as the lead Authority for the North Wales Adoption Service.

The Head of Children and Family Services (HC&FS) clarified points within the report. HC&FS gave assurances to the Scrutiny Committee that the Council's statutory functions in relation to providing an Adoption Service would be fully met, in accordance with legislation and guidance.

The creation of a National Adoption Service was one of the key Policy strands of the Welsh Government, and the proposals were endorsed by the Deputy Minister for Children and Social Services on 25 April 2013.

The Association of Directors of Social Services (ADSS) Cymru, had worked with the Welsh Local Government Association (WLGA) to produce a functional model for delivery of a National Adoption Service across Wales via regional collaboratives. The functional model proposed the following five Regional Adoption Collaboratives:

- North Wales – Wrexham, Flintshire, Gwynedd, Conwy, Denbighshire and Ynys Mon
- South East Wales – Blaenau Gwent, Monmouthshire, Torfaen, Newport and Caerphilly
- West & Mid Wales – Ceredigion, Carmarthenshire, Pembrokeshire and Powys
- Western Bay – Bridgend, Neath Port Talbot and Swansea
- Mid & South Wales – Cardiff, the Vale of Glamorgan, Merthyr Tydfil and Rhondda-Cynon-Taff.

It had been planned that all five Regional Collaboratives would be established by April 2014.

A Task and Finish Group would also be established, comprising of representatives from Welsh Government, ADSS Cymru, Care and Social Services Inspectorate Wales (CSSIW), British Association for Adoption and Fostering (BAAF), Voluntary Adoption Agencies and each of the five Regional Collaboratives to produce a robust change programme for implementing the functional model.

The national service model should be monitored to ensure costs did not increase from the current level of net expenditure. Any additional costs arising from administering and hosting the new arrangements should be properly distributed between participating authorities.

General discussion took place on adoption policies and procedures and it was:

RESOLVED that the Committee:

- (i) Support the proposals for achieving a National Adoption Service in Wales as detailed in the report of the Association of Directors of Social Services (ADSS) Cymru; and
- (ii) Support the proposal that Wrexham County Borough Council would continue to act as the lead authority for the North Wales Adoption Service.

7 FRAMEWORK FOR DELIVERING INTEGRATED HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE FOR OLDER PEOPLE WITH COMPLEX NEEDS

Councillor Bobby Feeley, Lead Member for Social Care Adults and Children's Services, introduced the report (previously circulated) to inform Members of the intentions of the Welsh Government (WG) to establish integrated health and social care services for older people with complex needs.

Indepth discussion took place and the following points were highlighted:

- The Committee welcomed proposals outlined in the draft Statement of Intent. In particular, the proposals to explore regional options for:
 - Improved governance
 - Joint commissioning strategies
 - Pooled budgets
 - Co-located teams
 - Shared information system
 - Outcome focused citizen directed services; and
 - A county based Single Point of Access.
- The Committee acknowledged that a number of the options were in the process of being developed in Denbighshire.
- Members felt that the development of integrated services between Health and Social Care could lead to improved co-ordination of care and better continuity of care for service users.

- A more straight forward and consistent referral and communication system would, in turn, provide better and easier access to services.
- Whilst the Committee acknowledged that the current financial climate within which both Local Government and the Health Services operate, along with staffing structure uncertainties within the Health Board and uncertainties surrounding future Local Government structures in Wales, did pose a risk to the vision outlined in the Statement of Intent, the principles were to be commended. Consequently, every effort should be made to ensure that sufficient human and financial resources were available to deliver the seamless/integrated services outlined in the Statement of Intent for the benefit of local residents.

RESOLVED that the Committee recommend to Cabinet that it fully supports the contents of the Statement of Intent on Integrated Care for Older People with Complex Needs drawn up between North Wales Local Authorities and BCUHB, for submission to the Welsh Government. The integrated working practices outlined in the Statement of Intent along with the utilisation of combined skills, knowledge, experience and resources should deliver better outcomes for older people and contribute towards the delivery of the Council's corporate priority of ensuring that vulnerable people are protected and are able to live as independently as possible.

**At this juncture (10.45 a.m.) there was a 15 minute break.
Meeting re-convened at 11.00 a.m.**

8 SINGLE ACCESS ROUTE TO HOUSING - COMMON ALLOCATION POLICY (CAP)

Councillor Hugh Irving, Lead Member for Customers and Communities, introduced the report (previously circulated) to provide information to Members regarding the details of the revised Common Allocation Policy (CAP) following the consideration of feedback from the CAP consultation, research and legal opinion. The CAP had been agreed by the SARTH (Single Access Route to Housing) Steering Group and would be presented to the Committees/ Boards of the partner organisations.

Councillor Irving also requested support from Members to continue with the project and implement the CAP locally from late 2014.

Following intense discussion the following points were raised:

- The Committee welcomed the fact that the Policy would be reviewed on an annual basis.
- Members welcomed the clarity on the definition of the local connection. However, concerns were raised with respect to potential future pressures on social care budgets if a disproportionately high rate of elderly/disabled tenants from outside the county were to access pensioner/sheltered housing accommodation in the county on the basis of family association/support connection. The Committee felt that trends required close monitoring in order to identify potential pressures.

- Members endorsed the “Guiding Principles” as outlined in the draft CAP. However, the Committee was keen that concerns raised with respect to certain registered social landlords’ (RSLs) lack of commitment to property maintenance, which had resulted in certain areas of the county suffering from poor quality housing, be noted. Whilst Members acknowledged that the majority of concerns could be addressed through the provisions of the new Housing Bill, the Committee requested that every effort be made via the Policy’s Steering Group to ensure that all RSLs operating in Denbighshire undertook to maintain their properties to the required standards and conform to Welsh Housing Quality Standards (WHQS) in order to safeguard tenants.
- The Committee requested details of all consultations that had taken place within Denbighshire (particularly during 2013) with the public and stakeholders be incorporated into the report to Cabinet.
- The Committee also requested that the report to Cabinet include details of each partner’s financial contribution towards the IT solution project to support the Policy and that the IT project be tailored to keep within the budget allocation and be fully evaluated and presented to members prior to its purchase.

RESOLVED that, subject to the observations raised, the Committee support the principles of the draft Common Allocations Policy. The Committee also recommended that Cabinet endorse and adopt the Policy for implementation in Denbighshire. The Policy should ensure that social housing is allocated in a fair and consistent method to people within our communities according to their housing needs.

9 SCRUTINY WORK PROGRAMME

The Scrutiny Co-ordinator submitted a report (previously circulated) seeking members’ review of the Committee’s Forward Work Programme and provided an update on relevant issues. A draft forward work programme (Appendix 1); Proposal Form for Agenda Items for Scrutiny Committees (Appendix 2); Cabinet’s Forward Work Programme (Appendix 3); Progress with Committee Resolutions (Appendix 4); and List of Scrutiny Representatives on Service Challenge Groups (Appendix 5) had been attached to the report.

The Scrutiny Co-ordinator reported upon changes to the work programme and various matters requiring attention –

- A Statement of Intent update from BCUHB and attendance at a future Scrutiny Committee to be requested.
- North Wales Residual Waste Treatment Project to be added to the 6 February 2014 Agenda
- Rural Development Plan Partnership to be moved from 6 February 2014 Agenda and added to 13 March 2014 Agenda
- All Lead Members to be invited to attend Partnerships Scrutiny Committee on 6 February 2014.
- Representation from Partnerships Scrutiny Committee had been requested for the Service Challenge Groups. Councillor Jeanette Chamberlain Jones

volunteered for the Business Planning & Performance and Councillor Merfyn Parry for Highways.

- Councillor Dewi Owens had offered and was nominated to be the Committee's representative on the Economic and Community Ambition Programme Board.
- Councillor Huw Jones to be invited to attend the meeting of 13 March as Lead Member for the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) item.
- The Chair, Councillor Jeanette Chamberlain Jones, requested that future meetings also be held in Rhyl and Denbigh as well as Ruthin.

RESOLVED that,

- (i) subject to the above amendments, the work programme as detailed in Appendix 1 to the report be approved;*
- (ii) Councillor Jeanette Chamberlain-Jones be appointed as the Committee's representative on the Service Challenge Group for the Business Planning and Performance Service, and that Councillor Merfyn Parry serve as the Committee's representative on the Service Challenge Group for the Highways and Infrastructure Service; and*
- (iii) Councillor Dewi Owens be appointed as the Committee's representative on the Economic and Community Ambition Programme Board.*

10 FEEDBACK FROM COMMITTEE REPRESENTATIVES

Councillor Ann Davies gave the Committee a brief update following a recent Carers Steering Group meeting which she had attended.

Meeting concluded at 12.40 p.m.