

PARTNERSHIPS SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Minutes of a meeting of the Partnerships Scrutiny Committee held in Conference Room 1a, County Hall, Ruthin on Thursday, 6 February 2014 at 9.30 am.

PRESENT

Councillors Jeanette Chamberlain-Jones (Chair), Ann Davies, Pat Jones, Margaret McCarroll, Dewi Owens, Merfyn Parry and Joe Welch

Lead Members, David Smith, Eryl Williams and Bobby Feeley attended at the Committee's request.

ALSO PRESENT

Corporate Director: Modernisation and Wellbeing (SE), Partnerships and Communities Team Manager (LG), Commissioning Hub Manager (VP), Project Manager (NE Hub) Waste Management (JE), Head of Education (KE), GwE Chief Officer (HFE), Project Manager (SO), Scrutiny Co-ordinator (RE) and Committee Administrator (SLW)

Co-opted Members – Gill Greenland, Dr Dawn Marjoram and Gareth Williams

1 APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Bill Cowie, Meirick Davies, Alice Jones and Bill Tasker

Apologies for absence were also received from Co-opted Members, Debra Houghton and Nicola Lewis.

2 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No declarations of interest.

3 URGENT MATTERS AS AGREED BY THE CHAIR

No urgent matters had been submitted.

4 MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING

The minutes of the Partnerships Scrutiny Committee held on 19 December 2013 were submitted.

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting held on 19 December 2013 be received and approved as a correct record.

5 REGIONAL SCHOOL EFFECTIVENESS AND IMPROVEMENT SERVICE (GWE)

The Head of Education introduced the report (previously circulated) to update Members and for Members to consider progress made following the establishment of the new Service in order to:

- Identify the benefits realised to date from its establishment in order to measure effectiveness of Service delivery.
- Identify problems encountered which were yet to be resolved in order to ensure that risk to service delivery was successfully mitigated.
- Inform the Committee of any proposals to expand the Service.

The Head of Education introduced the GwE Chief Officer, Huw Foster-Evans. The Chief Officer reiterated the importance of developing partnerships with the six North Wales Authorities through Service Level Agreements.

The following points were raised through general discussion:

- The Chief Officer clarified that it was the responsibility of the Local Authority to hold GwE responsible to for the smooth running and understanding partnership.
- There were two types of home education:
 - children whose parents withdraw them from a school. The parents of those children are under no obligation to engage with the Local Authority. The Education Liaison Officer monitors those children, and
 - children who are home educated for a specific reason e.g. children with medical needs. For these children, there are a team of home tutors. The Education Liaison Officer also works with the team of home tutors.
- There was a concern raised by the Chief Officer of the key Performance Indicators that do not focus sufficiently on the successes of the most able students.
- Teacher assessments were carried out at the end of the primary sector. It was important teacher assessments were robust and accurate. If a teacher had been identified as under-performing, the Head Teacher and Chair of Governors would deal with the issue.

The Chief Officer GwE agreed to return to the Partnership Scrutiny Committee in 12 months' time with further updates.

It was agreed the Regional School Effectiveness and Improvement Service be raised at Scrutiny Chairs and Vice-Chairs Group to ascertain which Scrutiny Committee the issue would best sit with.

RESOLVED that the Committee received and noted the progress achieved to date following the establishment of GwE with regard to the following:

- *The effectiveness of GwE in delivering economies of scale and specialist support to complement the County's Education Service.*

- *The Identification of slippages, risks, service gaps or future pressures with regard to recommending mitigating action.*

At this juncture (10.30 a.m.) there was a 10 minute break.

The meeting reconvened at 10.40 a.m.

6 THE BIG PLAN - UPDATE ON PERFORMANCE

The Partnership and Communities Team Manager introduced the report (previously circulated) to update Committee Members on the performance of the Local Service Board (LSB) and partners in delivering The BIG Plan: Part 1, 2011-14.

The Partnership and Communities Team Manager first of all submitted the Leader's apologies for being unable to attend the Committee meeting.

Denbighshire The BIG Plan: 2011-14 was the plan driving partnership working in Denbighshire. The BIG Plan was being delivered collaboratively by partner agencies. The Local Service Board were accountable for The BIG Plan, and held partner agencies (including Betsi Cadwaladr University Health Board (BCUHB), the third sector, North Wales Police, North Wales Fire and Rescue Service, Public Health Wales, Denbighshire County Council) responsible for implementing action plans to deliver The BIG Plan and its eight outcomes.

The report included a Summary Exceptions Report supported by more detailed chapters for each of The BIG Plan's eight outcomes.

The detailed report provided exception information for each outcome, as well as information about what was going well. It also highlighted information gaps and noted where these might limit overall evaluation of the outcomes. More work would be carried out throughout the summer to enable the publication of the final report, where more interrogation would be undertaken to identify what difference had been made by delivery of The BIG Plan.

Significant work was underway to develop The BIG Plan II which would commence in September 2014. Challenges in reporting of The BIG Plan 1 had shaped thinking around the development of The BIG Plan II which would identify fewer themes, with performance management placing an ongoing greater emphasis on impacts on outcomes through partnership activities in an environment of increasingly restricted resources.

RESOLVED that the Committee received and noted the report but echoed concern that due to the increasingly restricted resources, parts of The BIG Plan would not be deliverable.

7 NORTH WALES COMMISSIONING HUB ANNUAL REPORT

The Lead Member for Social Care and Children's Services, Councillor Bobby Feeley, introduced the report (previously circulated) detailing the progress to date with the establishment and running of the North Wales Commissioning Hub (NWCH) and the benefits realised to date from its establishment. Also details of the scoping exercise on high cost dementia placements.

The NWCH was a collaborative project between the six North Wales Local Authorities and the Betsi Cadwaladr University Health Board. The NWCH was unique in Wales as it covered children's and adult's services in partnership with the NHS. It was hosted by Denbighshire County Council was accountable to a Management Board chaired by the Corporate Director: Modernisation and Well-being.

The NWCH Manager provided regular update reports to the Social and Health programme Board.

The NWCH had four main functions:

- To ensure value for money in current high cost placements
- To source new placements through transparent process and ensure value for money
- To co-ordinate a regional approach and monitor the quality of care home provision
- Strategic commissioning, working with partners to develop the market to ensure services are able to meet current and future demand.

Funding had recently been in place for the NWCH to deal with people suffering from dementia.

The Corporate Director: Modernisation and Well-being confirmed she would be leaving the Local Authority at the end of February. Her place on the Management Board would be taken by the Head of Provider Services for Gwynedd County Council, Morwenna Edwards.

The Manager of NWCH will also be leaving in the middle of April as she has been appointed as the Regional Manager of CSSIW.

RESOLVED that the Committee note and receive the North Wales Commissioning Hub Annual Report.

8 SECOND INTER-AUTHORITY AGREEMENT FOR THE NORTH WALES RESIDUAL WASTE PROJECT (NWRWTP)

The Lead Member for Public Realm, Councillor David Smith, introduced the report (previously circulated) for Members to scrutinise the process involved in the award of "preferred Bidder" status and issues surrounding approval of Inter Authority Agreement 2.

In February 2008, Cabinet gave approval for Denbighshire County Council to enter into a formal partnership with four other North Wales councils, to jointly procure a 25 year contract for the provision of residual waste disposal facilities.

In order to facilitate the procurement process, all councils involved in the partnership signed up to a formal Inter Authority Agreement (IAA1). Under the agreement, delegated decision making authority had been given to the Project Board and the Project Committee, with a number of key decisions still being reserved for individual councils.

The NWRWTP had previously been presented to Council Briefing for indepth discussion.

The procurement had been undertaken, however, the second bidder withdrew unilaterally in January 2013, effectively leaving the current bidder in a monopoly position. The drive for value for money resulted in a number of highly significant changes to what was being procured. The overall result from these changes had been an improved position for Denbighshire.

The project was well-inside the “affordability envelope”. The final business case appeared to demonstrate genuine value for money. The Company had also satisfied the requirements of the partnerships legal, technical, and financial experts. In those circumstances, it appeared no reason why the remaining bidder should not now be granted “preferred bidder status”.

The Inter Authority Agreement No. 1 was an “agreement to procure” that covered everything up to the final contract award. The Inter Authority Agreement No. 2 covered the operation of the contract itself i.e. from contract award onwards. The agreement was a complex legal document that covered every aspect of how the contract was to be managed.

In summary, the Inter Authority Agreement 2 offered the council a better position than the Inter Authority Agreement 1. Technical Officers were satisfied with the main features, and the legal clauses had been drafted to the satisfaction of the Council’s legal officers. Officers, therefore, recommended that the draft be supported.

The Committee extended its gratitude to the officers for all their hard work on the project.

RESOLVED that the Partnerships Scrutiny Committee:

- (i) Confirmed support for the selection of the preferred bidder, and*
- (ii) Confirmed its support for the principles outlined in draft Inter Authority Agreement No. 2.*

9 SCRUTINY WORK PROGRAMME

The Scrutiny Co-ordinator submitted a report (previously circulated) seeking Member’s 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); and Progress with Committee Resolutions (Appendix 4) had been attached to the report.

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

- The Chair reported she was unable to attend the next meeting on 13 March and as there were no Vice-Chair of the Committee, both Councillors Ann Davies and Dewi Owens confirmed they would be willing to chair the meeting.
- All Lead Members to be invited to attend the Partnerships Scrutiny Committee on 13 March 2014.
- A report from the Local Service Board Development Officer, Beverley Moore, to be presented at the Partnerships Scrutiny Committee meeting taking place in June 2014. A request would be put forward for Co-opted Members. A training session would be organised for July 2014.

RESOLVED that subject to the above, the Forward Work Programme as detailed in Appendix 1 to the report be approved.

10 FEEDBACK FROM COMMITTEE REPRESENTATIVES

Councillor Ann Davies gave a brief update following a rota visit undertaken to Awelon.

Following the meeting, a presentation took place by the Committee to the Corporate Director: Modernisation and Wellbeing, Sally Ellis, who was retiring at the end of February 2014.

The meeting concluded at 12.15 p.m.