

PARTNERSHIPS SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Minutes of a meeting of the Partnerships Scrutiny Committee held in Council Chamber, County Hall, Ruthin and by Video Conference on Thursday, 14 September 2023 at 10.00 am.

PRESENT

Councillors- Joan Butterfield (Chair), Jeanette Chamberlain-Jones, Kelly Clewett, Pauline Edwards, Bobby Feeley, Terry Mendies, Arwel Roberts and Elfed Williams.

Lead Member- Lead Member for Health and Social Care, Councillor Elen Heaton was in attendance at the Committee's invitation.

ALSO PRESENT

Corporate Director- Social Services and Education (NS), Head of Regional Collaboration (CR), Scrutiny Co-ordinator (RE), and Committee Administrators (SJ and NH)

Betsi Cadwaladr University Health Board (BCUHB) Representative: Alyson Constantine (AC), Integrated Health Community (IHC) Director of Operations (Central Area) for business item 5.

1 APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Peter Scott and Raj Metri.

The Chair and members extended their deepest condolences to Councillor Peter Scott following the sad loss of his wife, Mrs Susan Scott. They requested that their deepest sympathies be conveyed to Councillor Scott and the family.

2 DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

Councillor Kelly Clewett declared a personal interest in agenda items 5 and 6 as an employee of Betsi Cadwaladr University Health Board (BCUHB).

3 URGENT MATTERS AS AGREED BY THE CHAIR

No matters of an urgent nature had been drawn to the Chair or the Scrutiny Co-ordinator's attention prior to the commencement of the meeting.

4 MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING

The minutes of the Partnerships Scrutiny Committee meeting held on 6 July 2023 were submitted. The Committee:

Resolved: that the minutes of the meeting held on 6 July 2023 be received and approved as a true and correct record of the proceedings.

No matters were raised in relation to the accuracy or the contents of the minutes.

5 NORTH DENBIGHSHIRE COMMUNITY HOSPITAL PROJECT

The Lead Member for Health and Social Care, Councillor Elen Heaton introduced the North Denbighshire Community Hospital Project update.

Members were informed that although the North Denbighshire Community Hospital was a Betsi Cadwaladr University Health Board (BCUHB) Project, Denbighshire County Council (DCC) were committed to supporting the vital project.

It was explained that the Project was crucial due to growing demands and pressures within Ysbyty Glan Clwyd A&E Department.

The Lead Member stated that the North Wales Regional Partnership Board (NWRPB) had been required to draft their first 10 year Strategic Capital Plan which had now been submitted to Welsh Government. The development of the Royal Alexandra Hospital was one of three priority projects covering Denbighshire Council.

The Form Zero applications had now been approved by the Regional Partnership Board however, although this was reassuring it was stated that this would only account for 20% of the total funding of the project and was only the first phase of application and not any guarantee of funding.

In August 2023 the Corporate Director, the Leader and the Lead Member for Health and Social Care met with the new interim Chair and Chief Executive of BCUHB. This was a very productive meeting and focused on the development of the North Denbighshire Community Hospital Project. It was reiterated that BCUHB were committed to seeing the project through and were continuing to make contact with Welsh Government to expedite the progress of the project.

The Lead Member expressed the undeniable need for this project to be completed however, there was the need to remember the difficult financial situation being faced.

The Corporate Director further explained the process and timescales as follows:

- Form Zero (application form) had now been submitted and approved by the Regional Partnership Board.
- North Wales Projects that had been approved at Form Zero level will be approved by the Regional Partnership Board and then be submitted to Welsh Government.

The update provided to the Committee in the meeting was a significant step forward in the project however, the funding was yet to be approved by Welsh Government.

The Integrated Health Community (IHC) Director of Operations listed the types of services that would be in place at Royal Alexandra Hospital site and the expectation of them as follows: -

- The recommissioning of community beds
- Enhanced treatment zones
- Level 1-3 Sexual Health
- Community Dental Services
- Older People Mental Health
- CAMHS (Child and Adolescents Mental Health Services)
- Relocation of SPOA (Single Point Of Access Team)
- Minor Injuries Unit (MIU)
- Multidisciplinary Services
- Audiology
- Enhanced radiology
- Preventative advisory services e.g. smoking cessation etc.
- Spaces for the voluntary sector

It was reiterated to the Committee that it was a very difficult financial climate and the cost of the project had significantly changed. The capital project required a review of revenue costs and identification of sources to plug any financial shortfalls.

The Chair thanked the Lead Member and Officers for their comprehensive update and welcomed questions from the Committee.

Members thanked Officers for their work on the Project however, expressed their disappointment at the length of time that this project had been promised to the community and sought clarity on the timescales of the Project going forward.

The Corporate Director understood the frustrations of the Committee and stated that there was currently no timescale for when Welsh Government would respond to the Form Zero Denbighshire County Council would be submitting to them. It would be for Welsh Government to give a date for when the application would be considered by them once they had received it.

Members questioned why there was no report given to the Committee prior to the meeting, and that a Business Case had been submitted however, the Committee had not seen this.

The Corporate Director explained that Committee Members had received updates on the North Denbighshire Community Hospital Project for many years. There was no report submitted for the meeting as there was nothing in writing to share at this moment in time.

At this juncture, the Scrutiny Co-Ordinator explained that BCUHB representatives were not compelled to share documents with the Committee.

The Director of Operations reassured the Committee that they would continue to liaise with Welsh Government to progress the project.

Members sought clarity on if there were any statutory rules in place to compel the Minister in Welsh Government to respond to the submissions within a timely

manner. The Chair asked the Scrutiny Co-ordinator if they would seek clarity on this from the Monitoring Officer.

The concerning issue of reinforced autoclaved aerated concrete (RAAC) had been widely documented in the press over the past week and Members questioned if the Health Board had conducted a survey on the North Denbighshire Community Hospital site. The Director of Operations Stated that surveys on the building had been completed and no issues with the concrete had been found.

The Chair thanked Officers for their attendance and the update that was given.

Members thanked Alyson Constantine for attending and for sharing the latest information with them. The Committee:

Resolved: subject to the above observations –

- (i) to acknowledge the information provided in relation to the progress made to date in relation to delivering the North Denbighshire Community Hospital Project;***
- (ii) to register its continued disappointment on the lack of a definitive timescale for the project's delivery; and***
- (iii) request that a further report be presented to the Committee upon receipt of the Welsh Government decisions relating to the Health Board's 10 year Capital Plan and the North Wales Regional Partnership Board's 10 year Strategic Plan.***

6 NORTH WALES REGIONAL PARTNERSHIP BOARD ANNUAL REPORT 2022 TO 2023

The Lead Member for Health and Social Care introduced the North Wales Regional Partnership Board (NWRPB) Annual Report.

Regional Partnership Boards were established as part of the Social Services and Well-being Act.

Regional Partnership Boards had two core aims: -

- To improve the well-being of the population.
- To improve how Health and Care Services were delivered within the region.

Annually the North Wales Regional Partnership Board were required to produce a report and submit it to Welsh Government.

The report (previously circulated) for the year 2022- 2023, gave a comprehensive overview of the achievements and communication and engagements efforts as well as providing an insight into the future priorities of the NWRPB.

Due to the breath of the report the Lead Member asked if the discussion could be opened to Members with the approval of the Chair.

Questions were welcomed from Members.

Members referred to the Regional Integration Fund (RIF) which was outlined in the report. Projects which directly supported carers were important however, the report stated that this funding was granted until 2027. Members questioned whether the funding would be continuing after this date. The Corporate Director- Social Services and Education stated that prior to the introduction of the RIF there was the Integrated Care Fund (ICF), which was allocated on a year by year basis. Currently there was a 5-year commitment to the funding however, the decision as to whether this continued after 2027 was with Welsh Government.

Members questioned the number of Boards that were operating within the NWRPB and their functions. Concerns were raised around how large the NWRPB was becoming. The Corporate Director stated that the NWRPB was a very busy environment and managing meetings and colleagues time was organised as efficiently as possible. Many of the Boards and meetings were required by the Social Services and Wellbeing (Wales) Act and more responsibility had been put on the Regional Partnership Board over recent years. Officers were always mindful that Denbighshire and Denbighshire residents were receiving the maximum value from their involvement within the NWRPB. There was a statutory element to the Partnership Board and the Boards within it.

The Corporate Director informed Members that the report was a regional report and the requirements as to how it was constructed were defined by Welsh Government. Therefore, the report did not go into the level of detail for Denbighshire that Members may have required to see. If there were areas of the report that Members felt that they would like more detail on they were advised to inform officers and potentially this detail could be provided at a future meeting.

Members referred to the Housing with Care Fund (HCF). The purpose of the HCF was to support independent living in the Community for people with care and support needs, and to provide intermediate care settings in the community so that people who needed care, support and rehabilitation could return to living independently or maintain their existing independence. This was a 4-year funding programme which funded schemes under 3 objectives.

Members questioned objective 1- Increase the existing stock of housing with care significantly asking if there was an update on this within Denbighshire.

The Corporate Director explained that there was little progression on objective 1 at this time however, this was under constant review. There were currently Projects under objectives 2 and 3 of the report (previously circulated). Denbighshire were utilising their allocation and were moving forward with the HCF.

Members questioned if there was an evaluation of the success of the Boards and the outcomes of the work that was taking place. The Corporate Director stated that evaluation of the Boards was thorough. Many reports were statutory required to be submitted to Welsh Government including the Population Needs Assessment and the Market Stability Report. These reports were evaluated when they were

submitted to Welsh Government. The NWRPB was subject to Audit Wales reviews and formal, informal and good practice evaluation was undertaken.

Members referred to the Annual Delivery Plan in appendix 2 of the report (previously circulated). Specific concerns were raised around the cancellation of the Health Care Support Team Workforce Project, within the District Nursing Team, although it was making a clear difference in the number of patients in hospital waiting for care packages. The Corporate Director stated that difficult decisions needed to be made within the financial climate at that time. As this team was funded via RIF funding, which was a tapered fund where funding reduced year on year, a decision had to be taken on which priorities could be funded going forward. Unfortunately, given the current financial climate further similar difficult decisions would need to be taken in future.

Members commented that North Wales had the largest Health Board in the country and the NWRPB played a crucial role within North Wales. Members commented that many residents were unaware of the NWRPB and what its purpose was and questioned if there was a way to engage local communities and give them knowledge of this. The NWRPB was still in need of being publicised to ensure that local people understood where money was spent and that it controlled many aspects of the care system within North Wales. The Head of Regional Collaboration explained that engaging with the public on the NWRPB was difficult. The NWRPB was good at communicating and sharing information with the people involved in the NWRPB and further work was ongoing to reach a wider audience.

Work was continuing to gather the stories of service users on the success of the projects that had helped them. It was hoped that once the stories were finalised a booklet would be circulated on a regular basis to residents, local members and to Welsh Government to help further with the knowledge and understanding of the NWRPB in the region.

Continuing, the Head of Regional Collaboration informed the Committee that there was an event planned for November 2023 to help residents understand the schemes and projects that were being delivered on a daily basis across the region.

Members questioned that in the report there was no reference to the concerns of the officers at the end of the funding time frame. The Corporate Director confirmed that the report did not contain that information as the contents of the report was dictated by Welsh Government. It was suggested that the report should be read alongside the Corporate Director's Annual Report as this outlined the hopes and aspirations but also the concerns for the coming year.

The Chair thanked the Corporate Director, Lead Member, Head of Regional Collaboration and Officers for bringing the report to the committee.

At the conclusion of an in-depth discussion the Committee:

Resolved:

- (i) to confirm that it had read, understood, and taken into account the work that was required to be undertaken by the Regional Partnership Board; and**
- (ii) subject to the above comments and observations, to receive the details provided on the work and progress achieved during 2022/23 on the areas that were being taken forward under the auspices of the North Wales Regional Partnership Board.**

7 SCRUTINY WORK PROGRAMME

The Scrutiny Co-ordinator introduced the report and appendices (previously circulated) seeking Members' review of the Committee's work programme which provided and update on relevant issues.

The next Partnerships Scrutiny Committee meeting was scheduled for the 26 October. There were two substantial items listed for the next meeting:

- Setting of Affordable Rent Levels
- Community Safety Partnership (Crime and Disorder Scrutiny Committee)

The Scrutiny Co-ordinator informed Members that the Scrutiny Chairs and Vice-Chairs Group at its recent meeting had agreed to request that the Committee include a report on the Blue Flag Status of Denbighshire's Beaches, which stemmed from a Notice of Motion to County Council, on its forward work programme. This had been placed on the Committee's Forward Work Programme for November 2024.

The Scrutiny Chair's and Vice Chair's Group next meeting was scheduled to be held on 3 October 2023 and Members were encouraged to complete the relevant form attached if there were any items Members wanted to be considered at the meeting.

Appendix 3 was the Cabinet's Forward Work Programme for Members reference. Appendix 4 provided the Committee with further information regarding recommendations from the previous meeting.

At the conclusion of the discussion the Committee:

Resolved: subject to the inclusion, as and when available, of a progress report on the North Denbighshire Community Hospital Project to confirm its forward work programme as set out in Appendix 1 to the report.

8 FEEDBACK FROM COMMITTEE REPRESENTATIVES

None.

Meeting concluded at 12pm.