

## **PARTNERSHIPS SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

Minutes of the Partnerships Scrutiny Committee held in the Conference Room 1a, County Hall, Ruthin on Thursday, 26<sup>th</sup> January, 2012 at 9.30 a.m.

### **PRESENT**

Councillors D. Owens (Chair), J.R. Bartley, C. Davies, J.A. Davies, C.M. Evans, G.C. Evans and G.M. Kensler.

Co-opted Member for Education Mr J. Saxon

### **ALSO PRESENT**

Corporate Director: Demographics, Wellbeing and Planning (SE), Head of Adult and Business Services (PG), Head of Business Planning and Performance (AS), Commissioning and Evaluation Officer (JJH), Planning and Performance Officer (RBM), Scrutiny Coordinator (RhE) and Democratic Services Office (RAH).

#### **1. APOLOGIES**

Councillors J. Butterfield, N. Hughes, G. Williams and J. Yorke.

Co-opted Members for Education Ms C. Burgess, Mrs G. Greenland, Ms D. Houghton and Dr D. Marjoram.

#### **2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

No personal or prejudicial interests in any items of business were declared

#### **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**

(i) The minutes of a meeting of the Partnerships Scrutiny Committee held on Thursday, 3<sup>rd</sup> November, 2011 were submitted. The minutes had been accepted as an accurate account at the meeting of the Partnerships Scrutiny Committee on the 15<sup>th</sup> December, but as that meeting was held in an inquorate capacity, the minutes could only be formally approved at the next quorate meeting of the Committee.

(ii) The minutes of the meeting of the Partnerships Scrutiny Committee held on Thursday 15<sup>th</sup> December were submitted

Matters arising: -

Councillor G C Evans highlighted that the minutes of the meeting on 15<sup>th</sup> December should include reference under the 'Points of Notice' heading that, due to the fact

that the meeting was inquorate, the minutes of the previous meeting on 3<sup>rd</sup> November could not be validated.

Members requested that a copy of the letter sent to the Betsi Cadwaladr University Health Board (BCUHB) regarding the Learning Disability Nurse pilot be sent to the newly appointed Local Authority representative on the BCUHB, other officials at BCUHB and the Chief Executive of the Community Health Council (CHC).

**Resolved:** *that pending the inclusion of the above point the minutes of the meetings held on the 3<sup>rd</sup> November and 15<sup>th</sup> November 2011 be approved as a true and accurate record of proceedings.*

## **5. REGIONAL COMMISSIONING, PROCUREMENT AND MONITORING HUB**

The Corporate Director: Demographics, Wellbeing and Planning (CD:DWP) presented to the Committee the draft Final Business Case (FBC) for the establishment of a Regional Commissioning, Procurement and Monitoring hub in North Wales. This would allow local authorities and the Betsi Cadwaladr University Health Board (BCUHB) to collaborate in the sourcing and provision of high cost, low volume residential placements to attain better quality and a more cost-effective service.

It was explained that the 'Simpson Review' of Local Authority service delivery and the 'Sustainable Social Services for Wales: A Framework for Action' documents published by the Welsh Government (WG) recommended that Councils work together to provide more efficient services. The present arrangements for provision of high cost, low volume residential placements across the NHS and different local authorities were recognised as being disjointed and inefficient, and Councils across North Wales and the BCUHB had resolved to collaborate to provide a more economical and better focused service.

Current spending on high cost, low volume placements across North Wales had been costed at circa £46m, and it was estimated that savings resulting from the regional hub could be up to £1.9m in total over a three year period. The operational cost of running the hub under the proposed model would cost approximately £145k, with Denbighshire County Council contributing £5.5k on top of the £7k that was spent under the present Learning Disabilities Project. If the proposed model was approved Denbighshire CC could realise savings totalling between £51K and £111K. This was less than other authorities but, as each authority's contribution cost would be based proportionately on relative savings, this would mean that DCC's contribution to the Hub would be lower than other authorities.

It was proposed that the Hub be governed by a Management Board, with a balance of representation from each local authority's service area and the BCUHB. The Management Board would be accountable to the Social Services and Health Programme Board. Whilst the Management Board would be made up of officers from all local authorities and the BCUHB, the relevant Lead Member from each local authority would sit on the Social Services and Health Programme Board. The Lead Member would be responsible for taking reports through DCC's scrutiny process. It

was also noted that DCC had put itself forward for consideration as the host authority for the Hub.

Risks associated with the implementation of a new project like this were highlighted, such as difficulty in recruiting the right calibre of staff and the actual delivery of the savings, but the Committee was assured that the Hub would be closely monitored and that DCC was free to exit the arrangement if it is not successful after an agreed period of time. The increase in funding from Denbighshire of £5.5k annually was considered to be a relatively small amount in comparison to the potential savings that could be achieved by the project.

The CD:DWP concluded by recommending that the Partnerships Scrutiny Committee support the FBC, and invited questions from members of the Committee.

Councillor C.M. Evans referenced the financial statistics listed in the report and questioned why Conwy CBC had more adult placements than DCC but that DCC spent more on these placements. The CD:DWP explained that the costs for each placement would vary greatly depending on individual needs and so total costs would not always correlate directly with the total number of placements. She added that if there were unaccounted reasons for a cost imbalance that these would be much easier to identify and remedy under the proposed new arrangements. Councillor G.M. Kensler queried the presentation of the data in the report, asking why health costs were not broken down by local authority. The CD:DWP stated that this data had not been listed but that it could be attained. It was also stressed that a data clean-up exercise had been carried out so the figures presented in the draft FBC were as accurate as feasibly possible.

The Committee questioned the extent of discretion allowed to individuals and their families in determining placement options under the proposed new system. The CD:DWP advised that when the Hub would make recommendations with respect to placements, individual/family's preference would be taken into account where possible, but the determining factors would be the quality of care and value for money of the provision on offer.

Concern was raised about scrutiny and monitoring arrangements for the collaborative Hub. Councillor G.C. Evans suggested that the Management Board should include democratic representation and queried whether the scrutiny of the project should be undertaken on a regional basis rather than separately by individual authorities. The CD:DWP assured the Committee that monitoring arrangements were thorough and that DCC's representatives on the Management Board of the project would ensure that Denbighshire's needs were recognised. However, until the guidelines on the scrutiny of jointly administered bodies were published by the WG joint scrutiny could only be carried out on an informal basis. The FBC was quite clear in that there was an expectation on each local authority's representatives, on either the Management Board or the Social Services and Health Programme Board, to take reports through the scrutiny process at least on an annual basis.

Councillor J.A. Davies asked how often the performance of the Hub would be reported on, suggesting that the service users' opinions of the new arrangements would be an essential gauge to use in measuring the Hub's success. The CD:DWP

said she would clarify the position with regards to this and inform the Committee of the plans for reporting on performance. Following an in-depth discussion it was:

**RESOLVED** – *that*

*a) Cabinet be recommended to commit Denbighshire County Council to the establishment of a Regional Commissioning, Procurement and Monitoring Hub in North Wales to serve the six local authorities and the Betsi Cadwaladr University Health Board (BCUHB), initially for the purpose of commissioning local authority (social care and education) and health services high cost, low volume residential placements; and*

*b) further work is done to strengthen and clarify the role of local government scrutiny, on a regional and local basis, in scrutinising and monitoring the work and performance of this and other regional collaborative projects.*

## **6. FAMILIES FIRST UPDATE**

A copy of a report by the Head of Business Planning and Performance, which provided an update on the funding available to support the Families First initiatives following the cessation of funding from the Cymorth projects, and which sought Members' views on the process adopted and its support for this approach, had been circulated with the papers for the meeting.

The Head of Business Planning and Performance (HoBPP) and the Commissioning and Evaluation Officer (C&EO) explained that Cymorth grant funding of approximately £1.2m which has previously been allocated through the Children and Young People's Strategic Partnership (CYPSP) would cease on 31<sup>st</sup> March 2012, and will be re-directed to support the Families First Programme in line with the WG's priority of addressing child poverty. This would lead to a change in what funding was provided and how it could be spent with a move away from the informal grant allocation towards a more rigorous commissioning process, with the intention of attaining better focused and more effective services. It was anticipated that revised commissioning arrangements would see a smaller number of large organisations working with vulnerable families, in contrast to the large number of smaller organisations currently involved.

The multi-agency Children and Young People's Strategic Partnership (CYPSP) Board was managing the transition and specifications had been developed early on in the process to help local providers, in conjunction with Denbighshire Voluntary Services Council (DVSC), to adapt in order to deliver the services that DCC and the Families First initiative required. Close communication and support had been offered to help ease the transition and workshops on the changes were attended by most of the organisations currently receiving funding, as well as by a number of new organisations. Many services/organisations could continue to receive funding as long as they could adapt their services to target child poverty more directly. It was acknowledged that some providers of non-priority services would lose funding, but that this would be a necessary price to pay to improve service overall. Every effort had been made over the last 12 to 24 months to assist organisations to devise exit strategies and/or adapt their services, which would consequently lessen the impact on their service users.

The HoBPP notified the Committee that the tendering process was approaching the deadline for tenders, due to close on 31<sup>st</sup> January 2012, and that applicants would be informed of the results of tendering on 22<sup>nd</sup> February.

The Committee was then invited to pose questions regarding the report and the processes scheduled for implementation.

Councillor J.R. Bartley shared with the Committee the concerns of dissatisfied providers such as Home-Start in Denbigh whose funding was at risk. Such organisations had seen an increase in demand for their services during recent months due to wider economic pressures and Councillor Bartley warned of wider implications if families were not able to get the support that they need. The C&EO advised that Home-Start received funding through the Flying Start programme and a number of other sources and that since the WG had announced its decision to stop Cymorth funding, DCC had worked with a number of organisations to develop exit strategies to mitigate the loss of funding. The HoBPP added that the strict criteria established by the WG for the application of grant funding under the Families First initiative meant that some services would fall outside of the criteria and therefore could not continue to receive this funding, but that these service providers had been notified of the changes and had been given sufficient time to adapt.

Councillor G.C. Evans enquired on the composition of the CYPSP and the HoBPP informed the Committee that its membership reflected a broad range of organisations including local authority, health, 3<sup>rd</sup> sector and police representatives, and that the Partnership would be robust in its consideration of tenders and would strive to avoid any vested interests.

Councillor G.M. Kensler requested assurances that the tendering process would be open and that the decision making would be justified. The HoBPP confirmed that decisions on the allocation of funding would be fully justified and reasons for opting for one service over another would be explained. There would be no process of appeal for unsuccessful applicants for funding, but the communication and support offered to help services through the process should maximise the chances of services/organisations continuing to receive funding under the new model.

The Chair commended the work done to target funding more effectively, but warned of potential negative media coverage resulting from services/organisations losing funding. The HoBPP explained that DCC had been open in explaining the changes to services and had offered support to facilitate the transition, and that the positive outcomes of the project should be emphasised in public relations. The Committee:

**RESOLVED –**

- a) to receive and note the report on the impact of the changes from CYMORTH funding to the Families First Programme;*
- b) to support the approach taken in implementing changes to funding streams and the assistance given to help services/organisations to adapt to these changes; and*
- c) that a list of the successful projects to be funded under the Families First Programme be compiled and distributed to the Committee members.*

## 7. THE BIG PLAN

The HoBPP introduced a report, circulated with the papers for the meeting beforehand, providing an update of recent developments in delivering the outcomes of Denbighshire's BIG Plan. The BIG Plan was explained to be a plan for partnership, led and produced by DCC on behalf of the Local Service Board (LSB), which would co-ordinate actions to achieve the 8 specified outcomes of the plan. Each outcome contained its own complex action plan with DCC's role in the implementation of each of these plans varying, consequently some aspects of the action plans under each outcome would be outside of DCC's direct control.

The Planning and Performance Officer (PPO) went through each of the 8 outcomes of The BIG Plan to update the Committee as to the progress that had been made against their objectives.

Outcome 1: Older people – Performance against all actions was progressing well. Locality Leadership Teams have been developed, prioritising prevention and promotion, enhancement of care in the community and at home and shifting services to the community (action 1) and a draft Carers' Strategy for North Wales was being developed by the BCUHB which would be available in the near future (action 2).

Outcome 2: Regeneration in Rhyl – Status updates were given for various regeneration projects taking place in Rhyl. Nearly all held a delivery confidence rating of green or amber, but the Neighbourhood Management project and the Foryd Bridge and Harbour project were rated 'red/amber'. A Health Impact Assessment of the Rhyl Going Forward delivery plan was planned for 2<sup>nd</sup> March 2012.

Councillor C.M. Evans asked what plans were in place to deal with poverty in Rhyl. The PPO explained how the work done in conjunction with DCC's Welfare Rights Unit, the Anti-Poverty Network and the Citizens Advice Bureau was helping many people out of poverty, but also cautioned that the wider economic environment was presently forcing more people into poverty. Councillor G.C. Evans asked whether these organisations were working together on the project, and the CD:DWP assured the Committee that the various services and organisations involved were working well together in an effort to combat poverty and provided distinct but complimentary services.

Outcome 3: Children and young people's skills – Actions were being taken forward through both the Early and Extending Entitlement actions plans, which were progressing well. The finer details of the action plans would be finalised shortly as would the methods for measuring the achievement of the outcomes.

Outcome 4: Vulnerable families – Actions 1-7 were being taken forward through the Families First Action Plan, Team Around the Family (TAF), Genesis and the Cordis Bright Mapping of Vulnerable Families Report. Action 8 aiming to reduce re-offending came under Priority Area B of the Community Safety Plan developed by the Community Safety Partnership, which was on-track and showing reductions in the last reporting quarter.

Outcome 5: Rural areas – Action 1 was being led by DVSC through the Denbighshire Advocacy Service for Older People and was progressing well. Actions 2-7 required further co-ordination of activity which was scheduled to begin between February and June 2012.

Councillor C.M. Evans expressed concern that, firstly, recent improvements to rural transport would be restrained due to a reduction in funding and, secondly, that the identification in the plan for improved broadband provision in rural areas was actually less of a concern than the lack of reception for mobile phones in rural areas. The concern about inadequate telephone coverage was shared by the Committee and it was agreed that this needed addressing directly. Councillor G. Kensler suggested that the Lead Member for Modernising the Council should be asked to contact the major telephone companies to explore how mobile telephone coverage could be improved.

Councillor G.C. Evans commented that while The BIG Plan looked good on paper, there was currently little interaction between DCC and Community Councils in comparison to interactions with Town Councils, and in order for the Plan to be implemented effectively it was vital to ensure that rural communities were not overlooked. The HoBPP agreed that the Plan needed to be pushed forward to ensure that its objectives were realised and stated that where it was identified that DCC was not delivering adequate services to rural areas that better consultation must be carried out to improve services.

Councillor J.R. Bartley requested that action 1 be extended to include people with learning disabilities. The HoBPP advised that as the Plan was a product of a lengthy agreement process with multiple partners that such modifications may not be possible, but that such suggestions for improvement would certainly be taken forward.

Outcome 6: Healthy lifestyles – Actions were being progressed through the Early Entitlement, Extending Entitlement, Health Social Care and Well Being (HSCWB) and Community Safety action plans. The HSCWB action plan would address adult sexual health (action 3) once finalised; the Healthy Schools and Pre-schools scheme was contributing to the progression of action 4; and the Emotional Mental Health and Well Being Steering Group was identified as having potential to become a valuable multi-agency vehicle in addressing action 5.

Councillor C.M. Evans suggested that the HPV vaccinations given to female school pupils should be extended to males. The CD:DWP and the HoBPP agreed that this could be taken forward and the Chair requested that Councillor C.M. Evans and the Scrutiny Coordinator prepare a letter to the WG expressing the Committee's recommendations in this area.

Members also requested that the latest version of the general immunisation programme for children, including take-up rates, was made available to the Committee.

Outcome 7: Keeping people safe – Actions were being led by the work of the Community Safety Partnership and were progressing. After a gap had been

identified in reducing childhood injuries action 3 was being prioritised through the Early Entitlement, Extending Entitlement and HSCWB action plans. Action 5 was being progressed through Denbighshire's Adult Protection Committee (DAPC) and action 8 was being taken forward by the Local Safeguarding Children's Board.

Councillor J.R. Bartley identified that dog fouling had not been cited in the plan and that this was a concern as he considered that the current procedures to address dog fouling were not working and that the issue should be escalated. The HoBPP agreed that it was a problem but that the plan could not be amended without consultation with the other partners involved with producing The BIG Plan.

Councillor J.A. Davies added that she had concerns about the consideration being given to victims when developing community safety plans. There was help available from Victim Support, but she also suggested that a telephone helpline would be beneficial to victims of crime. The HoBPP said that he would raise this suggestion with the Community Safety Partnership.

Outcome 8: Denbighshire's economy workforce – Actions 1-3 were being addressed under the Extending Entitlement action plan but progress could not be accurately measured with currently available data. Actions 4, 6, 7, 8 and 9 were identified as needing further development which would commence in the new financial year. Action 5 was progressing well at 97% above target. The Committee was advised that funding through the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) would cease at the end of March 2013. but that other avenues were being explored via the Wales European Funding Office (WEFO).

The Committee expressed concern for the attainment of action 7, the development of work placements for people with learning disabilities or physical/sensory impairment. The goal was commendable, but doubts were raised regarding its realisation due to the wider jobs market being so constrained. Councillor C.M. Evans argued that employment opportunities would only arise from external investment in the area and was dissatisfied that nothing seemed to be happening. The CD:DWP agreed that DCC needed to be proactive in attracting investment. The HoBPP said that the issue was something that would have to be addressed through working with other bodies and that the Conwy and Denbighshire Local Service Board was considering how to promote external investment. The PPO agreed to provide the Committee with information on the New Work Connections programme, including present take-up levels, as well as figures detailing the number of external investors and the value of economic investment in Denbighshire and the number of jobs created since the implementation of The BIG Plan.

Councillor C. Davies stated that many of the issues in The BIG Plan stemmed from economic problems in the area and that these would not be overcome without attracting investment. He observed that companies would be put off investing in the area due to a lack of skills in the potential workforce, but that this was attributable to many skilled people having to leave the area in search of work and that this cycle could only be broken through positive intervention from local bodies. The Chair advised that a lot of work was being done to help develop skills, and Councillor G.C. Evans enquired whether a representative from Coleg Llandrillo should be invited to a



Scrutiny Committee meeting to explore opportunities for developing and targeting skills locally. Following an in-depth discussion the Committee:

**RESOLVED: -**

- a) to receive the report and note the progress to date with the implementation of The BIG Plan;*
- b) that the comments and observations provided be acknowledged and actioned;*
- c) that the Lead Member for Modernising the Council be requested to raise with the appropriate telecommunication companies the problems encountered with mobile telephone coverage in a number of the County's rural areas;*
- d) that a letter be sent to the Welsh Government on behalf of the Committee formally recommending the extension of the HPV vaccination to males; and*
- e) to approach the Community Safety Partnership to seek the establishment of a victim support helpline to assist and support victims of crime.*

## **8. SCRUTINY WORK PROGRAMME**

A copy of a report by the Scrutiny Coordinator, which asked the Committee to review its programme of future work and which provided an update on relevant issues, had been circulated with the papers for the meeting.

The Scrutiny Coordinator notified the Committee of a special meeting that had been organised for Thursday, 9<sup>th</sup> February, in order to consider the final business case for a Regional School Effectiveness and Improvement Service, which was unavailable for consideration at the Committee's current meeting. As this would be the only item on the agenda the Committee was asked if a report on the Implementation of the Carers Strategies (Wales) Measure 2012 (as outlined in Appendix 2 to the report) could also be discussed at this meeting, which was consented to. Members were advised that another proposal relating to a request for a report on the changes to the regional and national supporting people programme had been tabled at the meeting. Due to the financial implications to the Council and its partners of the changes to the grant funding for this programme the Committee agreed to consider the report at its meeting on 8 March.

The Committee was notified of a second joint informal meeting that had been arranged between Denbighshire and Conwy's Partnerships Scrutiny Committees which would take place on the afternoon of Thursday, 8<sup>th</sup> March, following DCC's Partnerships Scrutiny Committee's normal meeting which would take place in the morning.

The Scrutiny Chairs and Vice-Chairs Group (SCVCG) had requested that an item on the Provision of Music within Schools be accepted on to the agenda of the Partnerships Scrutiny Committee meeting scheduled for 19<sup>th</sup> April, instead of being considered by Communities Scrutiny Committee as originally intended, in order that education items requiring the attendance of education the co-opted members be scheduled together where reasonably possible. The Committee agreed to accept the item for their April meeting.

The SCVCG had also observed that the Rhyl Going Forward project should be the subject of future scrutiny. Consequently it was requesting that Partnerships Scrutiny Committee consider scheduling items relating to this Project into its forward work programme. As the project was so large and diverse the Chair asked the Scrutiny Coordinator to source further details on the project, its objectives, progress, risks and costs prior to the Committee determining how and when to scrutinise it.

The SCVCG had also requested the Committee to consider scrutinising aspects of the Council's Regeneration Corporate Priority and possibly the Police and Fire and Rescue Services. With regards to the emergency services Committee members were of the view that, as both these services were governed by their own respective Authorities which were standalone bodies which had their own governance structures and scrutiny arrangements, it would not be appropriate for the Committee to scrutinise them as well. Members were of the view that it would be better if the Council's representatives on both authorities reported back to full Council on their activities on a periodic basis. The Committee agreed to the request to scrutinise aspects of the Regeneration Corporate Priority and in order to facilitate this it requested that enquiries be made with respect to the progress achieved in developing and Economic Development Strategy.

The Scrutiny Coordinator informed the Committee that notification had been received that the public consultation on the outcomes of the NHS Service Reviews had been delayed until approximately July 2012 and so the special joint meeting of the Communities and Partnerships Scrutiny Committees scheduled for 17<sup>th</sup> February would be postponed. Consultation could now potentially take the form of a presentation to full Council, but this would be clarified closer to the time.

Councillor G.C. Evans requested that information be obtained on the current status and position of the Agricultural Estate's Advisory Group, which Cabinet had established following the review of the Agricultural Estate, as he had concerns that the Group had not met for some considerable length of time although maintenance and upgrading work was underway on a number of the County's agricultural holdings. Members supported the request and recommended that the issue be raised at the next SCVCG meeting.

**RESOLVED** – *that, subject to the above amendments, requests and observations to approve the forward Work Programme as set out in Appendix 1 to the report.*

## **9. FEEDBACK FROM COMMITTEE REPRESENTATIVES**

Councillor J.A. Davies reported from a meeting of the Cross Party Stroke Group which she had recently attended on behalf of the Community Health Council. Councillor Davies also provided a written report on the meeting to members and informed the Committee that there were currently only 2 hospitals in Wales that provided a full stroke service that included thrombolysis available around the clock. Councillor Davies asked whether the Committee should write to the Health Minister to highlight the problem but caution was given that this could be stepping outside of the Scrutiny Committee's remit. Councillors emphasised the importance of receiving reports on what other Committees/Groups were doing, but that it would not be

worthwhile to get too involved with issues that were already being scrutinised by other bodies.

The meeting concluded at 1.00pm.