

PARTNERSHIPS SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Minutes of a meeting of the Partnerships Scrutiny Committee held in by video conference on Thursday, 8 July 2021 at 10.00 am.

PRESENT

Councillors Joan Butterfield, Jeanette Chamberlain-Jones (Chair), Ann Davies, Gareth Davies, Hugh Irving, Pat Jones, Christine Marston, Melvyn Mile, Rhys Thomas, David Williams and Emrys Wynne (Vice-Chair)

Also in attendance: Councillor Bobby Feeley – Lead Member for Well-being and Independence.

Observer: Councillor Tony Thomas.

ALSO PRESENT

Corporate Director: Communities (NS), Head of Community Support Services (PG), Team Manager – Safeguarding (NT), Scrutiny Coordinator (RhE) and Committee Administrators (RTJ, KJ and SJ).

Betsi Cadwaladr University Health Board representatives in attendance -

Dr Gary Francis, Secondary Care Medical Director (Interim)
Helen Wilkinson, Strategic Manager for Cardiac Services

1 APOLOGIES

Councillor Hugh Irving had informed the Chair that he would be late joining the meeting, due to a prior engagement.

2 DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

Councillor Ann Davies declared a personal interest agenda item 5 as a relative worked for the Health Board.

Councillor Joan Butterfield declared a personal interest in agenda item 6 as a relative worked for Care Inspectorate Wales (CIW).

3 URGENT MATTERS AS AGREED BY THE CHAIR

No urgent matters had been raised with the Chair.

Councillor Rhys Thomas queried with the Chair why the matter of holding pre-meetings which he had raised at the last meeting had not been referenced as an Urgent Matter. The Scrutiny Co-ordinator advised that items raised under 'Under Matters' were defined in legislation and therefore had to conform with the legal definition to be transacted under 'Urgent Matters'. Councillor Thomas was referred

to item 7 on the minutes of the last meeting which referred to the questions raised by him at the meeting and the answers given.

With regards to the possibility of pre meetings being held again. The Chair responded that in accordance with the advice given at the previous meeting she felt that the business on the current meeting agenda did not merit the holding of a pre-meeting of the Committee and no member had contacted her to request a pre meeting. However, if there was a future business agenda which required a pre meeting one would be arranged. If a member felt that a pre-meeting would be beneficial they should contact the Chair as soon as possible with a request for one to be held.

4 MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING

The minutes of the Partnerships Scrutiny Committee meeting held on 20 May 2021 were submitted.

Resolved: - that the minutes of the Partnerships Scrutiny Committee meeting held on 20 May 2021 be approved as a true and correct record of the proceedings.

5 BETSI CADWALADR UNIVERSITY HEALTH BOARD HEART FAILURE SERVICES IN DENBIGHSHIRE AND ITS IMPACT ON THE COUNCIL'S SOCIAL CARE SERVICES

Dr Gary Francis, Secondary Care Medical Director (Interim) introduced the joint report prepared by Phil Gilroy and Helen Wilkinson (previously circulated) which provided information on the current status of the Betsi Cadwaladr University Health Board (BCUHB) Heart Failure Services provided in Denbighshire and across North Wales.

Dr Francis explained that historically some aspects of BCUHB Heart Failure Services had been subject to temporary funding streams; this had caused some uncertainty for the public around the future provision of these services and had resulted in the request for the Services' future viability and the potential impact of their withdrawal on the Council's social care services to be examined by Scrutiny. Dr Francis confirmed that the Health Board had secured funding for heart failure services from April 2020 for the foreseeable future.

BCUHB fully recognised the value of the Heart Failure Services across North Wales, and would continue to support the development of them with no plans to reduce the current provision. The Health Board recognised the key role fulfilled by community based health services in supporting health and well-being across the region, and viewed them as an integral part of their service delivery. It also acknowledged the need to sufficiently fund such services and provide them with short to medium term assurances that funding would be provided.

The Committee discussed the following points in more detail –

- The challenges posed by community based caring, it was queried whether more information could be shared with carers when patients were discharged from hospitals. BCUHB acknowledged the challenges in delivering care in the community. It was currently working on improvements with community care and was keen to hear from carers on how services could be improved.
- The Health Board acknowledged that there were some instances of delayed hospital discharges, but it was working hard to address any delays but the utmost priority would be to ensure the safety and well-being of the patient/individual concerned.
- The amount of funding available for the Heart Failure Service was queried and how long would the funding be available. BCUHB representatives stated that the funding would be available as long as the services provided met the needs of the community and were the best solutions available to deliver those services in a viable way. Medical advancements may in future require service provision and delivery methods to be reviewed and amended.

The Chair thanked representatives from BCUHB for attending. She confirmed that the details provided in the report and communicated by Health Board representatives at the meeting had alleviated concerns which were previously raised when the matter was requested to be scrutinised.

The Committee:

Resolved: - subject to the above observations to receive the information provided and

- (i) welcome the reassurances given by Betsi Cadwaladr University Health Board in relation to current and medium term funding for Heart Failure Services in Denbighshire; and***
- (ii) the Health Board's recognition of the importance of community based health services and the need to adequately fund and support them.***

6 ANNUAL REPORT ON SAFEGUARDING ADULTS IN DENBIGHSHIRE 1ST APRIL 2020 - 31ST MARCH 2021

The Lead Member for Well-being and Independence and the Head of Community Support Services, presented the report (previously circulated) which aimed to provide members with an overview of the impact of Local Safeguarding arrangements and practice. The report also sought the Committee to review progress in this key area of work over the last twelve months through examination of the data submitted by the Local Authority to the Welsh Government Data Unit.

Despite the pressures caused by the COVID-19 pandemic and the restrictions placed upon individuals and organisations by the crisis the Council's performance in relation to safeguarding adults had remained strong, with improvements being realised in a number of areas, such as performance against the Welsh Government performance indicator on enquiries completed within 7 working days.

Overall there has been a significant reduction (40%) in numbers of safeguarding reports received in comparison to the same period the previous year. However

there has been an increase in the number of telephone calls to the Safeguarding team to discuss safeguarding issues. This provided some reassurance that it remained very much in focus for providers and other agencies despite the reduction in the number of reports

Although fewer reports have been received during the 2020-21 year, the Council had not seen an increase in cases needing to progress to strategy meetings, which appeared to be following the trends of recent years. Section 126 enquiries had become more embedded in safeguarding practice across all agencies and the Council continued to see only those more serious allegations of abuse or neglect progressing through to strategy meetings. The preventative actions towards reducing further risk of harm continued to be at the forefront of the enquiry stage, with the emphasis on the individual's personal outcomes being at the centre of the safeguarding process.

The Council had continued to maintain its performance in relation to the Welsh Government performance indicator, with 99% of enquiries completed within the 7 working day timescale for 2020/2021.

The Committee discussed the following points in more detail –

- whether data was available for the number of proven safeguarding complaints, as it was only the number of alleged incidents that were referenced within the report. Due to technical connection issues, officers agreed to provide the data to members in writing, they also confirmed that the data on the number of substantiated allegations would be included in future Safeguarding reports.
- Confirmation was provided that there had been a 40% reduction in people choosing to reside in care homes during the Coronavirus pandemic. However, there had been a significant increase in the number of enquiries received by the Single Point of Access (SPoA) Service during the same period.
- Installation of CCTV equipment in residents' care home bedrooms would be a matter of personal choice for the individual or his/her family. The Council could not install CCTV surveillance equipment in people's private rooms.
- Quality of care and safeguarding were two separate matters. Whilst there may be concerns regarding the quality of care in an establishment that in itself may not meet the criteria or statutory threshold to instigate a Safeguarding investigation.
- Any individual had the right to raise safeguarding issues and these could be raised with a number of different individuals or organisations. They would all eventually be examined by the Council's Corporate Safeguarding Panel.
- The provision of an Annual Safeguarding Adults Report was a statutory requirement for all local authorities in Wales. It was a way of providing assurances to residents that the safety of the county's vulnerable residents was regarded as a priority and to provide assurances that all allegations or concerns were thoroughly investigated.

At the conclusion of the discussion the Committee:

Resolved: - *subject to the above observations and the provision of the additional information and data requested during the course of the discussion, to acknowledge the importance of a corporate approach to the safeguarding of adults at risk and the responsibility of the Council to view this as a key priority area.*

7 SCRUTINY WORK PROGRAMME

The Scrutiny Coordinator submitted a report (previously circulated) seeking members' review of the Committee's work programme and provided an update on relevant issues.

- Confirmation was still awaited from the Health Board on when its representatives would be in a position to attend a meeting to discuss its plans for services in Denbighshire. The Health Board was awaiting further information from the Welsh Government in relation to the North Denbighshire Community Hospital project.
- 16 September 2021 meeting - the Community Safety Partnership's Annual Report would be available for scrutiny. In addition, Denbighshire Voluntary Services Council (DVSC) had a newly appointed Chief Executive who had indicated that he would welcome the opportunity to discuss with the Committee his vision and plans for DVSC along with any future working opportunities with the Council.
- The Scrutiny Chairs and Vice-Chairs Group (SCVCG) had indicated that it wished the Committee to discuss National Non-Domestic Rates (NNDR) and their potential impact on the viability of town centre retail. Further information was currently being sourced in relation to this topic before it would be scheduled into the Committee's forward work programme.

The Committee:

Resolved: - *subject to the above comments and inclusions to confirm the Committee's forward work programme.*

8 FEEDBACK FROM COMMITTEE REPRESENTATIVES

The following Committee representatives on various Boards and Groups, provided an update on recent meetings which they had attended:

- Councillor Jeanette Chamberlain-Jones had attended the Communities and Customers Service challenge meeting where concerns on the quality of Denbighshire's housing stock had been raised. Officers had agreed to investigate the concerns and address them. They had also advised that due to COVID-19 restrictions Housing Officers had been unable to undertake routine inspection visits to the housing stock.
- Councillor Hugh Irving and Councillor Melvyn Mile had attended the Business Improvement and Modernisation service challenge meeting. They confirmed that they would send a list of the findings to the Scrutiny Co-ordinator for circulation.

- Councillor Irving had also attended the Queen's Building Project Working Group. Due to the sensitive nature of the matters discussed he would query at a future meeting what information he could share with other committees.

. The Committee:

Resolved: to receive and note the information updates received from Committee representatives on various Boards and Groups.

Meeting concluded at 11.25am