

PARTNERSHIPS SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Minutes of a meeting of the Partnerships Scrutiny Committee held in Conference Room 1a, County Hall, Ruthin on Thursday, 31 May 2012 at 9.30 am.

PRESENT

Councillors Brian Blakeley, Ann Davies, Meirick Davies, Alice Jones, Pat Jones, Gwyneth Kensler, Margaret McCarroll, Dewi Owens and Merfyn Parry.
Councillors J.R. Bartley and W.L. Cowie attended as Observers.

ALSO PRESENT

Corporate Director: Modernising and Wellbeing (SE), Head of Adult and Business Services (PG), Head of Business, Planning and Performance (AS), Service Manager: Quality and Systems Development (CM), Scrutiny Coordinator (RE) and Administrative Officer (CW).

The Chair thanked the Councillor D. Owens for the work he had undertaken in chairing the Partnerships Scrutiny Committee during the past 12 months.

1 APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Bill Tasker

2 APPOINTMENT OF VICE CHAIR

In accordance with the Council's Constitution CVs/statements had been requested from interested parties for the office of Committee Vice-Chair. One such CV had been received prior to the meeting and circulated to all members.

Councillor E A Jones was nominated and seconded for the office of Committee Vice-Chair. No other nominations were received and the Committee:

***RESOLVED** – that Councillor E.A. Jones be appointed Vice Chair for the ensuing year.*

3 DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

No Members declared any personal or prejudicial interests in any business identified to be considered at the meeting.

4 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.

5 MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING

The Minutes of a meeting of the Partnerships Scrutiny Committee held on Thursday, 19th April, 2012 were submitted.

Matters arising:-

4. Minutes of the last meeting, Page 1, The Big Plan – In response to a question from the Councillor D. Owens, the Scrutiny Coordinator agreed to circulate to Members of the Committee the response received from the Minister for Health and social Services regarding the provision of HPV vaccinations to boys.

Page 2, Tourism - In reply to a question from the Councillor D. Owens, the Scrutiny Coordinator confirmed the Tourism and Leisure Services had been asked to provide all councillors with details of the progress in respect of planned initiatives to encourage Tweedmill outlet shoppers to visit other parts of the County. Councillor W.L. Cowie informed the Committee that a booklet had been produced by the Tweedmill outlet which made reference to St Asaph, and in particular to the Cathedral.

Page 2, Members Questions – Councillor J.R. Bartley informed Members that he had requested, from the Assistant Director of Primary Care, statistics and details in respect of annual health checks for people with learning disabilities. The Corporate Director: Modernising and Wellbeing agreed that she would endeavour to obtain the information, and suggested that this matter be included on the agenda for the next Scrutiny Committee attended by representatives of BCU.

RESOLVED – *that, subject to the above, the Minutes be received and approved as a correct record.*

6 SUSTAINABLE SOCIAL SERVICES: A FRAMEWORK FOR ACTION AND SOCIAL SERVICES (WALES) BILL

A copy of a report by the Corporate Director: Modernising and Wellbeing, which detailed major policy and legislative change proposed by Welsh Government and its affect on the delivery of social services for the foreseeable future, had been circulated with the papers for the meeting.

The Corporate Director: Modernising and Wellbeing introduced the report which outlined the proposed changes set out in “Sustainable Social Services: A Framework for Action” (SSSFFA) and the Social Services (Wales) Bill. The report sought Members’ guidance on how Denbighshire might wish to express its views on the consultation report on the Bill, and on the proposed Modernising Social Services Board which was to be established to take forward key developments in Denbighshire. It was explained that delivery through partnership would be a core feature of the proposals.

Appendix 1 summarised the content of the major Welsh Government policy document “Sustainable Social Services: a Framework for Action” and proposals in the Social Services (Wales) Bill. Together they set out a radical agenda for the transformation of Social Services in Wales. Delivery of the agenda formed the heart of Contract 2 within the Compact for Change. A consultation document on

the Social Services (Wales) Bill had been issued with a closing date of 1st June, 2012. Consideration of this report at the current meeting provided members with an opportunity to feed into a Local Government response to the consultation. The WLGA's briefing on the proposals had been made available as a Background Document.

Many of the proposals in SSSFFA and the Bill assumed that councils would deliver services in partnership through close collaboration with other services within the Council, the NHS, other Councils or with the community, voluntary and independent sectors. Appendix 2 set out current structures for working on an inter-agency, sub-regional and regional basis.

Some issues would require a particular Denbighshire focus if a particular impetus was needed or there were particular opportunities. It was proposed that a Denbighshire Modernising Social Services Board, across Children's, Adults and Business Services, was established to oversee this work. There would be considerable common areas of work with those to modernise the Council generally and this had been illustrated in the Chart included in Appendix 2 to the report.

The Corporate Director: Modernising and Wellbeing (CDM&W) provided a detailed presentation of Appendix 1, Modernising Social Services – The Package, and the main points included:-

- Challenges
- Gamechanging Principles
- Differences
- Social Services (Wales) Bill
- Maintaining and Enhancing the Wellbeing of People in Need
- Implications
- A stronger Voice and Real Control
- Strong nation Direction and Local Accountability
- Safeguarding and Protection
- Regulation and Inspection
- Denbighshire Modernising Social Services Board

The following issues were raised by Councillor J.A. Davies and responses provided by the CDM&W:-

Pages 18 and 21 - Simplicity of obtaining details on acquiring help, and access to information. It was confirmed that there would be a need to monitor the dissemination of information through various channels such as the website, leaflets and posters.

Page 25 - The CDM&W confirmed that there were no additional resources provided in respect of the implementation of the Local "People in Need" assessments.

Page 27 – It was explained that the maximum £50.00 per week charge had been introduced under the Welsh Government charging policy in respect of social care in the community. In response to a question from Councillor, M. McCarroll, the Head of Adult and Business Services (HABS) outlined the criteria and procedure adopted for assessing the need for the provision of additional sessions.

Page 31 - Rights of Carers. The officers confirmed the importance of the provision of help and assistance for carers, particular reference being made to the introduction of the new Carers Strategies (Wales) Measure 2010.

In response to questions from Members, the CDM&W outlined the significant change in assessing the Welsh Language as a care need and highlighted the importance of meeting service users' needs, particular reference being made to independent sector providers. She confirmed that procedures would be introduced to monitor the effectiveness of the service and reference was made to the role of the Contract Management Team in monitoring service provision.

The concerns expressed by Councillor D. Owens, regarding the need for the provision of additional funding from the Welsh Government to meet the requirements of the important and significant changes being introduced into the service provision, were endorsed by the CDM&W.

In response to questions from Councillor G.M. Kensler the HABS provided an outline of the work undertaken by North East Wales Carers Information Service (NEWCIS); the supply and reclamation of equipment to service users by both Health and Social Care Services, and detailed the service provided by the Family Information Service.

In reply to a question from Councillor E.A. Jones regarding forward planning within the service in respect of changes in society, the CDM&W outlined the work undertaken in respect of demographic change, the need for early intervention and the importance of the transformation of the provision of services to adapt to the needs of the public.

The CDM&W responded to a question from the Chair regarding recommendation 3.2 of the report and explained that the Membership of the Denbighshire Modernising Social Services Board would include a Lead Member as it would have executive powers. It was also emphasised that it would be important that scrutiny was kept informed of the Board's proposals and decisions.

The CDM&W responded to a question from Councillor M. McCarroll regarding social enterprise models. She confirmed it was currently in the preliminary stages and made reference to Cefndy Healthcare although not a social enterprise, it did have a number of the characteristics of a social enterprise.

Reference was made by Councillor J.R. Bartley to concerns expressed regarding assessment and early diagnosis with a view to providing early intervention. He explained that currently the service users' family would be responsible for finding a placement for the service user following their 8 week assessment. The HABS referred to the re-ablement approach and the role and use of the day centre facilities to assist with rehabilitation and re-ablement. Members of the Committee were assured by officers that continued support would be provided and that the matter would be monitored closely.

Following a brief discussion, it was:-

RESOLVED – that the Partnerships Scrutiny Committee:-

(a) receive the report and that members' comments on the proposed provisions in the Social Services (Wales) Bill be included in the Council's response to the consultation on the Bill, and

(b) supports the proposal to establish a Denbighshire Modernising Social Services Board for the purpose of taking forward key developments in Denbighshire.

At this juncture in the meeting the fire alarm sounded and the meeting was adjourned.

At the commencement of the meeting the following Members were present:-
Councillors B. Blakeley, E.A. Jones, P.M. Jones, M. McCarroll and T.M. Parry.

7 ANNUAL COUNCIL REPORT: SOCIAL SERVICES 2011/2012

A copy of a report by the Corporate Director: Modernising and Wellbeing, which provided the self assessment of social care in Denbighshire and improvement priorities for 2012/2013, had been circulated with the papers for the meeting.

Due to the limited time available to conduct the remainder of the meeting the Committee agreed that any questions or comments in respect of the Directors Annual Report for 2011/2012, Appendix 1, be submitted to the Corporate Director: Modernising and Wellbeing. Members were informed that the Directors Annual Report for 2011/2012 would be submitted to County Council in July 2012 for consideration and approval.

RESOLVED – that Members questions and comments in respect of the Directors Annual Report for 2011/2012, Appendix 1, be submitted to the Corporate Director: Modernising and Wellbeing.

8 REGIONAL AND NATIONAL SUPPORTING PEOPLE PROGRAMME CHANGES

A copy of a report by the Supporting People Manager, which detailed the proposed changes to the Supporting People Programme in Wales, and provided an update on the revised interim arrangements proposed by the Welsh Government for the establishment of a Regional Collaborative Committee (RCC) for Supporting People (SP) Services, Appendix 1, had been circulated with the papers for the meeting. The report also sought Members' views to inform Denbighshire's response to the consultation.

The Corporate Director: Modernising and Wellbeing explained that Supporting People was a significant programme providing "housing related" support services to a wide range of vulnerable groups. The Programme had been evaluated at national level and shown to deliver very positive financial benefits in addition to non-financial benefits which had been outlined in the report.

An independent review of the Supporting People programme had been commissioned by the Welsh Government (WG) and the 25 key recommendations put forward had been accepted. The WG subsequently established a cross sector

Steering Group and a number of national workstreams to take forward the implementation of the recommendations.

The Minister for Housing, Regeneration and Heritage had decided that Regional Collaborative Committees (RCCs) should be established from the start of the new arrangements and this requirement had subsequently been incorporated within the Compact for Change. Concerns had been raised by Welsh Local Government Association (WLGA) and local authority representatives regarding the proposed role for the RCCs, the governance arrangements and the potential for an increase in bureaucracy.

Details of the current position had been included in the report. The new proposed interim model provided the RCC responsibility under four broad areas which would include oversight; Ministerial advice; planning and administration. The substantial and significant difference being that the RCC would make recommendations on local and regional spend to the Minister who would then make the resource decision.

The model proposed that the Minister would be involved in decisions in respect of local and regional spend on Supporting People Services, and virement of Supporting People Programme Grant (SPPG) between service user groups within the local and regional SP plan within the region. The model raised concerns as it appeared to run counter to the principles agreed following the "Essex Review". The proposal also appeared to run counter to the findings of the Review of current supporting people arrangements which stressed the need to reduce complexity and bureaucracy and avoid the delays created by Ministers making decisions about local services.

The WG had decided that transfer of Supporting People Revenue Grant (SPRG) would not occur until the RCCs had been appropriately established, possibly in August, 2012 and it was understood that suggestions to further delay until April, 2013 had been rejected.

The Corporate Director stressed that it would be important to deliver good services to vulnerable people and to manage a reduction in resources in as effective a way as possible, including through collaboration. It was felt that this would be best achieved by means of a thought through change management process.

In reply to a question from Councillor G.M. Kensler, it was confirmed that representations could be made by Members to the Welsh Assembly in respect of this matter. The Corporate Director agreed that a copy of a letter sent from the North Wales Chief Executives to the AM Minister for Housing, Regeneration and Heritage, setting out issues and concerns of the Local Authorities, could be circulated to Members of the Committee.

In response to concerns raised by Members relating to the costs of service provisions for people now residing in Denbighshire who were from outside the County, the Corporate Director explained that she had liaised with the Head of Housing Services in respect of the matter relating to cross border movement. In the majority of cases, the housing costs of homeless people from outside the county

who were placed in temporary accommodation in Denbighshire would be met by the 'home' authority.

RESOLVED – *that the Committee:-*

(a) receives the report and notes the current proposed arrangements;
(b) comments are incorporated into Denbighshire's consultation response, and
(c) requests that a copy of the letter sent from the North Wales Chief Executives to the AM Minister for Housing, Regeneration and Heritage be circulated to Members of the Committee.

9 SAFER COMMUNITIES REGIONAL BOARD

A copy of a report by the Head of Business, Planning and Performance (HBPP) (copy enclosed) which outlined progress towards the formation of the Safer Communities Regional Partnership Board and presented the amended Partnership Agreement for the Board, had been circulated with the papers for the meeting.

As part of the North Wales Partnership Review it had been agreed that a Regional Safer Communities Board for North Wales be established by 2012. The Board would be responsible for the governance, regional commissioning and oversight of operational delivery arrangements of Community Safety Partnerships, Youth Justice Services and would influence Criminal Justice service provision and development, and would be supported by sub-regional operational arrangements which included Anglesey/ Gwynedd, Conwy/ Denbighshire and Flintshire/ Wrexham. Sub-regional differences would be recognised and respected with sub-regional groups being guided by the Board to ensure greater consistency in the achievement of standards of performance and outcomes.

The idea of a formal Joint Committee had not been supported across the North Wales councils and a less formal arrangement had been proposed. An amended Partnership Agreement, which reflected the changes, had been attached as an Appendix to the report. The main elements of the new agreement and the strategic role of the North Wales Safer Communities Board, which would assume the regional strategic responsibilities currently held by local strategic or executive groups, had been detailed in the report.

The HBPP outlined the proposed membership of the Board which included the Lead Elected Member for Community Safety from each Authority, representatives from the Police, Health, Probation and Fire Service. There would also be a supporting group of 'experts' with experience in Youth Justice and Community Safety. He also provided a summary of the commissioning and resource allocation, forward work programme and associated developments, all of which had been included in the report.

Members and officers discussed the role of the Scrutiny Committee and considered how the arrangements would address the needs locally following the process of centralisation in North Wales. Councillor E.A. Jones highlighted the importance of avoiding the possible risk of democratic deficit and the need to monitor closely the areas under scrutiny to ensure the needs of the local areas were met.

The HBPP highlighted the significance of the Community Safety Partnership Action Plan in respect of their proposals for Denbighshire. With regard to the scrutiny of partnerships, the Scrutiny Coordinator referred to the WLGA proposals to arrange a workshop for all Chairs of Scrutiny. The HBPP confirmed that the Lead Member for Public Realm would be nominated as Denbighshire's member of the Safer Communities Board. Members were informed that the issue of dog fouling would be considered by the Communities Scrutiny Committee at its meeting in June, 2012.

During the ensuing discussion the Committee endorsed the recommendations contained in the report. Members also supported a proposal by Councillor E.A. Jones that the WLGA's suggestion of holding a workshop for scrutiny chairs and vice-chairs to develop clear direction and guidance with respect to the scrutiny of regional and sub regional partnerships be pursued, to ensure the avoidance of democratic deficit.

RESOLVED – *that the Committee:-*

- (a) receives and notes the revised Partnership Agreement;*
- (b) supports the amended arrangements as detailed in the Agreement, and*
- (c) recommends that the WLGA's proposal for a workshop for scrutiny chairs and vice-chairs for the purpose of developing clear guidance and direction with respect to the scrutiny of regional and sub regional partnerships be pursued.*

10 SCRUTINY WORK PROGRAMME

A copy of a report by the Scrutiny Coordinator seeking the Committee to review its draft Forward Work Programme (FWP) and which provided an update on relevant issues had been circulated with the papers for the meeting.

The Scrutiny Coordinator introduced the report and explained that Committee's draft forward work programme, Appendix 1, had been inherited from its predecessor Committee. Members were requested to consider whether the FWP reflected the new Committee's wishes and priorities. Members were informed that details of the FWP for the Communities and Performance Scrutiny Committees had been included in the information papers circulated previously.

A table summarising recent Committee resolutions and advising Members on progress with their implementation had been attached at Appendix 4 to the report.

Under the Council's scrutiny arrangements the Scrutiny Chairs and Vice-Chairs Group (SCVCG) performed the role of a coordinating Committee. The SCVCG had recommended that the Partnerships Scrutiny Committee, in complying with its designated function of scrutinising crime and disorder matters under the requirements of the Police and Justice Act 2006, schedule into its FWP for September 2012 an item on the Community Safety Partnership (CSP).

The Committee considered the draft FWP for future meetings, as detailed in Appendix 1, and reference was made to the following issues:-

The inclusion of the continuation of meetings with representatives of Betsi Cadwaladr University Health Board (BCUHB) - In response to concerns raised by Councillor E.A. Jones with regard to the importance of the consultation process in respect of Health Authority issues, the Scrutiny Coordinator explained that the Service Reviews would be submitted to Council for consideration in July 2012.

Children and Adolescent Mental Health Progress (CAMHS) – in response to a question from Councillor G.M. Kensler, the Scrutiny Coordinator explained that this item could be included on the agenda for the meeting with BCU. The Corporate Director: Modernising and Wellbeing explained that some aspects of this matter would be included in the item pertaining to the Mental Health Measure to be considered in July, 2012.

Street Lighting – Members expressed the view that there were no apparent problems pertaining to street lighting and that this item be removed from the FWP.

The Scrutiny Coordinator responded to questions from Members regarding items included on the FWP. The Committee agreed that the Scrutiny Coordinator be requested to arrange a Workshop to enable Committee Members to consider in detail the Committee's FWP for the 2012/13 municipal year.

Nominations had been sought for Committee Members to serve on the Service Challenge Groups, which would meet on a twice yearly basis. A timetable for the meetings had been included in the information sheet circulated prior to the meeting. The following Members were appointed to serve on the following Groups:-

Legal and Democratic Services: Cllr B. Blakeley
Business Planning and Performance: Cllr G.M. Kensler
Education and Customers and Education Support: Cllr B. Blakeley
Communications, Marketing and Leisure: Cllr B. Blakeley
Finance and Assets: Cllr G.M. Kensler
Highways and Infrastructure: Cllr T.M. Parry
Regeneration: Cllr M. McCarroll

Councillor E.A. Jones was appointed to serve on the Strategic Investment Group which would meet on a monthly basis.

It was explained that nominations would be required from amongst the Committee's membership to serve on the following Groups:-

Housing and Community Development
Children and Family Services
Adult and Business Services
Environmental Services
Planning and Public Protection
Strategic Human Resources

Members agreed that in order to ease the workload the Scrutiny Coordinator be asked to seek expressions of interest, from Members who were unable to attend

the meeting or had to leave the meeting before the item had been considered, to serve on the Groups.

At the request of Members from the Rhyl area, the Scrutiny Coordinator agreed to liaise with Councillor J. Thompson-Hill and the Head of Business, Planning and Performance regarding the possibility of switching any of the meetings, which did not yet have Partnerships Scrutiny Members assigned to them, to a venue in Rhyl or Prestatyn. It was:

RESOLVED – *that,*

subject to the above, and to arrangements being made for a workshop to be held on the forward work plan, the Partnerships Scrutiny Committee approve its forward work programme as set out in Appendix 1 to the report; and the above named members be appointed to serve as the Committee's representatives on the service challenge groups and the Strategic Investment Group.

Meeting ended at 13.25 p.m.