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Health, Care and Housing Committee – 21 June 2018

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE HEALTH, CARE AND HOUSING SCRUTINY COMMITTEE HELD AT COUNCIL CHAMBER - COUNTY HALL, LLANDRINDOD WELLS, POWYS ON THURSDAY, 21 JUNE 2018

PRESENT

County Councillors G I S Williams, J Charlton, H Hulme, A Jenner, E Jones, C Mills, G Morgan, P C Pritchard, D Rowlands, E Vaughan, A Williams, J M Williams and R Powell

Cabinet Portfolio Holders In Attendance: County Councillor R Powell

Officers: Dylan Owen, Head of Transformation, David Johnston, Interim Lead, Children's Services, Scott McGregor, Business Manager, Adults Services and Wyn Richards, Scrutiny Manager

Other Officers In Attendance: Liz Patterson and Lisa Richards, Scrutiny Officers

1.	APOLOGIES
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Apologies for absence were received from County Councillors S C Davies, J Gibson-Watt, S Lewis, MC Mackenzie, K M Roberts-Jones and J Williams

2.	DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST
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There were no declarations of interest.

3.	DECLARATIONS OF PARTY WHIPS
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There were no declarations of party whips.

4.	MINUTES
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Documents:

- Minutes of meeting held on 29 May 2018

Outcome:

- **The Chair was authorised to sign the minutes of the meeting held on 29 May 2018 as a correct record.**

5.	DRAFT SOCIAL SERVICES ANNUAL REPORT
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Documents:

- Draft Director of Social Service's Annual Report

Discussion:

- It was noted that the Director of Social Services had not been in post for the year covered by the report.

- The year had seen a significant period of challenge with CIW Inspection reports for both Adults' and Children's Social Services
- Following the critical Children's Services Report an Improvement Plan was developed, implementation of which will be monitored by the Improvement and Assurance Board. The Board will also monitor the implementation of the Adults' Services Improvement Plan.
- The Service received significant support from corporate services and have had additional investment
- Whilst significantly improved performance is being achieved there is more work to do
- The report of the Director of Social Services is statutory and had originally been intended to report on what had been achieved and services provided. However at that time, little guidance had been issued, allowing individual authorities to develop their own report format. Under the Social Services and Wellbeing Act there is a requirement for a similar report to be produced but with a specific format. The report is now required to focus on improvements and support this with both qualitative and quantitative data. Consideration had been given to reporting Children's and Adults' Services separately but this did not provide clarity. Further consideration will be given to the report format for future years.
- The Scrutiny Committee were asked to provide balance and challenge and to make suggestions as to what might make the report more readable:
- Members suggestions:
 - The report needed to flow – there was too much 'jumping' around
 - Links to Performance Management were missing
 - Members questioned how they could test the viability of outcomes – ie quality of what we deliver and not just quantity? The Interim Lead for Children's Services informed the Committee that monitoring is undertaken by the Improvement and Assurance Board and that the minutes of that should be widely available. More transparency is required. There is also a need to build in more robust quality assurance in order to give Scrutiny more assurance. The Portfolio Holder confirmed the need to look beyond figures to assess quality and whether the right services were being provided. The Head of Transformation said that the actions matched those detailed within the Improvement Plan and monitoring will take place against that Plan.
 - It was essential that managers manage. It was acknowledged that the service had been through a challenging period, but managers must carry out the full extent of their duties. The Interim Lead, Children's Services indicated that a number of things needed to be put in place – firstly the workforce needed to be stabilized. Extra staff have been brought in to ensure the safety of children. A permanent and stable workforce was not yet in place but the service was working towards this. HR have developed a package to attract more staff. It is acknowledged that agency workers are more expensive. Secondly, placements need to be addressed. More foster carers have been recruited. The increase in Looked After Children (LACs) have been heavily reliant on out of county placements. The commissioning process must be strengthened to deliver in county services.

- Geographical positives could be highlighted
- The transitions from care leaver to adult social services could be highlighted
- Staff sickness absence is high and it was questioned whether this should be referred to in the report. A Panel has been set up to deal with stress related illness and this should be sufficiently flexible to include the Portfolio Holder and Head of Service from the area in question. Staff have been under significant pressure and absence is recognised as an issue. Teams will have more resilience once they are in place. The Chair of Employment Committee informed Members that a detailed report on sickness absence would be considered by Employment Committee in the autumn.
- Powys People Direct (PPD) showed some improvements but clarity was required regarding what further work was to be undertaken. PPD is under review, including the name, which did not reflect the service provided.
- Recovering relationships and the positive impact this is having should also be highlighted
- The priorities for the forthcoming year were not always clear
- There was too much jargon in the report – the report should be easily read by the public, including service users, and should not be aimed at professionals. The Head of Transformation agreed that jargon should be avoided. The audience for the report was County Council and the public via the website in addition to the Welsh Government and CIW.
- Members suggested that they needed some assistance in handling complaints from their constituents and how best to engage. Pilot studies had been carried out in some wards and the local Member had been unaware of the projects. It was accepted that this was an area for Member Development but that queries etc should continue to be logged with Member Support.
- There was no reference to day centres within the report – it was acknowledged that this had been confused by the use of different terminology
- The statistic relating to 90% of PPD clients not having called back within 6 months was not thought to be a worthwhile statistic. However, this was a statutory KPI, but it was not clear what had happened to that 90%. Officers were of the opinion that the re-referral rate of 10% was statistically low and there was further work being undertaken.
- The Active Offer is to be promoted 'where possible' - this was not considered to be sufficiently robust. Currently less than 10% receive the Active Offer. The service is only just beginning to measure this. It would not always be possible to deliver specialist services through the medium of Welsh.

County Councillor C Mills left the meeting at 11.15 am

- With regard to the case studies within the report, the Committee were of the opinion that one fit within the context of the report but the other one did not and consideration should be given to whether case studies enhanced the report. This comment has been made elsewhere and the inclusion of case studies will be reconsidered.

- Are children always assigned a qualified social worker? Any child's case will be dealt with or overseen by a qualified social worker.
- Support and assessment – what does this mean for those we are delivering to? Assessment had been a significant concern for the CIW. This has been addressed and is now up to date and clients are assessed in a timely manner. However, the performance rating is still classed as amber due to the provision of domiciliary care.
- There is no reference to feedback from the Safeguarding Group or Community Connectors. It was thought that there was insufficient information to be included in this report but this would be considered for future reports.
- Fostering was only mentioned in passing and it was suggested that the report should reflect the work undertaken in the last year which has led to an increase in approvals

Outcome:

- **The comments made would be considered for inclusion in the Director of Social Service's Annual Report**

6.	WORK PROGRAMME
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The work programme was still under review following the changes to the committee structure. It would be circulated to Members as soon as practicable.

Members asked if additional training would be provided. The Scrutiny Manager confirmed that he was developing a training programme to cover the remaining term of the Council. One of the first topics to be addressed would be relationship issues between the Cabinet, Scrutiny and Officers.

7.	CORRESPONDENCE
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There were no items of correspondence.

**County Councillor G I S Williams
Chair**