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Health and Care Scrutiny Committee – 5 April 2019

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE HEALTH AND CARE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE HELD AT COUNCIL CHAMBER, COUNTY HALL - COUNTY HALL ON FRIDAY, 5 APRIL 2019

PRESENT

County Councillors G I S Williams (Chair)

County Councillors J Charlton, D E Davies, H Hulme, A Jenner, S McNicholas, G Morgan, K M Roberts-Jones, D Rowlands, J Williams, J M Williams, R Williams and E Vaughan

In attendance: County Councillor E Durrant (Member of the Employment and Appeals Committee)

Cabinet Portfolio Holders in Attendance: None

Officers: A Bulman, Corporate Director, Children's and Adults, J Coles, Head of Children's Services, Dylan Owen, Head of Commissioning, P Bradshaw, Head of Workforce and OD, C Williams, Practice and Learning Development Officer, R Evans, Health and Social Care Manager and D Moody, Strategic Commissioning Manager

Other Officers in Attendance: C Turner, Chief Executive

1.	APOLOGIES
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Apologies for absence were received from County Councillors E Jones, S M Hayes and R Powell

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

3.	DISCLOSURE OF PARTY WHIPS
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There were no disclosures of party whips.

4.	MINUTES
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The Chair was authorised to sign the minutes of the last meeting, held on 22 February 2019 as a correct record.

- Members requested an update on progress in arranging finance training to ensure that they were properly equipped to effectively scrutinize financial matters
- It was also noted that in relation to Performance monitoring, officers had also been keen to ensure that the Committee had the most up to date performance information

5.	WORKFORCE AND AGENCY
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Members of the Employment and Appeals Committee had been invited to attend the Committee for discussion of this item.

Documents:

- Presentation – Improvement and Assurance Board Workforce Workshop
- Social Services Workforce and Training and Development Overview

Discussion:

- The presentation had been updated since it had been presented to the Improvement and Assurance Board
- The older population is increasing – this is typical across Wales – and will lead to challenges
- At the same time, the overall population in Powys is falling – the number of working age residents is reducing by approximately 1000 per annum
- 11000 hours of domiciliary care is being provided weekly but it is becoming more challenging to recruit carers
- Members noted that the retirement age was increasing to 67 and, whilst this may mitigate some of the reduction in working age people, the role could be physically demanding. the majority of carers in the in- house domiciliary care team were aged over 55.
- The Welsh Government had clarified that under the Social Services and Wellbeing Act, an older person, was categorised as age 65 and above
- It was noted that Delayed Transfers of Care had increased over the preceding month. The Corporate Director, Children’s and Adults, reported that she had been investigating the data and had noted challenges around the data. She was having weekly conference calls with the Chief Executive of the Health Board and other officers to address this issue.
- It was also noted that independent, front line staff had a lot of responsibility but were often paid less than office based staff. The need to promote the role as a rewarding career was noted. Work was ongoing with Social Care Wales to attract staff.
- Data provided had been produced on a regional basis in May 2018. Further work was needed on an age profile, workforce stability and a workforce structure.
- A restructure of Children’s Services was in hand. Agency staff have reduced from 43 to 39 with a further four agency staff being appointed to permanent posts.
- An additional benefit of the far reaching recruitment campaign has been to improve the profile of Powys
- Recruitment has been undertaken by the service, with the support of corporate services, avoiding the expense of recruitment agencies
- The Service has a formal partnership with the Open University that suits the needs of the Authority. Currently only undergraduate courses are offered but there is an opportunity to pilot a Masters Degree in the future. Historically two to three students have studied through Powys but last year this was increased to six. Placements are also provided for level 3 students from Glandwr, Bangor and Chester Universities. The number of placements has been doubled but this had led to a challenge in recruiting

Practice Assessors. Seven members of staff are currently undertaking the Practice Assessors Award.

- Newly qualified social workers are required to undertake a Consolidation Award and this requires confidence in the leadership and support available to them
- Many of the students are mature students – the average age of in-house secondees is over 30
- A recent Careers Event saw 200 students access the Social Care presentation. The Birmingham Compass event has generated three applications to date. A similar event in Manchester is taking place in May.
- An integrated mid Wales approach was needed to ensure career progression was available
- The Chair of the Employment and Appeals Committee referred to the number of grievances that were being dealt with including some that take several months to resolve. He noted that employees need fair but strong management and welcome a sense of value as well as monetary recompense. The Corporate Director indicated that she wanted to ensure that staff were engaged with the process and could be listened to whilst acknowledging that grievances will continue to arise during the transition phase. However, efforts will be made to resolve these at the informal stage. An Employee Representative Group has been established and this group meets regularly with the Corporate Director and Heads of Service both to hold the senior management team to account and also to raise issues from the teams. The Trade Unions are also invited to attend.
- The service has been through a challenging period and an event will be held in July celebrating the positive work that has been done and to share good practice.
- The Corporate Director was asked whether work was ongoing with the Health Board and many recruitment and retention issues were common across both authorities. There are challenges in improving career structures which can be constrained in a rural area but innovative work with both the PtHB and Regional Partnership Board could be beneficial. A Workforce Development Manager has been appointed to an integrated post to tackle such issues.
- Members asked for further information on the levels of absence and within that, the levels of absence due to stress
- Members raised their concerns that, under the previous administration, Members had been assured that the service was progressing well and that there was no cause for concern. There was a need to ensure that this did not happen again. It had been proposed that Members visit various teams to gain first-hand experience and talk to staff. There is also a need to raise political awareness with staff. The Chief Executive was keen to find ways to support Members and provide opportunities for staff to meet Members and vice versa in the most productive way. Visits to teams had previously been undertaken and both sides had found them beneficial. Members also suggested that the OU courses should be promoted via social media, school assembly visits etc.
- Training will be aligned with the Service's needs
- Grow Your Own is being actively pursued
- Support arrangements are being improved for both new and newly promoted social workers

Outcomes:

- **Details of absence to be circulated**

6. EXEMPT ITEMS

RESOLVED to exclude the public for the following item of business on the grounds that there would be disclosure to them of exempt information under category 3 of The Local Authorities (Access to Information) (Variation) (Wales) Order (2007).

7. SUPPORTED LIVING FRAMEWORK

Documents:

- Development of Supported Living Framework - draft delegated decision report

Discussion:

- The focus must be on outcomes and wellbeing of the client
- Any Framework will be in line with the National Commissioning Board and it is expected that all authorities will work within its guidelines. The Regional Partnership board will ensure this is being implemented.
- The existing framework expired in 2015. Contracts let under that framework will expire in November 2019 or April 2020. There are 23 contracts across Powys.
- Currently there are 184 clients and 74 shared houses
- Current spend is in the region of £10M
- The percentage of the population with learning disabilities is higher in Powys than in other authorities. This is due to three large institutions which closed down in the 1990s with the residents remaining in the area. There are also three educational establishments situated in Powys which attracts people to move into the area for the support offered.
- By 2025 the ageing population will have increased by 5%. There are challenges in designing services and providing different support needs.
- Not all accommodation is strategically located
- There is a need to assess community opportunities
- 112 clients are placed outside Powys. Work is ongoing to understand where people are located and why – decisions made must be in their best interests and provide good quality and effective provision. Capacity is being created to bring some clients back into the County

County Councillor J M Williams left the meeting at 11.55.

- The proposed tender will need to achieve high quality care and support at the best market value. It will need to be legally compliant and have sufficient flexibility to be responsive to changing needs and expectations. It will also need to be sustainable.

- The Framework will have to take into consideration the Health and Care Strategy, Learning Disability Commissioning Strategy and the National Commissioning Board.
- A night-time support review is underway using technology to gather evidence. This project is supported by Intermediate Care Fund monies. The whole supported living system is being reviewed to ensure there is no under or over provision.
- The design of accommodation should enable more independent living. Sixteen new supported placements will become live shortly. Peoples' aspirations are also considered and these are fed into the Housing Strategy.
- The specification is written and will now be published
- The bulk of existing contracts expire in November and a framework in due course with preferred providers needs to be established to enable tenders to let.
- When the contracts were let in 2014 a number were blocked together. Since then spot contracts have been let to accommodate changing needs
- Organisations are keen to operate in a block and have an outcome focussed approach.

County Councillor D Rowlands left at 12.20

- Members were disappointed that there was no Impact Assessment given the size of the contract and the potential level of risk. The commissioning of a framework does not guarantee any business – the object is to place organisations on the Framework ready for commissioning to commence.
- The Committee asked if there was an alternative plan. An options appraisal had considered all options. The new regime would be classed as 'light touch'. A Steering Group has been established and its preferred option was a Framework as the area would not lend itself to a dynamic purchasing system as there would be little change. Culturally a framework was thought to work well and would provide the required flexibility. A framework can be used to commission quickly where necessary and it also mitigates risk if a supplier were to fail.
- Rents are commissioned through landlords with the Support Provider dealing with the management of the tenancy. Costs are underwritten by Adult Social Care to keep voids to a minimum. The individual is a tenant and has rent liability – in many cases the client is in receipt of housing benefit.
- The Committee questioned the OUJC rules in the event of Brexit. The Head of Commissioning informed the Committee that the Welsh Government have said the current system will continue until such time as Brexit actually happens.
- It seemed as though some properties were isolated with no interaction with the communities in which they were situated. Properties were not necessarily evenly spread across the County and there was evidence of greater demand in Welshpool and Brecon.
- The maintenance liability for properties was questioned. The Landlord is responsible for maintenance and rents should be used for the upkeep and repair of the property. Part of the commissioning work is to ensure that that contract monitoring takes place and the Contract Monitoring Officer

may advocate on behalf of the tenants. The properties are also covered by WHQS.

- The Committee questioned continuity of care and what mitigation is to be put in place and whether the market capacity was sustainable. The Framework would provide more flexibility. A Dynamic Purchasing System might discourage registration and therefore destabilize the workforce.
- Members asked if there was sufficient competition within the market - engagement events are to be organised with suppliers and this will provide more information. There is confidence in the market but interest needs to be generated around the whole process.
- The Steering Group will meet fortnightly to consider legal, financial, human resources and procurement issues.
- The Chair asked whether the Council's own properties could be used and was advised that this was being considered. This would be highlighted with the Steering Group.

Outcomes:

- **The Committee welcomed the report and would provide observations to the Portfolio Holder**

8.	EXTRA CARE HOUSING
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This item was deferred to the next meeting.

9.	WORKING GROUPS
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9.1	SOCIAL CARE WORKING GROUP
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Documents:

- Scrutiny Summary Report

Outcome:

- **Noted**

10.	TASK AND FINISH GROUP
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RESOLVED that County Councillors J Charlton, A Jenner and R Williams be appointed to a Task and Finish Group to consider three Budget Review reports produced.

11.	WORK PROGRAMME
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Documents:

- Health and Care Scrutiny Committee Work Programme

Outcome:

- **Noted**

County Councillor G I S Williams (Chair)

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