MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE HEALTH AND CARE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE HELD AT COUNCIL CHAMBER, COUNTY HALL - COUNTY HALL ON FRIDAY, 18 OCTOBER 2019

PRESENT
County Councillors G I S Williams (Chair), D E Davies, A Jenner, E Jones, S McNicholas, G Morgan, D Rowlands, E Vaughan and R Williams

Officers: J Coles, Head of Childrens Services, M Gray, Head of Adult Services, D Owen, Head of Commissioning. R Evans Health and Social Care Change Manager, D Moody, Strategic Commissioning Manager and J Pugh, Finance Manager

1. APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from County Councillors J Charlton, K M Roberts-Jones, A Williams, J M Williams, R Powell and MC Alexander

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

County Councillor G Morgan declared a personal interest in Item 6.1 as having a family Member working at a council owned establishment, if any specific discussion were to take place.

3. DISCLOSURE OF PARTY WHIPS

There were no disclosures of party whips.

4. MINUTES

Documents:

- Minutes of meeting held on 27 June 2019
- Minutes of meeting held on 26 September 2019

Discussion:

- A query had been raised regarding Ombudsman complaints. These had risen from one to eight and the Committee sought further information on how many had been upheld or dismissed.
- This information was made available during the meeting. In four of the cases, two were referred for settlement and two were resolved. Of the remaining four, two were found in favour of the Council and two were found to have no case to answer.

Outcomes:

- **The Chair was authorised to sign the minutes of meetings held on 27 June and 26 September 2019 as correct records**

5.	ASSIST/CYMORTH

This item was withdrawn pending a more detailed report being prepared for the next meeting.

6.	FINANCE

6.1. Adult Social Care

Documents:

- Period 5, August 2019, Adult Social Care

Discussion:

- At the end of period 5 the projected overspend at year end had reduced to £1.071M
- Additional savings of £539K have been achieved but this has been mitigated by pressures committed for 20 new and 14 temporary residential/nursing placements to reduce Delayed Transfers of Care (DToCs). It was noted that the ultimate aim was to discharge patients to their home but sometimes a step-down stage may be required. Officers continued to work closely with the Health Board to address the issue of DToCs and the trend was improving.
- The Committee sought assurance regarding unplanned issues arising during the year. The service intends to deliver all savings identified but the main pressures could occur over the winter period. The Regional Partnership Board and Health Board have committed £1M and this will be used to alleviate winter pressures.
- At the beginning of the financial year, pressures of £9.534M had been identified. To date £3.915M have materialised. There has been no uplift to service providers which will reduce this pressure by £2.762M.
- Savings of £7.8M had been identified at the beginning of the year – delivery of £2.7 have been achieved and if no uplifts are provided this will increase by a further £2.7M
- The Committee asked for progress in ensuring costs were appropriately apportioned between the Authority and Health Board. Continuing Health Care is a complex issue. Joint assessment is in place and a *decision support tool* is used in the decision-making process. An expert in this field has been reviewing cases which may not be clear cut. This process will ensure there is more clarity for both parties. It was suggested that a further report be provided to a future Committee.
- The Head of Commissioning was asked if strategies were in place with the Health Board for investment in early intervention and prevention. Section 33 agreements were in place which allowed the pooling of funds by both authorities. Such agreements were in place for Glan Irfon Intermediate Care Facility, Substance Misuse and the Equipment Service amongst others. There is also close co-operation in support for informal carers with Credu being jointly commissioned to provide an information and advice service.
- Officers were asked how the Authority compared with other Welsh Authorities. In some instances, Powys was ahead, for example with S33

Agreements which have been in place in some form since 2003, but other areas it are not so advanced.

- Members noted that the introduction of Glan Irfon in Builth Wells had received some opposition from the local community and asked if there was evidence to measure the success of the facility. Glan Irfon was an Intermediate Care Facility which was proving to be successful and had been accepted within the community. The service was currently working with a new provider to consider whether provision should be reviewed. For example, Members had suggested that palliative or end of life care should provided. There were 12 beds, 10 of which were currently occupied.
- The level of debt within the service was noted with half of the Council's debt being recorded within the Adult Social Care budget. The Committee asked whether the Enforcement Agency was successful, and it was suggested that Income and Awards provide greater detail to a future meeting of the Committee. It was also noted that a legal charge could be put on a person's property who was receiving residential care. A further report was requested on the legal implications of these charges.
- Plans were in place to use the Capital budget
- There was some confusion regarding the way the Council's finance reports were presented. Savings are included in the budget at the start of the year and as they are achieved, the projected overspend reduces. The service was confident that the budget would balance by year end but advised that winter pressures were unpredictable.

Outcomes:

- **Further information to be provided on the following topics:**
  - **legal implications of legal charges against properties of those in residential care**
  - **the work of the Enforcement Agency**
  - **Continuing Health Care – apportionment of costs**

6.2. Children's Services

Documents:

- Period 5, 31 August 2019

Discussion:

- The forecast overspend at year end has increased to £4.8M
- Staff related costs are currently underspent by £702K with 61 vacant posts covered by 41 agency staff
- The budget is evenly split between staffing costs and placement costs
- There have been an additional 6 placements arising during the last month which equates to a net increase of 2 during the financial year
- The Head of Service is attempting to limit transport costs but until such time as sufficient in house foster placements are available this will be a challenge
- Team managers posts are mainly filled with permanent staff who have all received finance training
- Teams are no longer making individual arrangements – all arrangements are made through Commissioning

- The Committee asked if there was a target for in-house foster carers. Unless more foster carers can be recruited, the service will be unable to make further savings. There will be another recruitment campaign starting shortly which will also cover hosts for supported lodgings. The more that can be recruited, the less reliance there will be on independent foster carers. It was hoped that Members of the Committee would support this campaign in their own areas.
- The Lead Member of the Children's Services Working Group informed the Committee that the Group had asked for detail regarding legal costs and were now seeking additional information
- The new staffing structure provides a full range of posts and recruitment is an ongoing process. A Grow Your Own scheme is currently being costed. Reliance on interim staff must reduce. The cost to the Authority of agency staff can be up to £22K per annum more but it was incorrect that agency staff were paid £22K more than permanent staff. However, an interim work force was essential as there may be a need to cover short term projects or absences. It is acknowledged that the service has been too reliant on agency staff but replacing them is a long-term process. There are currently 41 agency staff and the service aim for this to reduce to 10 within three to five years. The Committee was also reminded that agency staff were not entitled to holiday pay, sick pay or pension entitlement. In total there were 61 vacancies or which 41 were social work vacancies which were the posts covered by agency staff.

Outcomes:

- **The Grow Your Own report to be provided to the Committee at a future date**

7.	**PERFORMANCE**

7.1. Adult Services Performance Report

Documents:

- Adult's Performance Report – August 2019

Discussion:

- Demand needs to be managed at both the front door and at hospitals. A discharge process has been embedded which provides clarity where people are and to identify a pathway with appropriate response times. A list of codes for discharges is in place to provide more clarity around the Delayed Transfers of Care issue. A Discharge Co-ordinator is now in place. Drop in sessions are to be held for all professionals – the first of these was held in Llanidloes.
- The front door, rebranded ASSIST, is continuing to support responsiveness
- Further work is being undertaken on investment in staff to enhance early intervention. Work with the Technology Enabled Care Team to train front line staff to prescribe low level TEC needs has already had a positive impact. The aim is to provide the right support at the right time to promote independence and prevent the need for longer term care.

- There are still a significant number of inappropriate calls to ASSIST and work continues with the Communications Team to ensure that ASSIST is for adult social care issues only
- In addition to training, there has been an investment in mentoring which creates a safe space to develop good practice
- Work continues to reduce the backlog of reviews
- Members asked if training was given to ensure TEC and digital solutions were being used correctly. There is a dedicated TEC Team and an officer will liaise with the client and their family to ensure equipment is used appropriately. Occupational Therapists are also involved.

Outcome:

- **The report was noted**

7.2. Children's Services Performance Report

Documents:

- Children's Services Performance Report – August 2019

Discussion:

- There had bee a dip in performance during the restructuring, but Team Managers were now in place and performance is improving
- The number of children coming into care has fallen
- The front door is performing well with only 20% of contacts leading through to statutory intervention
- Signs of Safety continues with staff being supported. The culture is becoming more reflective as staff move away from a defensive position. An 'appreciative inquiry' method is being used to explore solutions in Team meetings. It is the Head of Service's expectation that this will be how case discussions will be conducted. A standardised form has been implemented to promote new practice.
- It had been brought to the Chair's attention that not all front line workers had a business phone – the Head of Service confirmed that all front line staff must have an Authority laptop and phone for work purposes. She was confident that the appropriate processes were in place and the situation of personal mobiles being used would not reoccur.

County Councillor E Vaughan left the meeting at 11.30.

- The Springboard Project was nearing completion in Newtown. This would be rolled out across the County.
- Springboard provides a multi occupancy house to ensure those leaving care develop appropriate skills with the help of Personal Advisers and Social Workers. It is transitional support to assist young people into independence.
- The Committee questioned why some children had three or more placements in a year. In an emergency a child may be placed wherever is available and may subsequently move on to more appropriate placement. The aim as that this would then be a place of permanence for the young person but this is not always possible. The Committee were provided with examples of situations where a child may be moved. The Authority performs well against other Welsh Authorities in this regard.

- Consideration was being given to proposals for a residential home within Powys. A capital bid has been made and a progress report will be brought to Committee in due course. The home would be similar in size to a family home and would accommodate three children. It was hoped that there would be at least one such home in place during the next financial year. The first home would be located in the area with the most demand.

Outcomes:

- **A further report on proposals for provision of a children's home will be considered by Committee**

8.	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).

9.	DAY AND EMPLOYMENT SERVICES OPTIONS APPRAISAL

Documents:

- Supported Employment Contract Review – Report Summary Overview
- Impact Assessment

Discussion:

- A contract is in place to assist some clients develop skills to find work
- Both the supported employment and supported living contracts are due for renewal and consideration has been given to the effectiveness of the current arrangements and the way forward
- Members were provided with a summary of performance

Outcomes:

- **The Committee agreed with the proposal and asked to be kept informed of future progress**

10.	WORKING GROUPS

Documents:

- Scrutiny Summary Report – Adult Services Working Group
- Scrutiny Summary Report – Children's Services Working Group

Outcomes:

- Noted

11.	WORK PROGRAMME

Documents:

- Scrutiny Work Programme

Discussion:

- It was noted that Members had been asked to complete a survey regarding the effectiveness of scrutiny
- It was considered that there had been an improvement with Members being more involved and officers providing better information
- Members would like to be able to raise issues for discussion rather than have a work programme imposed upon them
- Officers and Members expressed concern at the timeliness of information being available for consideration – for example, it was known that September performance reports were available but could not be presented to Committee until they had been considered by the Improvement and Assurance Board. Members were of the opinion that they could be self-sufficient in scrutiny.

Outcomes:

- **A request would made that the Committee has the most up to date information available.**

County Councillor G I S Williams (Chair)

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