

Health and Care Scrutiny Committee

Scrutiny Observations Cabinet – WCCIS replacement proposal

Members of the Health and Care Scrutiny Committee met 1 March 2022 to consider the draft Portfolio Holder report on the WCCIS replacement proposal. Members also had the opportunity to undertake virtual scrutiny of the same report.

The Committee made the following observations:

1. Scrutiny is aware of the ongoing problems with the current system including the risk this has placed on service users and the impact it has had on staff, particularly during the pandemic.
2. The unreliability of the system is concerning with regards the safeguarding of our most vulnerable clients and poses a significant risk
3. The instability of the system has been cited as a key issue in the recruitment and retention of staff in addition to having a significant impact on the wellbeing of staff
4. Scrutiny agreed that the risks posed by the ongoing issues were escalated to the corporate risk register and have sought regular updates from the Director on the status and functioning of the system. We are aware that the Governance and Audit Committee do not have assurance that the current system is fit for purpose.
5. It is vital that any new system is fully scoped before any commitments are made in order to ensure that it will function as needed without the same problems as the current system and will be capable of working alongside other IT systems both within the council and with outside organisations such as the Health Board. The Committee would wish assurances to be given that data sharing between systems is viable and the level of risk that this would pose.
6. The Committee had expressed concern that the Health Board were informed of the Authority's intentions regarding the use of WCCIS. The national working group is also aware of the difficulties but seems focussed on progressing with a revised version of WCCIS.
7. Given that the current contract comes to an end in 2024 – is there time between now and then to implement the recommendations from BetterGov and scope and build a new fully functioning system. It seems that these recommendations will take 18 months which will be towards end of 2023 at the earliest.
8. One of the recommendations from BetterGov states that an in depth technical review is needed in conjunction with the National WCCIS team. Will this team be willing to take part in this given the desire to terminate the contract?

9. Consideration should be given to assessing examples of Health Boards and Local Authorities using differing systems.
10. If there is a wish to commit to expenditure of £1.2M at this stage from digital transformation provision, it must be clear what impact this would have on other elements of digital provision, whilst acknowledging that service delivery platforms are a high risk area.
11. What is the risk to the 2023/24 budget from these proposals?
12. Cabinet should be given the legal advice and the opportunity to question the legal advisor in private about this advice

Members of the Health Care and Housing Scrutiny Committee: County Councillors A Jenner (Chair), J Gibson-Watt, S M Hayes, S McNicholas, G Morgan, L Rijnenberg, L Roberts, K Roberts Jones, D Rowlands, A Williams, R Williams and J M Williams.