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Health and Care Scrutiny Committee – 27-01-2023

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE HEALTH AND CARE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE HELD AT BY ZOOM ON FRIDAY, 27 JANUARY 2023

PRESENT: County Councillor A Jenner (Chair)
County Councillors B Breeze, G E Jones, G Preston, G W Ratcliffe, C Robinson,
C Walsh and C Kenyon-Wade

Cabinet Portfolio Holders In Attendance: County Councillors S Cox (Cabinet Member for a Caring Powys, R Church (Cabinet Member for a Safer Powys) and S C Davies (Cabinet Member for Future Generations)

Officers: Wyn Richards (Scrutiny Manager and Head of Democratic Services), Nina Davies Director of Social Services and Housing), Sharon Powell (Head of Children's Services, Michael Gray (Head of Adults Services), Catherine James (Head of Transformation and Democratic Services), James Langridge-Thomas (Deputy Head of Transformation and Democratic Services) and Emma Palmer (Director of Corporate Services).

1. APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from County Councillors C Robinson, E Roderick, E. Vaughan, J Ewing, G Morgan and L Rijnenberg (Other Council business) and from County Councillor S McNicholas (Cabinet Member for Future Generations)

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no Declarations of Interest from Members relating to items to be considered on the agenda.

3. DISCLOSURE OF PARTY WHIPS

The Committee did not receive any disclosures of prohibited party whips which a Member had been given in relation to the meeting in accordance with Section 78(3) of the Local Government Measure 2011.

4. PRESENTATION - CORPORATE IMPROVEMENT PLAN

Documents Considered:

- Presentation – Corporate Improvement Plan

Issues Discussed:

- The Plan has been informed by intelligence from a variety of sources, including the Well-Being assessment together with public engagement and consultation.
- The Plan sets the direction for forthcoming years and will need to move forward in parallel with the Budget and Medium Term Financial Strategy and may need to be amended depending on decisions regarding the budget.
- The number of objectives had been condensed. Climate, nature and equalities were key and the Council needed to understand its impact on those areas.
- It was the intention to review Impact Assessments to include the impact on climate and environment.

- Work was also underway with partners such as the PSB (Public Service Board) and the RPB (Regional Partnership Board), to ensure synergies between various plans to avoid duplication of work elsewhere.
- Challenge had been received from the Economy, Residents and Communities Scrutiny Committee that the plan was not explicit enough about partnerships, co-production and collaboration. The comments received from the Scrutiny Committees were being used to modify the final version of the plan.

Cabinet Member Comments:

- Whilst Children and Education were mentioned Children’s Services was not specifically mentioned. There was a need for a more detailed section in relation to children and Children’s Services. Unpaid carers were important to the Council as if they did not provide care and support this responsibility would fall on the Council. Sometimes those cared for are unknown to the Council. In addition, some carers are young people, and there was a need for more work to identify those young carers.
- In relation to Adult Social Care there was a need to understand the perfect storm of pressures falling on adult services such as sustained high demand, issues relating to recruitment and retention and demography issues. Therefore there would be an interest as to how the plan addressed these issues and improved outcomes for people. The strength based approach was key to assisting people before deciding on the need for services. There was a need for a new approach instead of focussing on the provision of services, co-producing solutions with others.

Questions:

Question	Response
<p>Does the document achieve the right balance, noting the relevant pressures for today and the future. Climate appeared regularly in the document but children was mentioned much less. Pleased that collaborative working was raised by the other scrutiny committee particularly in relation to isolation.</p> <p>Isolation has been mentioned several times, does the document recognise rurality adequately.</p>	<p>Cabinet Member Response: It is for Cabinet, Councillors and officers to work out the detail to address the plan. It was covered in Objective 1 – strengthening and co-working with communities. There was a need to focus on bringing citizens into decision making processes in future.</p> <p>Officer Response: Rurality is something else which was implicit rather than explicit. Highlighting the rural nature of the Council could be undertaken and linking that to the rural cost analysis undertaken previously. The document was strategic in nature, and it was the Integrated Business Plans which would indicate how services would contribute to the objectives. This was also about how the whole Council came together to support the delivery of the objectives. The objectives were broad enough to encompass all services although they were not mentioned explicitly.</p> <p>It was difficult to keep the document succinct</p>

	<p>and strategic but did not reference all aspects within it. The detail would sit below the strategic plan.</p> <p>ACTION: Director of Corporate Services to consider the inclusion of rurality in the document.</p>
<p>In relation to loneliness, the percentage stands out as if not addressed it could lead to depression, mental health issues, relationship issues and housing issues. There is a need to focus on a model of proactive community resilience and prevention models implemented.</p> <p>This would tie into rurality and opportunities for funding under the Barnett formula as rurality is not taken into account. Assurances were sought from officers and Cabinet Members that difficulties in accessing services was due to geography and rurality rather than the Council not providing those services.</p> <p>There are a series of dates in the document as to what we will do, by when. In relation to Social Services transformation can we have an explanation of what transformation means together with timelines. Is this subject to funding being made available. The budget should be the enabler to make the service look different, but the vision should set out what the service should look like in future.</p>	<p>Officer Response: In terms of Social Services transformation a transformation board was to be established. The Council was advertising for permanent Heads of Service posts. The Council was at the beginning of the transformation journey and unable to provide the detail currently.</p> <p>The loneliness agenda was important and early help and intervention was key. The Council needed to work with and support people in the most appropriate way for them.</p> <p>The Plan needed to be strategic and high level and not looking at specific services which would assist in breaking down silos and encouraging joint working with partners. The points about children and the climate had been noted and a review of the wording in the document would be considered. There were also other boards undertaking key aspects of work such as the Regional Partnership Board.</p> <p>Cabinet Member Response: Issues such as rurality and loneliness required a whole system approach across the Council and working in collaboration with partners.</p>
<p>Climate and ecological issues are key drivers of the need for Service change and redesign. There was also rurality and demographic ageing. The Plan needs to stress these key issues as to why the Council needs to transform.</p> <p>What has been done to date to engage service users and what is proposed.</p>	<p>Officer Response: Carers, learning disability and volunteers forums have been engaged as well as third sector organisations.</p> <p>Staff in services had been asked to engage with service users. Existing focus groups such as for older people, learning disabilities and mental health had been engaged as part of the process. Whilst the Council had tried to engage as widely as possible the level of responses was disappointing. The Council would continue to engage and use those</p>

	<p>channels available to the Council but there was a need for the assistance of Members to improve response rates from constituents.</p> <p>There would be an opportunity to review the plan annually. There would also be in year engagement on specific aspects of the plan for example if a change of service model was being proposed.</p>
<p>How do we look at a long term, 15 year strategy as it is a very reactive programme with short term planning (reacting to budgets) and long term changes. The council needs to make some harsh decisions now. How does the Plan enable us to do this working across future Councils as well.</p> <p>How do you measure the difference for the long term.</p>	<p>Officer Response:</p> <p>This was the importance of the Future Generations Act, long term strategic planning and the lasting impact of decisions taken now on the future. It was sometimes difficult to measure the impact of current decisions on the long term. Some of the impacts of the plan would not be seen in the current term of Council but in future years.</p> <p>There were high level national well-being indicators. There was also the Well-Being plan which was long term and the Council needed to align with that. The budget was challenging. Discussions had been held with the Cabinet about reimagining the Council and how to redesign sustainable services for the future. There would be a programme of work with the Council and others to consider what services were needed for the future and who provided them. The Council could not continue as it had operated and needed to consider long term sustainable change.</p> <p>ACTION:</p> <p>Officers to consider the establishment of a suite of KPIs (Key Performance Indicators) to measure where preventative work in place of reactive work was leading to a successful step down in services.</p>
<p>Is there more we can do with Objective 1, improving awareness of services in communities, tagging on prevention work, can the Council do more to reach families about early support, technology assisted care.</p>	<p>Cabinet Member Response:</p> <p>Need to bring citizens on board in terms of deliberative processes leading to decisions.</p> <p>ACTION:</p> <p>Officers to consider the need for more preventative work as part of the plan and the provision of wider information to communities regarding services.</p>
<p>Pages 12 / 15 / 18 of the Plan there are sections on how performance will be measured but there are no KPIs included. How does scrutiny obtain assurances</p>	<p>Officer Response:</p> <p>Whilst data provides a picture it needs to be triangulated. The Plan would use results based accountability with scorecards against each objectives, which included what</p>

<p>about delivery. These need to be high level KPIs in the plan.</p> <p>In addition there is a need to look at benchmarking data against other authorities.</p>	<p>difference was being made. There was also a need to use service level data and benchmarking information.</p> <p>Since the pandemic there was a set of indicators which the Council had to provide and could be made available to Members.</p> <p>ACTION: Data to be provided to Members – scorecards and service date / benchmarking.</p>
<p>Will half of the population of Powys be over 65 by 2043.</p>	<p>Officer Response: Demographics is one of the Council's strategic risks. The pandemic has also affected people's life choices about work and how they live their lives. This was why there was an objective in the corporate plan about employment.</p>

Outcomes:

- Noted
- Actions as detailed above.

5.	CORPORATE SAFEGUARDING REPORT ACTIVITY REPORT
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Documents Considered:

- Report of the Interim Director of Social Services and Housing

Issues Discussed:

Cabinet Member Comment:

- In August 2022 Audit Wales inspected the Council regarding its Corporate Safeguarding arrangements.
- The Audit Wales report was issued in December 2022 but the issues raised were already the subject of a review during the Autumn of 2022.
- The Corporate Safeguarding Board had been in existence for some time but had not established its Terms of Reference or a Corporate Safeguarding Policy.
- Terms of Reference for the Board were now established and a Corporate Safeguarding Policy agreed by the Cabinet before Christmas 2022.
- A programme of training for staff and Councillors had been undertaken. This identified that Corporate Safeguarding did not relate to individual services only but was the responsibility of the whole Council. All staff and Councillors had a role in ensuring that vulnerable people were safeguarded.
- The majority of Councillors had undertaken Corporate Safeguarding Training.
- The Corporate Safeguarding Board was meeting quarterly and was reporting both to the Cabinet and the Health and Care Scrutiny Committee.

Director of Social Services Comment:

- The Interim Director of Social Services and Housing took on the role of corporate lead on Safeguarding in August 2022.
- The report presented was following the Corporate Safeguarding Board meeting in December 2022, prior to the receipt of the Audit Wales Report.

The Audit Wales report was to be discussed at the Governance and Audit Committee on 9th February 2023 and then at the Corporate Safeguarding Board in March. Following that the report and action plan would be presented to the scrutiny committee.

- A draft Development Plan had been developed in Autumn 2022 to address the anticipated Audit Wales recommendations as well as other issues identified by the Board and officers.
- The Director thanked the Committee for reviewing the Corporate Safeguarding Policy, Terms of Reference and the briefing summary and any comments had been taken on board. Corporate communications would be issued once the intranet landing pages had been completed.
- A Corporate Self Assessment toolkit for safeguarding was developed and included into the Council's self assessment processes.
- It would be the intention to seek scrutiny input into the self assessment reports and action plans. A safeguarding dashboard was being considered for development which scrutiny could view.
- Young people's housing was discussed at the Board Meeting in December as well as increases in homeless presentations and elective home education.
- Mandatory training would be monitored by the Board. Mandatory training amongst staff had increased to 66% but this needed further work.
- The Audit Wales recommendations would be included and monitored in the quarterly regulatory tracker.

Questions:

Question	Response
<p>What lessons have been learned not necessarily in terms of systems required, but in terms of gaps where corporate safeguarding may apply. What else needs to be developed.</p>	<p>Officer Response: Need to refresh and review Board terms of reference on a regular basis. The Board was previously not delivering what was expected of it within its terms of reference. Also a need to update documents and having the correct policies in place with a corporate tracker in place to ensure that policies are updated and being delivered. A key lesson was regarding good governance.</p>
<p>Is this about systems and governance rather than service areas where corporate safeguarding might apply.</p>	<p>Officer Response: This was about the corporate overview. Service areas were delivering services to individuals using volunteers but there was no overarching corporate volunteer policy in place.</p>
<p>The report was positive showing work which has been undertaken. Mandatory training by staff – increased to 66% completed. Why are staff not engaging in undertaking the training if this is mandatory. What is being done to address this. Courses could be simplified as long as this does not dilute the impact.</p>	<p>Officer Response: Training – compliance tends to be lower where there are a high volume of front line staff in services. Some staff do not have access to laptops or IT so are the more difficult to reach groups. The team is working with services to consider depot talks and other ways to engage with these staff so staff can access the training. Communications is also being issued about the importance to complete the training. Whilst compliance has</p>

<p>The safeguarding dashboard is welcomed. Is this an internal or external system and what is the timeline for delivering this.</p>	<p>increased there is more work to be done. Dashboard – this is an internal system. There is no timescale as yet but that will be confirmed at the next meeting.</p>
<p>33.5% of staff not undertaking mandatory training is around 2000 staff.</p> <p>Is there a breakdown of service areas and compliance as well.</p> <p>Could staff who do not use IT be provided with a physical copy of the training.</p>	<p>Officer Response: The Council needs to be creative in delivering training to hard to reach groups.</p> <p>ACTION: Director to advise the Committee of measures to improve compliance and a breakdown by Service areas.</p> <p>ACTION: Chair to discuss monitoring of corporate safeguarding with other relevant committee chairs as there may be cross-over of responsibilities between committees.</p>
<p>Much of this is about spotting signs of safeguarding. This could also tie into corporate parenting responsibilities. Is there a place in the strategy for a more proactive and preventative approach in relation to corporate parenting, such as training courses on internet use for parents and children’s carers. Is there also a cross over with other services such as safeguarding in sport, preventative work with third party organisations.</p> <p>In terms of elective home education the law has changed and what Council has to do. Is it important to get the narrative and communications about this right so as not to demonise home education.</p>	<p>Cabinet Member Response: These are valid points about the need for general public education as well as training staff. There are also implications for schools as this is wider than just pupils with risks also for teachers, parents and others. Safeguarding is a wider issue than just the Council.</p> <p>Officer Response: Safeguarding affects every aspect of the community, and how the Council as a corporate body can target certain campaigns during a year as an organisation rather than at a service level. The Council would need to look at themes and trends of particular safeguarding issues and use those to target specific monthly campaigns. There is a wealth of information and advice available which the council could assist in promoting.</p> <p>ACTION: Officers to consider preventative measures which could be undertaken including potential public awareness raising relating to safeguarding.</p>

Outcomes:

- Noted
- Actions as detailed above.

6.	WORK PROGRAMME
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Documents Considered:

- Forward Work Programme

Outcomes:

- Noted

County Councillor A Jenner (Chair)