

SOCIAL & HEALTH CARE OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
21 JANUARY 2021

Minutes of the meeting of the Social & Health Care Overview & Scrutiny Committee of Flintshire County Council held remotely on Thursday 21 January 2021

PRESENT: Councillor Hilary McGuill (Chair)

Councillors: Mike Allport, Marion Bateman, Paul Cunningham, Jean Davies, Carol Ellis, Gladys Healey, Cindy Hinds, Mike Lowe, Dave Mackie, Michelle Perfect and David Wisinger

CONTRIBUTORS: Councillor Christine Jones (Cabinet Member for Social Services); Chief Officer (Social Services); Senior Manager – Integrated Services and Lead Adults; Senior Manager – Children and Workforce; Strategic Performance Advisor. (For Minute no.27) Planning and Development Officer and Claire Sullivan, NEWCIS Chief Executive Officer.

OBSERVER: Ms. Phillipa Earlam, Independent Member of the Standards Committee.

IN ATTENDANCE: Overview & Scrutiny Facilitators and Democratic Services Support Officer.

Prior to the start of the meeting the Chair expressed her condolences on the recent sad loss of Councillor Kevin Hughes. She invited Members to join her in one minutes silence in his memory of his life and achievements.

23. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST (INCLUDING WHIPPING)

None were received.

24. MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 3 December 2020 were submitted.

Matters arising

Councillor Gladys Healey raised further concerns regarding the lack of monitoring for children who are home schooled. The Senior Manager: Children and Workforce advised that this continued to be a live issue in Wales and remained a significant concern for the Children's Commissioner. Members supported the suggestion that a joint letter be sent from the Chair of the Committee and the Chair of the Education & Youth Overview & Scrutiny to the relevant Minister at the Welsh Government with a copy to the Children's Commissioner.

The minutes were moved by Councillor Dave Mackie and seconded by Councillor David Wisinger.

RESOLVED:

That the minutes be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

25. FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME AND ACTION TRACKING

The Overview & Scrutiny Facilitator presented the current Forward Work Programme for consideration. She referred to the items for consideration at the next and future meetings of the Committee and invited members to raise any items they wished to be included for consideration on the forward work programme.

Referring to the action tracking report which was appended to the report The Facilitator advised that there were currently no outstanding actions from previous meetings.

Councillor Carol Ellis suggested that an update be provided on the vaccination process. The Chair advised that an email had been circulated by the Chief Executive with the vaccination strategy as an attachment which was very informative. Key questions regarding the vaccination process should be directed to the Chief Executive via email.

Councillor Cindy Hinds asked that a report on disability and discrimination be considered by the Committee. The Chief Officer advised that the Strategic Policy Advisor was the lead officer for this area of work as it was a corporate issue. Further enquiries would be made to ascertain how this request could be progressed.

RESOLVED:

- (a) That the Forward Work Programme be noted;
- (b) That the Facilitator, in consultation with the Chair of the Committee be authorised to vary the Forward Work Programme between meetings, as the need arises; and
- (c) That the Committee notes the progress made in completing the outstanding actions

26. COUNCIL PLAN 2021/22

The Chief Officer (Social Services) introduced a report to consider the proposed Council Plan for 2020/21 with specific focus on the Committee's respective portfolio. He provided background information and gave a brief summary of the Plan.

The Chief Officer invited the Strategic Performance Advisor to outline the contents of the draft plan and the process for further development. The

Strategic Performance Advisor informed the Committee that a number of elements within the plan had been revised. He advised that the Wellbeing objectives were embedded within the plan and further work had taken place on the development of themes. He added that with regard to monitoring of the Plan, the aim was to be able to demonstrate impact as an authority in a strategic sense. He welcomed any comments and suggestions to be included which would be fed back to the Corporate Resources Overview & Scrutiny Committee in February before being considered by Cabinet in March/April. Work on Part 2 of the Plan would commence shortly to develop tasks, milestones, measures, and risks. He commented that the Council Plan was ambitious but also realistic in view of current circumstances.

Councillor David Mackie welcomed the contents of the priority area: Personal and Community Well-being which he felt was comprehensive and well presented. He requested further information on the following as outlined on page 25 of the Plan:

- The Well Fed at Home service
- Hospital to Home meals service
- Mobile meals Service

Councillor Mackie drew attention to a duplication on page 27 (explore opportunities to develop a young person's homeless hub) which appeared in two sections. Referring to page 28 he questioned whether the fourth bullet point (supporting our tenants to access technology and create sustainable digital communities) should be in the digital communities section. On page 30 he referred to the Circular Economy section and specifically to the fourth bullet point which he felt needed further clarification.

The Chief Officer advised that further detailed information on the above could be obtained from the Benefits Manager who was the lead officer for this area of work.

The Strategic Performance Advisor explained the process for reviewing progress of the plan once adopted, and said a performance report on the whole Plan would be presented to each Overview & Scrutiny Committee with the relevant areas highlighted for each specific committee.

The Chair referred to the earlier discussion around monitoring of home schooling and suggested this should be incorporated within the Plan. Councillor Gladys Healey concurred with the views expressed by the Chair that this area should be included in the Plan. The Chief Officer suggested that the Education and Skills section of the report could be an area where the home schooling issue might be reflected. Councillor Carol Ellis commented that this was an aspiration and suggested it could be included under child poverty in relation to having access to technology, equipment, and books for home schooling.

The Cabinet Member for Social Services agreed on the importance of keeping home schooling under review. She gave an explanation of the difference between children who were home-schooled due to Covid-19 and children who received home-schooling due to parental choice. She added that children who

usually attended school were monitored when home-schooled by their own school, however, there was no monitoring mechanism in place for children who were being home-schooled through parental choice and the Children's Commissioner was concerned about this. The Chair expressed her concerns that despite the arrangements made some children were not being suitably home-schooled as agreed. .

Councillor Cindy Hinds commented on the issues of domestic abuse and mental health and the potential impact on some children who were home-schooling. Councillor Paul Cunningham suggested that the Education and Youth Overview & Scrutiny Committee be made aware of the Committee's concerns.

The Chief Officer referred to the comments made by Councillor Dave Mackie regarding the Personal and Community Wellbeing priority and asked the Committee to confirm that they approved the draft plan from a Social Services perspective.

The recommendation in the report was moved by Councillor David Wisinger and seconded by Councillor Jean Davies.

RESOLVED:

That the Committee notes the developed themes of the Council Plan 2021/22 prior to approval by Cabinet.

27. YOUNG CARERS – NORTH EAST WALES CARERS INFORMATION SERVICES (NEWCIS) CONTRACT

The Chair commented on the excellent standard of the report which was submitted to the Committee for consideration.

The Chief Officer (Social Services) introduced the report and provided background information. He invited the Planning and Development Officer and Chief Executive Officer of NEWCIS to present the report.

The Planning and Development Officer advised that the Social Services Well-being Act had introduced significant and positive changes for both unpaid adult and young carers which had resulted in an opportunity to review the Young Carers service contract which ended in March last year. Four young carers had been part of the tendering process by supporting officers as equal partners. This included shaping the service, choosing questions and interviewing prospective service providers which had resulted in NEWCIS being awarded the contract.

Referring to the New Young Carers ID Card she advised that the new card would build on the foundations of the A2A card previously adopted by Flintshire. She added that Flintshire had decided to take a regional approach to the development of the national Young Carers ID Card, working with Conwy, Denbighshire and Wrexham Councils and the Betsi Cadwaladr University Health Board. A communication plan was being worked on collectively with

partners including the launch of the new card and potentially involving high profile celebrities currently planned for the 16 March 2021 to mark Young Carers Awareness day.

The Chief Executive of NEWCIS expressed her delight at acquiring the contract in July last year. Whilst Covid 19 restrictions were not factored in whilst drawing up the tender, it had not stopped progress, and had encouraged more innovation in service delivery with virtual meetings due to restrictions on face to face meeting opportunities. Going forward it was expected that there would be a mix of virtual and physical interaction. She added that the service was extremely busy and working with young carers was proving to be very positive for NEWCIS staff, whilst recognising there had been a few difficult cases. She referred to the significant rise in participants both in the under 18 and 18-25 age groups. Going forward, she was confident that NEWCIS would continue to provide a good service and referred to good regional links with Credu who provide young carer services for other local authority areas and cited Wrexham and Denbighshire as examples. The Chief Executive Officer was particularly pleased to report that in December a young carer had been employed by NEWCIS and funding had been made available to support a young carer to start his own business. She commented on the enthusiasm of the young people despite the ongoing challenges of the current pandemic.

The Chair referred to section 1.11 of the report which stated that 201 new referrals had been received between July and September 2020. The Chief Executive Officer explained this was mainly due to publicity in partnership with social services and through the development of a more robust social media presence. She added that the power of social media had allowed the Service to engage with many more young people.

Councillor Dave Mackie spoke in support of the innovative work being taken forward by NEWCIS which further demonstrated the new initiatives to service delivery and continuous improvement within the Social Services department working in partnership.

Councillor Mackie referred to the A2A card which had been developed following discussions at the Children's Services Forum. He welcomed the development of the Young Carers ID card and the drawing on the learning and experience from the A2A card and agreed that publicity had been an issue. He drew attention to the case studies on page 67 of the report which brought home the importance of the service and encouraged everyone to read them.

Councillor Gladys Healey welcomed the report and commented on the importance of rewards to show appreciation to young carers and cited provision of skateboards and 'goody' bags as examples. She emphasised that young carers saved the Council a large sum of money by providing unpaid care.

Councillor Carol Ellis felt that the achievements gained in such a short space of time were to be commended. She referred to page 45 of the report and the contract value agreed by all partners for the duration of the 3 year period of a maximum of £71,000 per annum. She asked for a breakdown of contributions and questioned whether the budget was sufficient given the large increase in

demand as a result of awareness raising. She also referred to section 3.02 of the report which outlined a potential risk to the service. Councillor Ellis suggested that the Committee should review the budget risk for the service in 12 months.

The Senior Manager – Children and Workforce acknowledged the points made by Councillor Ellis. He advised that the risk was being monitored by all partners and a collective response would be agreed if and when needed. He added that Flintshire had a very positive relationship with NEWCIS. The Planning and Development Officer confirmed that BCUHB gave a contribution of £9,000 per annum, Youth Services provided £20,000 per annum and the remainder was provided through the Social Services Carers Strategy funding.

In response to the earlier comments made by Councillor Mackie, the Planning and Development Officer referred to lessons learnt and the importance of ensuring teachers recognised the Young Carers ID card. She gave assurances that there would be a robust campaign before the launch as part of the local and regional communication plan. The Chair commented that an area of concern with the A2A card had been that some chemists did not accept the ID Card and refused to give the medication to the young carer for their parent.

The Chief Executive recognised that this was a small project coming across to NEWCIS but they had been able to draw down additional funds and going forward she was confident there would be further funding opportunities for the service.

The Committee welcomed a suggestion from Councillor Paul Cunningham that a press release be issued through Corporate Communications to recognise the successes of the service.

The recommendations in the report were moved by Councillor David Mackie and seconded by Councillor Mike Lowe.

RESOLVED:

- (a) That the Committee thanks officers for the report and congratulates Flintshire Social Services for developing the much needed Young Carers Support Service;
- (b) That the Committee further commends NEWCIS for setting up the Flintshire Young Carers Support Service and for performing above the expectations in the service contract and delivery outcomes, and for developing the Young Carers ID Card;
- (c) That funding for the Young Carers Support Service be reviewed in 12 months; and
- (d) That the Committee proposes that a press release be issued regarding the Young Carers – NEWCIS contract.

28. MARLEYFIELD HOUSE UPDATE

The Senior Manager Integrated Services and Lead Adults introduced the report to update on progress. She advised that a 32 bed expansion at Marleyfield House in Buckley was currently under construction taking in-house capacity from 90 to 112. The work commenced in April 2020 and progress was substantial and on target for handover was 21 May 2021, with an opening date in the second week of June 2021. Residents moving in on a phased approach.

The Senior Manager advised that capital funding had been made available to refresh the original Marleyfield House and exterior and interior work was being undertaken on the building to update the appearance. She invited the Committee to visit the premises prior to opening in line with Covid-19 guidelines and said this could be co-ordinated through the Chair and the Committee's Facilitator nearer to the time. She explained that the model of support would include 16 placements available for discharge to assess and recover a "step down facility" and 16 additional long-term placements, whilst maintaining some flexibility on placements to meet service needs. She added that learning from the opening of Ty Treffynnon would inform the operation of the assess and recover placements. Support from BCUHB had been good and funding had been secured for an advanced nurse practitioner in addition to support from district nurses, whilst a consultant would have oversight of the beds.

Councillor Carol Ellis welcomed the update and said she was very pleased with the progress achieved and looked forward to the opening of the facility in Buckley. She thanked the Chief Officer, Service Manager, and all staff involved and in addition the previous Council leadership for moving this initiative forward on behalf of the residents of Buckley and Flintshire.

The recommendations in the report were moved by Councillor Carole Ellis and seconded by Councillor David Wisinger.

RESOLVED:

- (a) That the Committee notes the progress made on the Marleyfield House Expansion Project as a strategic priority for Social Services; and
- (b) That the Committee notes the key upcoming project activities including developing and implementing the operational model with the Health Board.

29. PLAS YR YWEN (HOLYWELL EXTRA CARE)

The Senior Manager Integrated Services and Lead Adults introduced the report to update on progress with the new £8.5 million extra care facility in Holywell. She advised that whilst the facility had been due to open in March 2020, fire regulations had changed prior to the opening and this had required further work being undertaken to meet new regulations. In addition Covid-19 had created additional challenges, thus lengthening the time taken to complete the development. The facility will offer 55 spacious apartments with a number being allocated to people with Dementia. She added that Plas yr Ywen has a new smart digital solution being used in the scheme (the Appello Living Hub) which

included features such as digital emergency alarm, voice and video calling, notifications, video door entry, telecare compatibility and smart home connectivity. The benefits for staff included call records and 7 day histories, pendant device management, battery life alerts and notifications.

The Senior Manager advised that whilst lettings were full last March, some people allocated a place no longer required it for a range of reasons. She provided reassurance that there were 45 applications and people would be moved in as soon as practicable. The aim was to adhere to the one-third high level need, one-third medium level and one-third not yet needing support. Recruited staff had been redeployed to other work areas to provide care, e.g. Ty Treffynnon. The opening date will be reviewed in February with a view to opening in mid-March depending on lockdown measures.

Councillor Dave Mackie expressed his thanks to the Senior Manager Integrated Services, Lead Adults and her team for their sterling work. The Chair concurred with Councillor Mackie's comments and thanked the Senior Manager and her team for their achievements during the current challenging times.

The Chief Officer Social Services welcomed the positive comments from Members. He referred to the Council Plan and commented on how provision was being increased to ensure Flintshire was a leading provider within the County and said the Council Plan signalled a commitment to extend in-house provision further in the future. The Chair welcomed the comments by the Chief Officer and said she hoped the Council would continue to build extra care facilities in the future suggesting that areas such as Penyffordd, Broughton, and other areas were not catered for at the current time.

The recommendations in the report were moved by Councillor David Wisinger and seconded by Councillor Gladys Healey.

RESOLVED:

That the Committee notes the progress of the Plas yr Ywen Extra Care Scheme and the operational timeframe.

30. MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC AND PRESS IN ATTENDANCE

There were no members of the press in attendance.

(The meeting started at 10.00 pm and ended at 11.22 am)

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Chairman