

## **SOCIAL CARE HEALTH AND WELLBEING SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

**(Committee Rooms 1/2 - Port Talbot Civic Centre)**

**Members Present:**

**5 January 2018**

**Chairperson:** Councillor L.M.Purcell

**Vice Chairperson:** Councillor S.E.Freeguard

**Councillors:** H.C.Clarke, A.P.H.Davies, C.Galsworthy,  
H.N.James, J.Miller, S.Paddison, S.H.Reynolds  
and D.Whitelock

**Officers In Attendance** R.Davies, M.Hayes, A.Jarrett, H.Jenkins,  
I.Oliver, S.Phillips, G. Powell, S.Adie,  
Mrs.A.Thomas, Ms.K.Warren and B.Cannon

**Cabinet Invitees:** Councillors A.R.Lockyer and P.D.Richards

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### **1. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST FROM MEMBERS**

The following Member made a declaration of interest at the commencement of the meeting:

Cllr S Reynolds: Report of the Director of Social Services Health and Housing re: Consultation on the Social Services Budget and Draft Savings 2018/19 as she is a trustee of Canolfan Maerdy and Director of Y Banwen.

### **2. CONSULTATION ON SOCIAL SERVICES BUDGET AND DRAFT SAVINGS 2018/19**

The Committee received information concerning the savings proposals for the Social Services Budget and draft savings for 2018/19 as contained within the circulated report.

Andrew Jarrett was welcomed to the meeting, the first in his new role as Director of Social Services Health and Housing. He explained that the Forward Financial Plan required savings of £4.55m from the Social Services Directorate. It was stated that the main 'pillars' of savings are planned to be via the Asset Based Approach and Direct Payments.

Members noted the current climate of austerity but stated that to allow for full scrutiny, detailed breakdowns of costs needed to be included in the report alongside the percentage each proposed budget saving is representing. The Director of Finance explained that generally the savings required represent a 10% budget cut and that there are not individual 'pots' of money to be allocated against each savings target, but an overall pot from which all savings will be delivered. Members remained concerned about the level of detail contained within the report and felt they could not perform robust scrutiny of the proposals with this level of detail lacking.

The Chief Executive stated that the level of detail included in the proposed budget savings strategies was not unique to the Social Services Directorate and that fuller detail would be added to the proposals as they develop and reminded the Committee that the Council have a legal requirement to set a balanced budget. The discussion at today's meeting is to inform the consultation on the budget proposals before the Council's final budget is put before Council for approval. Budget Monitoring will then be undertaken on a regular basis where the spend and performance in relevant areas can be considered.

The Director of Finance explained that the Budget Book is available for all members to view should they so wish and that if the Committee required more advance involvement in the budget setting process for the next financial year then this could be arranged.

#### SSHH801 Direct Payments

Members asked if the 'gremlins' in the system had been ironed out such as delays in assessment and issues with flexibility. It was explained that the service is continually evolving and improving and Members were pleased to note that a Direct Payments Social Worker is now in post and that there is currently no waiting list from the 'front door'. Members asked how long it takes on average from referral to assessment and looked forward to the Direct Payments Task and

Finish Group which will be held later in the year where further detail will be considered.

It was asked if Direct Payments would be 'offered' or 'pushed' to service users and it was explained that information would be offered in a positive way to ensure the service provided is in the best interest of the service user.

Members queried the statement that Direct Payments puts the service user in control as they felt that some service users are not able to make their own decisions. It was stated that the Act promotes choice and control and that there is a legal duty to promote Direct Payments.

The Committee noted the requirement of the Future Generations Act in having consideration to how the decisions taken will affect the population in years to come.

#### SSHH802 Asset Based Approach

Members noted the asset based approach focusses on community engagement to empower people and the local services to enable everyone to make a valuable contribution. The aim is to develop a whole Council approach and divert from working in silos. It was noted that the Local Area Co-ordination approach is aiming to build and support community engagement

Members asked for further information in relation to Local Area Co-ordinators; some were disappointed that they had not been made aware that these posts had commenced. Concern was expressed about what services and activities the co-ordinators would be working within as they continue to diminish.

It was explained that a continued focus would be on what local areas need working in partnership with volunteers and communities but would not include new infrastructure. The Committee stated that volunteers need support and development and were concerned that more is more is being required from communities; more creative solutions will be required and hoped that Community Councils and the Council for Voluntary Service would continue to be involved.

### SSHH804 Learning Disabilities

Members debated the term 'right sizing' and asked for further information in relation to how the client's input would be fed into the targeted review of independent living packages of care. It was explained that previously there has been 'over provision' and opportunities are being sought to enable people to reduce the need for care and to look to support people in different ways in order to help people be as independent as possible. Officers went on to explain that some service users have moved on from the traditional care requirements to greater independence as part of a planned social work review. Members agreed that it was important that this is done within careful review and management allowing service users to exercise choice and control.

### SSHH806 Block Booked Beds

Members heard how the Council commissions 80% of residential care beds under contract with the Pobl Group but that the actual occupancy levels are on average 73% which means the Council is paying for empty beds.

Members asked if Direct Payments could be used to contribute towards these bed placements and it was explained that the mechanisms for this were being considered. Although the Council holds a contract and must manage the placements into the 80% very carefully to ensure value for money.

Members understood there it makes financial sense to move service users into beds that the Council are already paying for but discussed the wider implications on family members if they cannot visit their loved ones locally.

### SSHH811 Double Handling Programme

Members asked for more detail in relation to how a one person call is an improvement on a two person call. Officers explained that it is based on assessed need and risk management in dialogue with the service user and about the choice of the service user; i.e. some don't want to be 'over staffed' in matters such as personal care although it was debated if there were greater safeguards for staff if there are two members of staff present. Officers assured Members that a detailed assessment is carried out by an Occupational Therapist to help

support someone to manage their care safely by using the right equipment.

### SSHH812 Homecare Review

The Committee questioned that if £764k of savings have been achieved in the last three years, could officers be confident that a further £500k could be delivered in one year? It was explained that the non-filling of existing vacancies would allow for delivery of the savings.

Whilst it was noted that the in house care service remains more expensive than the external market the Council remains committed to providing an in house service. It was discussed that the Council service is a specialist service and is not comparable to other services.

The stark figures in paragraph 41 were noted and the Committee were made aware of ongoing discussions with the Trade Unions about progressing innovation within the service.

### SSHH 803 Children and Young People Services

The Committee were gravely concerned at the inclusion of a target in relation to the reduction of Looked after Children. They felt that the care of LAC's must remain a priority and whilst they understood LAC placements can be very expensive they inclusion of a numbered target was not something they could support.

Officers explained that the target is purely indicative and that any reduction would be the result of safe and negotiated work with intensive levels of support that has safely been concluded. and confirmed that there would be **no** targets set for Social Workers to reduce the number of LACs.

Officers explained how work would also be done into reducing 'drifting' in care by looking at permanence, stability and attachment along with continuity of care which would naturally reduce costs.

After debate Officers confirmed that:

- the £500k financial target is manageable but;
- there would be **no** targets set for Social Workers to reduce the number of LACs.

- That paragraph 46 of the report be removed entirely which includes the target of reducing LAC by 18.
- that any child who needs to become Looked After will be,

The Committee were pleased to conclude that there appears to be a change of culture and attitude within the Directorate with the overall focus being on need and the choice of the service user and it was noted that the discussions from today's meeting would feed into the overall budget consultation.

Following scrutiny it was agreed that the report be noted.

## **CHAIRPERSON**