

Social Care Health and Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee

(Via Microsoft Teams)

Members Present:

28 January 2021

Chairperson: Councillor L.M.Purcell

Vice Chairperson: Councillor C.Galsworthy

Councillors: A.P.H.Davies, O.S.Davies, J.Miller, S.Paddison, S.H.Reynolds, D.Whitelock, A.N.Woolcock, C.Edwards, W.F.Griffiths and H.C.Clarke

Officers In Attendance A.Jarrett, A.Thomas, K.Warren and J.Hodges, N.Maund, T.Davies and C.L.Davies

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

Observers Councillor C.Clement-Williams

1. **Chairs Announcements**

Following the recent news of the Skewen Flooding, Members commended the officers for their urgent response and support to the scene.

2. **Declarations of Interest**

The following member made a declaration of interest at the start of the meeting:

Councillor C. Galsworthy

Re: Consultation on 2021/22 Budget Proposals, as she is in receipt of Direct Payments for a family member.

3. **Minutes of Previous Meeting**

That the minutes of the previous meeting held on the 3rd December 2020, be approved.

4. **Verbal Update on the Impacts Covid-19 has had on Social Services**

Members received a power point presentation which was circulated at the meeting, in relation to updates on the impacts of Covid-19 within Adult and Children's Services.

Discussions took place in relation to the number of vaccinations that had taken place within care homes, along with the safe process of the transfer of residents due to the Skewen Flooding, during the pandemic. Officers highlighted that all of the residents within Neath Port Talbot Care Homes have been vaccinated. Members were reassured that it was a smooth and well organised transfer.

Officers reassured members that the wellbeing of employees was a priority and that they are ensuring that employees take annual leave when required to prevent them from feeling overloaded with pressure. Officers also highlighted to members that the impacts of long covid-19 was also being considered and that this would also be an element where employees would need to be provided with support.

Members noted that it was likely that there may be less demand for residential care going forward and a higher demand for more care in the Community.

The Adult and Children's Services Cabinet Members commended the Officers for their work and support during these unprecedented times.

The Cabinet Member for Finance highlighted to members that Welsh Government had provided further funding for the Hardship Fund of 6.5 Million.

The Chair asked Members to forward any further questions to the Scrutiny Officer in relation to the update on the Impacts Covid-19 has had on Adult and Children's Services, as detailed within the circulated presentation.

Following Scrutiny, the report was noted.

5. **Consultation on 2021/22 Budget Proposals**

An overview was received on the Social Services, Health and Housing draft budget proposals 2021/2022.

It was highlighted, that the proposals included within the report were a small number of saving strategies which had already been scrutinised, consulted on and were approved by Council on 6th March 2020.

Members were also provided with information on the budget pressures to the service, along with the savings, cuts and income generation opportunities which are detailed within the circulated report.

The Impacts of Covid-19 on the budget were discussed and members therefore asked officers for reassurance on the predictions that they had produced for the upcoming budget and for clarity on whether any contingencies had been put in place in preparation for any unpredicted increase in budget. Officers reassured members that they had taken a reasonable view across the council and have provided a realistic view over the next year.

Following a query, officers clarified that the £135,000 figure detailed within the report was a council wide income generation, not just from the Social Services Department.

Discussions took place around the Building Safe and Resilient Communities project that was taking place. Officers informed members that due to the pressures following Covid-19 a decision was made to halt that project. A safe and well service was set up to provide support to those that were vulnerable.

Members queried whether the predicted figure of £400,000 for Homelessness was going to be adequate during these times. Members asked whether Officers had considered contingency plans and used the Skewen Flooding as an example of unpredicted circumstances. Officers informed members that there had been further funding from Welsh Government of 1.5 mil which reduced the predicted figure to £400,000. It was noted that a report would be brought to a future committee providing further detail on Homelessness.

Following a discussion relating to an income generation suggestion from scrutiny members relating to a bus service for organisations and communities. The Director of Social Services, Health and Housing and the Cabinet Member for Finance confirmed that they would

consider this suggestion following a scoping exercise and at a meeting of the Income Generation panel.

Following Scrutiny of the budget details contained within the report, Members were reminded that their comments from this meeting would form part of the formal consultation response for the budget 2021/22. They were asked that if they had any other proposals for budget savings, not included within the attached report, that they approach Officers for their consideration.

6. **Forward Work Programme 2020/21**

The Forward Work Programme was noted.

7. **Access to Meetings**

RESOLVED: that pursuant to Section 100A(4) and (5) of the Local Government Act 1972, the public be excluded for the following items of business which involved the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Paragraph 14 of Part 4 of Schedule 12A to the above Act.

8. **Pre-Decision Scrutiny of Private Item/s**

The committee chose to scrutinise the following private cabinet board items:

Vacant Property Surplus to Requirements

Members received information in a request in declaring a vacant property surplus, as detailed within the private circulated report.

Following scrutiny, the committee was supportive of the proposals to be considered by cabinet board.

CHAIRPERSON