

CHILDREN, YOUNG PEOPLE AND EDUCATION SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

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

Members Present:

9th April 2015

Chairman: Councillor A.R.Lockyer

Vice Chairman: Councillor Mrs.D.Jones

Councillors: A.Carter, Mrs.A.Chaves, Mrs.J.Dudley,
P.Greenaway, R.G.Jones, J.D.Morgan,
Mrs.S.Paddison, A.L.Thomas and Mrs.L.G.Williams

Officers In Attendance: N. Jarman, J.Hodges, M.Lazarus and Ms.C.Gadd

Cabinet Invitees: Councillors P.A.Rees, P.D.Richards and
E.V.Latham

Observers: Ms.C.Simmons (Wales Audit Office)

1. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST FROM MEMBERS

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

Cllr.R.G.Jones – Report of the Director of Social Services, Health and Housing – Early Intervention and Prevention Services – Procurement, as the Managing Director of Whitehead-Ross Education and Consulting Ltd is known to him.

Cllr.Mrs.S.Paddison – Report of the Director of Social Services, Health and Housing – Early Intervention and Prevention Services – Procurement, as the Managing Director of Whitehead-Ross Education and Consulting Ltd is known to her.

Cllr.A.L.Thomas – Report of the Director of Social Services, Health and Housing – Early Intervention and Prevention Services – Procurement, as the Managing Director

of Whitehead-Ross Education and Consulting Ltd is known to him.

Cllr.P.D.Richards - Report of the Director of Social Services, Health and Housing – Early Intervention and Prevention Services – Procurement, as the Managing Director of Whitehead-Ross Education and Consulting Ltd is known to him.

2. **MINUTES OF THE CHILDREN, YOUNG PEOPLE AND EDUCATION SCRUTINY COMMITTEE HELD ON 26TH FEBRUARY 2015**

Noted by the Committee.

Members commented that the minutes were informative and highlighted key discussions.

3. **SCRUTINY FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME 2014/15**

Noted by the Committee.

It was highlighted to the Committee that a workshop would be held with the Committee to develop their Forward Work Programme for the new cycle. It was noted that Membership of the Committee could change and therefore the workshop would be held after the reconstitution of Council. It was requested that Members inform the Scrutiny Team of items they were interested in being included in the Work Programme.

Members highlighted that they were interested in an update on the progress made with Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS). It was highlighted that this was a timely issue to be scrutinised and there was work being undertaken in this area. It was agreed that representatives from CAMHS would be invited to the next meeting of the Committee in May to present information on the work being undertaken and what improvements were required. The Scrutiny item on youth club provision would be moved forward to the next available meeting, as it was felt that addressing the CAMHS Service was a pressing issue.

Members noted that they would like the Work Programme to include monitoring of the Welsh in Education Strategic Plan. It was also highlighted that a draft work programme should be developed with the suggestions from the current Committee to be taken to the workshop discussions. It was

agreed that a draft Programme would be developed and Members would send any further suggestions to the Scrutiny Team.

4. **SCRUTINY INQUIRY - PROTECTING CHILDREN FROM SEXUAL EXPLOITATION IN NEATH PORT TALBOT**

The Committee received the draft scoping document that could form the basis for the one day inquiry into protecting children from sexual exploitation in Neath Port Talbot, as detailed within the circulated report.

Members were informed that the Committee had received several reports and presentations that covered a range of issues relating to safeguarding. Based on the discussions around safeguarding and training received by the Committee in relation to preventing child sex exploitation it was suggested that an Inquiry would be held to ensure there were effective multiagency arrangements in place to protect children from sexual exploitation. The University of Bedford had produced a self-assessment tool to assess progress in this area and this assessment would be completed by a multiagency group and reported to the June meeting of the Committee. Following this, it was proposed that the one day inquiry would take place on 30th June. The Inquiry would be based on the information contained within this report to assess Neath Port Talbot's current position and to identify what improvements could be achieved.

There was some discussion over how many Members should be involved in the Inquiry and it was agreed that it would be opened to all Members of the Committee rather than restricting it to six. Members felt that it was important to include the Licensing Section in the Inquiry as taxi drivers, pubs and shops selling alcohol often had contact with vulnerable children and young people. It was noted that Children and Young People's Services now had a stronger relationship with the Licensing Section, which was beneficial in tackling such issues, and the recent emerging problems with the use of legal highs. It was highlighted that there were shops known to be selling legal highs in the area and a multiagency approach was being taken to try and legally disrupt this practice where possible. Members noted that education was an important part of tackling this and for the issue to be targeted in schools. An example was given of a local young person who had given an interview on their experience and it was suggested that this clip could be used to emphasis the message to local children and young people.

Members queried if the outcomes should include the potential to reformulate policy. However, it was agreed that this was covered under any recommendations from the Inquiry to be made to the Cabinet Board. On reflection Members did not want to define this outcome further as they felt

that it provided more flexibility in the recommendations they could make following the Inquiry.

The Committee agreed the scope of the Inquiry with the following amendments: Members involvement would include all Members of the Committee and those wishing to be involved would confirm their attendance with the Scrutiny Officer. Additional key stakeholder would be the Principal Officer for Licensing.

5. **PRE-SCRUTINY**

The Committee scrutinised the following matters:

Cabinet Board Proposals

5.1 Draft Information Sharing Protocol for Children and Young People with Additional Needs: Neath Port Talbot

The Committee received the draft Information Sharing Protocol to support the regular sharing of personal information between agencies for the benefit of Children and Young People aged 0-25 years with Additional Needs, as detailed within the circulated report.

Members were informed that the Protocol covers the exchange of information between Neath Port Talbot Child Development, Disability Teams and partner agencies across Neath Port Talbot. It had been developed in line with the Welsh Government's Guidance on the Development of an Information Sharing Protocol. It was highlighted that work was being undertaken to develop an integrated and co-located service for children with disabilities in Neath Port Talbot. The sharing of personal information on a consent basis would be critical to the effective operation of the service. It was noted that agencies not being able to share information had been an obstacle and the Protocol would assist with overcoming such obstacles. Members queried if the Protocol stating that only the minimum necessary personal information should be shared could still be used as a barrier. It was explained that the Protocol would make it easier to share information, however, it was important that only information that was necessary should be shared.

Members suggested that the Mid and West Wales Fire and Rescue Authority should be included as a partner organisation for the Protocol. It was highlighted that the Service aimed to assist

vulnerable people and this would be of benefit. It was confirmed that schools would be represented through the Local Authority.

Following scrutiny, the Committee was supportive of the proposal to be considered by the Cabinet Board. It was also agreed that the Cabinet Board be asked to consider the following recommendation that the Mid and West Wales Fire and Rescue Authority be included in the Partner Organisations for the Protocol.

5.2 Early Intervention and Prevention Services – Procurement

The Committee received the report advising them of the outcome of the procurement process for early intervention and prevention services, as detailed with the circulated report.

Members were informed that a lot of work had been undertaken to improve Prevention and Early Intervention Services. Previously there had been no clear contracts with the allocations of grant monies. This had been addressed and also had been assisted by the development of a Common Commissioning Unit across Social Services to ensure new contracts were outcome focussed.

It was noted that the Committee had previously been informed that two lots in this area had not gone through the procurement process for specific reasons. These were for Domestic Violence, which would be delivered by Calan DVS and Thriving Families Services, which would be delivered by the NSPCC. With the assistance of the Council both organisations had been successful in their applications for significant additional external funding for provision of such services. The proposals had also been agreed by Welsh Government as the money was from Family First funding. The remaining three lots had gone out to competitive tender and Members were informed of the organisations that had been awarded the contracts. The procurement process had allowed new organisations to bid for the money and the new contracts would ensure that outcomes were delivered

Members asked what process had been followed in the tendering process. Officers informed them that there had been a rigorous process and bids were made against set specifications. All tenders received were assessed against the specifications and the organisations that best matched the specifications were awarded the contract.

Members queried if any consideration had been given to providing the services in-house. It was clarified that only a certain amount of

funding could be allocated in-house and the Council was obliged through the grant criteria to go out to tender for part of the contracts.

It was noted that the performance against the contracts would be monitored and reported back to the Committee by the Officer appointed to manage the contracts.

Following scrutiny, it was agreed that the report be noted.

6. **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 Paragraphs 12 and 14 of Part 4 of Schedule 12A to the above Act.

7. **PRE-SCRUTINY**

The Committee scrutinised the following matters:

Cabinet Board Proposals

7.1 All Wales Secure Unit – Hillside Secure Placement Fees 2015/2016

The Committee received the report informing Members of the placement fees to be applied at the All Wales Secure Unit at Hillside for the financial year 2015/16, as detailed within the circulated report.

Members were informed that there had been a slight increase in placement costs, however, the Unit remained competitive. It was highlighted that there continued to be young people with increasing complex needs admitted to the Unit and addressing this had an impact on the costs of placements. It was noted that the Admissions Panel helped to manage the mix of young people in Hillside. It was also noted that the costs were based on a certain level of occupancy and it had to be self-funding, even if not at 100% occupancy.

Members asked how many Welsh young people were currently resident in Hillside. Officers informed them that 40% of the Youth Justice Boards placements were Welsh. It was noted that the original intention for Hillside was for it to be for local young people.

Members queried if there was any scope for expanding Hillside and they were informed that the site could not be expanded. However, the Service was considering how they could extend service provision through a Resettlement Officer and providing more of a step down facility.

Following scrutiny, it was agreed that the report be noted.

CHAIRMAN