

SOCIAL CARE, HEALTH AND HOUSING SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

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

Members Present:

10 September 2015

Chairman: Councillor Mrs.D.Jones

Councillors: Mrs P.Bebell, J.S.Evans, H.N.James, J.Miller, Mrs L.M.Purcell and A.Taylor

Officers In Attendance Mrs.C.Marchant, Mrs.A.Thomas, A.Griffiths, Ms L. Barry, Mrs A Saunders, Mr C. Williams, Mr L Williams and Ms S. Sullivan

Cabinet Invitees: Councillors P.D.Richards and J.Rogers

1. **MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS SOCIAL CARE, HEALTH AND HOUSING SCRUTINY COMMITTEE HELD ON 30TH JULY.**

Members received the minutes from the Social Care, Health and Housing Scrutiny Committee held on 30th July 2015. Members asked if there was an update available on the 0853 Urgency Action-Indemnity Provider Costs as detailed in the minutes. Members were informed that this information would be made available to them in the next meeting.

The Committee noted the minutes.

2. **SCRUTINY FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME 2015/16**

In addition, the Committee noted the upcoming training sessions in relation to conducting Rota Visits to Social Care and Nursing Establishments and the half day inquiry into the proposed s.33 agreement that the Committee will be undertaking.

The Committee noted and agreed the Forward Work Programme.

3. **COMMUNITY RESOURCE TEAM AND COMMUNITY NETWORKS REPORT CARD**

Members considered the Community Resource Team and Community Networks Report Card, which the Committee received as part of the new performance management framework of the Council.

Members drew attention to the abbreviations and acronyms used throughout the report and asked for this to be kept to a minimum in future.

Members observed that the report was very positive but asked if there were any issues or under-achievements in the service that they should be aware of. Officers re-iterated that overall the picture was positive and Members were pleased to note that the majority of posts had been recruited to on a substantive basis. There had been more challenge in relation to recruiting Reablement Support Workers and Mental Health specialists but Members were pleased to note that the Integrated Service Model had allowed for effective recruitment overall.

Members observed that there was no reference in the report to sickness absence in the service and asked for further detail in relation to this which they had expected to see included in the Report Card. Officers informed the Committee that sickness absence in the service was at 4% in July and the embedded HR support in the service was assisting in reducing levels of sickness absence. Officers committed to bringing a more detailed breakdown of sickness absence within the service to a future meeting of the Committee.

Members were pleased to note that the number of Carer's Assessments had risen and queried what work had contributed to this increase. They were informed that close work had been undertaken with the Carer's Network and that focussed work would continue in an attempt to increase the numbers of assessments carried out.

Members queried the finances of the section and were informed further in relation to the Intermediate Care Fund (ICF). Officers explained that there was a varying picture in relation to spend and that the in house domiciliary care service was mainly underspent while the external domiciliary care service was mainly overspent.

Members were pleased to note that Delayed Transfers of Care remained low and agreed that Direct Payments were a positive tool to allow this to continue to improve.

Members were of the view that a visit by the Committee to the Gateway Team would be beneficial and also looked forward to the launch of the new Health and Social Care Centre on November 4th 2015.

Following scrutiny it was agreed that the report be noted.

4. **PRE-SCRUTINY**

The Committee scrutinised the following matters:

Cabinet Board Proposals

4.1 Social Services Health and Housing Quarter 1 Performance

The Committee received the Social Services, Health and Housing Quarterly Performance Indicator Data for Quarter 1 as detailed within the circulated report.

Members queried the rate of delayed transfers of care and were informed that certain social work teams had recently re-structured and caseloads transferred which had resulted in the slight dip in performance. Members were assured that Team Managers were being supported to ensure that they have the right systems in place to support timely review and hospital discharge.

Members queried the percentage of significant breaches that were rectified by intervention by Trading Standards and were informed that no businesses had in fact been identified.

Members' were made aware of an error in the complaints data as it included reference to complaints received within Children's Services and Hillside Secure Centre which is not within the remit of this Committee.

Members queried if the 'notable decline' in the percentage of significant breaches rectified by interventions by Trading Standards was a staffing issue and were assured by Officers that it was not. Officers explained that most investigations would not be resolved within a quarter thus the quarterly figures were not particularly representative; Members were guided towards the cumulative figures for a more representative comparison.

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

4.2 Food Standards Agency Audit Action Plan

The Committee received the Food Standards Agency Audit Action Plan as contained within the circulated report.

Members had asked for the Action Plan to be brought to the Committee following the presentation of the Food Standards Agency Audit Feedback Report at the last meeting. Members were informed that the action plan included the detail to address the issues identified following the Food Standards Agency's Audit of Environmental Health and Trading Standards.

Members queried the reference throughout the action plan to 'significant resource implications' and what impact this would have on the work of the existing teams caseloads. Officers explained that carrying out the tasks in the action plan would be resource intensive; numbers of frontline staff had been increased and trained and high risk or new business premises are being prioritised to ensure caseloads are manageable.

Members expressed the importance of the 'scores on the doors' food hygiene ratings which are displayed to reflect the standards of food hygiene within businesses and expressed.

Members were pleased to note that all of the required actions within the plan had been completed and appreciated that some actions are ongoing and form part of the continual internal monitoring of the work of the officers within the service.

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

4.3 Commissioning and Contracting Update

The Committee received the report on adult social care contract monitoring for the year ending 31st March 2015 as detailed within the circulated report.

Members queried the current financial position, the overall budget and fee setting process and understood that this is a process which is undertaken every year whereby service is

assessed and costs are negotiated with the providers. The report states that Local Authorities need to ensure that the fees take into account the cost of care rather than the Local Authorities' financial position and Members queried if there were any assurances in place to avoid conflicts of interests. Officers reminded Members that they were bound by a Code of Conduct in instances such as this.

Members asked for assurance of procedure following the recent situation where a Domiciliary Care Provider went out of business. Officers explained the lessons learnt and the close links that exist with the Audit department as well as the robust contract monitoring arrangements which are in place.

Members asked for more information in relation to the 'Quality Standards and Standards of Care'. Officers explained that the quality standards were being piloted with Western Bay Local Authority colleagues. It is envisaged that contract monitoring of domiciliary care will involve a set of similar quality standards in time.

Members asked if relatives and family members were spoken to when contract monitoring visits were conducted and they were assured that the views of relatives and family members were crucial elements to the visits. Members asked if they could be provided with statistics as to how many family members were spoken to as part of a monitoring visit and officers committed to bringing this information back to Members.

Members drew attention to reference in the report to 'sub-optimal practice' and queried the action that is taken when such practice is identified. Officers explained that initially they will work directly with the service provider and establish an action plan in an attempt to directly solve the issues set against Western Bay 'Escalating Concerns' measures and that there can also be embargoes on placements.

Members were pleased to hear that there is robust and clear guidance in relation to Safeguarding aligned to the Child Protection measures and they looked forward to receiving a detailed report on this to a future meeting of the Committee.

Members queried the complaints data within the report and in particular the higher number of complaints in relation to Domiciliary Care in Older and Disabled People Services.

Officers explained that this type of service was more personalised and by its nature the monitoring of the service was more robust and complex and over a longer period of time and involving more people.

Members asked for detail on the professional development offered to Care Home staff and heard about the Social Care Work Force Development Programme run by Welsh Government. Concerns were raised about staff retention levels but Members were pleased to note the cross region Commissioning Strategy which is currently being developed.

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

4.4 Review of Direct Payments

The Committee received the report on the proposed review of Direct Payments in relation to ensuring effective and appropriate allocation of resources to individuals as detailed within the circulated report.

Members understood that Direct Payments involve identifying the needs of individuals through assessment and providing a number of hours for a Personal Assistant or appropriate suitable person to employ an individual or agency to provide support to achieve specific outcomes. Officers explained that a review is needed to ensure that the packages are being used effectively and are achieving the identified outcomes. Members heard that there are currently 225 individuals in receipt of Direct Payments in Neath Port Talbot, 47 of which receive over 30 hours of support and 9 of which receive support from an agency.

Members were pleased to note that the initial assessment process for Direct Payments eligibility is timely but officers explained that the proposed review is likely to result in some challenge and complaints from individuals.

Members clarified that the review is about achieving the right outcomes for people and it is important that the systems and processes are in place to robustly evidence outcomes for people.

Members drew attention to the Equality Impact Assessment and were clear that people may be affected if their package of Direct

Payments are changed or reduced but sought clarity from officers that their needs would continue to be met. Officers were directed to a mistake in the Equality Impact Assessment whereby a word was included that had no meaning and Officers agreed to strike out the word from the Equality Impact Assessment.

Following scrutiny, the Committee was supportive of the proposal to be considered by Cabinet Board.

5. **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.

6. **PRE-SCRUTINY**

The Committee scrutinised the following matters:

Cabinet Board Proposals

6.1 Housing Renewal and Adaption Services-Financial Allocations 2015-16

The Committee received the Housing Renewal and Adaption Service Financial Allocations for 2015-16 as contained within the circulated report.

Members were pleased to note that the Rapid Adaption Grant pilot scheme had delivered 65 adaptations to property at an average time of 50 days compared to the average time of 252 days for a Disabled Facility Grant.

Officers informed Members that £920,965 had been awarded of Specific Capital Grant to carry out renewal area activity during 2015/16 as well as ARBED2 funding being achieved to provide energy saving measures to additional properties within renewal areas.

Members were additionally informed of the Houses to Homes loan scheme which assists owners and landlords to bring empty uninhabitable properties back to habitable standards to enable the property to be rented or sold.

Following scrutiny, the Committee was supportive of the proposal to be considered by Cabinet Board.

6.2 Supporting People Programme Grant

The Committee received the Supporting People Programme Grant as detailed in the circulated report.

Following scrutiny, the Committee was supportive of the proposal to be considered by Cabinet Board.

CHAIRPERSON