

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

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

**Members Present:**

**24 November 2017**

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

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

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

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

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

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

The Committee received the consultation on the Social Services Budget and Draft Savings 2018-19 as contained within the circulated report.

Officers introduced the report by stating that some of the savings targets included in the report were challenging and unrealistic and there would be a need to reconsider and re-prioritise elements of the savings strategies.

The savings in relation to SSHH802 Asset Based Approach were stated as being unrealistic targets and that income generation is being considered to alleviate this savings target.

In relation to SSHH801 Direct Payments, it was stated that whilst Direct Payments are statutory there is a need for the personal care elements to be regulated and that Personal Assistants (PA's) are mainly employed to assist with socialisation. It was agreed that there have been barriers in the system such as delays and payment issues

but Members were pleased to note that staff have continually provided feed-back (particularly in line with social work practice) which has helped with reducing bureaucracy and streamlining and officers were confident that the barriers had been removed.

Officers requested that paragraph 16 on page 6 of the circulated report stating:

*'Work is currently ongoing analysing DP packages provided over the last 6 months, examining what has worked well, are there any barriers and to estimate the levels of savings generated. This information will form the basis for the target number of DPs required to generate £950k savings in 2018/19'* be removed from consideration at the meeting today.

The Committee were concerned at the difference in opinion that had been raised in relation to Direct Payments by Officers today compared to what the Committee had previously heard and asked for further information about why this was. The Cabinet Members stated that they were new to their portfolios and that previous processes and channels of communication may have been challenging and that previous figures and processes had been inherited from the previous Director. The Committee expressed dismay that professional opinion and advice from Officers had not previously been forthcoming and stated that when Members take decisions in Committee they do so in good faith based on the advice presented to them by the Officers. Concern was raised that they had only heard 'one voice' and that now it was apparent that there has existed a significant difference of professional views over a long period of time. Members were keen to ensure that in the future all professional views be presented to Members to enable an open, balanced and transparent dialogue.

Due to the significant concern raised in the Committee, Members agreed that a letter be written to Cabinet expressing the concerns raised in this meeting and asking for assurances that this type of situation would not arise again in the future.

The Committee discussed the website where Direct Payment PA's are advertised and that it seems as though the choice is not with the service user but with the potential PA to pick a service user 'off a shelf'. Officers explained that the service users had requested to have it advertised in this way.

In relation to SSHH802 Asset Based Approach the importance of early intervention and prevention to assist with problems such as isolation and loneliness which could prevent people coming into the social care system was discussed. It was stated that this is an unrealistic target and that income generation is being considered. Ongoing discussions are being held with Partner Agencies and other Council Directorates to consider the wider implications of Asset Based Approach. Members heard more about the example of Wigan where they have stimulated organisations to work in a different way encouraging social enterprise.

#### SSHH804 Learning Disabilities

Members heard that a targeted review will challenge the way care is provided. The Council has 70 supported living houses and are trying to progress with the asset based approach here. Members heard that there is an issue with 'sleep-ins' as some service users don't want people sleeping in their homes so there is need to consider different models of working where people want their own front door and greater levels of independence.

#### SSHH805 Domiciliary Care

Members asked for further information in relation to reduce the level of care provided. It was explained that some of the existing calls are not required (i.e. when staff go to the house the person is physically not at home) so savings here could be easily deliverable. It was agreed that any changes are done safely under careful review.

The Committee discussed safely reducing numbers of LAC by improving Social Work practice, stabilising the workforce and working with families to strengthen links with the community and local resources. They were pleased to note that there will be no reduction if is not safe and appropriate to do so. Members strongly felt that they did not want a target included for reducing the number of LAC and instead to deliver associated savings requested that high cost placements be considered including those that are placed a long way from home. Options included identifying options closer to home and strengthening arrangements for planned returns with secure packages of care.

In relation to Child Protection it was noted that risks to a child will change as they get grow older and that work is ongoing with families to allow children to return home safely. The importance of Adult and Social Services working together in meeting needs earlier was

stressed and concluded that a natural consequence will be a reduction in cost.

Concern was expressed on the recently appointed Local Area Co-ordinators who had recently started their posts and the vast areas they will be expected to cover. Members asked for information about where they would be expected to work as it is expected for them to be based in the community but questions were raised about being based in buildings such as community centres and what would happen if these buildings were closed. It was explained that at present the Local Area Co-Ordinators are under the remit of the Health Board but the understanding is that the amount of posts will increase.

The term 'right-sizing' was debated by the Committee as Members felt uncomfortable with the term; Officers explained that there are some instances where the packages of care haven't been right in the first instance or that some people have become more independent and the care needs need to be re-assessed by reducing levels to allow for greater independence. It was discussed that the 'want' of the service users is taken into account and that while nothing is imposed on individuals it was stressed that nothing will be done if it cannot be not done safely.

In relation to 'single-handed calls' it was asked why this would be better than 'double handed calls'. It was explained that new equipment is now available to make single handed calls more feasible as well as feedback from service users showing that they don't necessarily want 2 staff members attending on them. Members were keen to learn more about the feedback from service users and discussed Quality Assurance Frameworks and audits.

In relation to the Domiciliary Care saving Members asked for clarity on the wording of 'reduce the care provided as part of an enabling approach'; it was explained that it was important to safely move the process forward from being too risk averse previously and it was confirmed that risk assessments are done continuously.

Following scrutiny it was agreed that the report be noted but that a letter be written to the Cabinet by the Chairperson on behalf of the Committee expressing the concerns raised in this meeting and seeking assurances on existing policies and procedures to ensure that a similar situation would not arise in the future.

**CHAIRPERSON**

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