

SOCIAL CARE HEALTH AND WELLBEING SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

(Committee Rooms A/B - Neath Civic Centre)

Members Present:

23 January 2020

Vice Chairperson: Councillor C.Galsworthy

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

Officers In Attendance A.Jarrett, K.Warren, A.Bradshaw, G. Powell,
H.Jenkins and S.Curran

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

1. **CONSULTATION ON SOCIAL SERVICES BUDGET AND DRAFT SAVINGS 2020/21**

An overview was received on the Social Services Budget and Draft Savings 2020/2021, as detailed in the circulated report.

Members were informed that there had been an administrative error on page 13 in Appendix 1 and in relation to SSHH1001 the sentence 'Proposal to reduce the rates paid to AFP carers in line with the rates paid to children's foster carers' should be removed.

Members were also assured that there would be no deletion of posts as stated in SSHH1008 and this sentence would be removed from the report.

The Committee noted that homelessness wasn't included as a named pressure in the report. Officers agreed that homelessness was indeed a pressure to services but gave assurances that it was manageable.

The Committee noted the crossover between the social services and education divisions.

Members queried the position of EU funded projects following Brexit and were informed that the current arrangements will see no effects

in the 20/21 financial year. The Director of Finance and Corporate Services also informed members that whilst they were reviewing the schedule of cuts and income generation the Draft Budget, currently out to consultation, includes new investment in 2020/21 of some £2.5m for Social Care services. Members requested that in future years that the scrutiny committee should receive such details so that they could consider all of the draft budget proposals.

In relation to SSHH1001 members asked if carers would be affected if the adult family placement fees were revised. Officers stated that the detail was being negotiated and all options were being considered to achieve the savings.

In relation to SSHH1002 the committee asked if contributions from the Health Board had been agreed. It was stated that officers are exploring historical claims for contributions, seeking to increase capacity in legal to pursue these matters and putting forward a new financial model for future contributions.

Members were assured that the reduction in numbers of Looked After Children (LAC) would be done safely and naturally and that the needs of the child would always be paramount with no child being put at risk.

The committee asked for further information in relation to SSHH1003 and were informed that due to increased demand, income from financial assessments will naturally increase due to the increased number of care packages provided from the new investment of funds in 2020/21.

Members were given assurance that the savings identified in SSHH1005 in relation to the Joint Equipment Service would have no impact on the service users and that contributions would be based on actual usage.

Members had a discussion on the savings identified in SSHH1010 and were informed that savings in legal budgets have been identified due to the growing expertise of Council staff. Decisions are being challenged less as the quality of social work assessments improve and therefore the requirement of external counsel and specialist assessments is reducing. Members were assured that where complex cases arise such as reputational issues for the Council or attendance at High Court, which require a barrister then this will always be done to ensure the best outcomes possible are delivered.

The Committee discussed how the number of different types of service users can be estimated and agreed that in demand led services this is difficult. Professional opinions based on previous years, trends, market predictions and realistic assumptions are used

Following consideration of the Integrated Impact Assessments included within the report, Members were reminded that their comments from this meeting would form part of the formal consultation response for the Budget 2020/21. 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.

CHAIRPERSON

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