
SERVICES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

13.02.14

Present: Councillor Dyfrig Siencyn – Chairman

Councillors: Huw Edwards, Elin Walker Jones, Linda Ann Wyn Jones, Eryl Jones-Williams, Liz Saville Roberts, Ann Williams, Eirwyn Williams and Hefin Williams.

Others invited: Cllr R H Wyn Williams (Care Cabinet Member)

Also in attendance: Morwena Edwards (Corporate Director), Aled Evans (Senior Officer Performance and Change), Meilys Smith (Senior Business Manager), Glenda Lloyd Evans (Service Manager), David Oliver (Autism Key Worker), Olwen Ellis-Jones (Service Manager, Learning Disabilities and Mental Health), Iona Griffith (Service Manager), Sioned Thomas (Strategic Care and Health Manager), Arwel Ellis Jones (Senior Manager Corporate Commission Service) and Glynda O'Brien (Members and Scrutiny Support Officer).

Apologies: Councillors Llywarch Bowen Jones, Beth Lawton, Dilwyn Lloyd, and Peter Read, Mrs Rita Price (Catholic Church), Dylan Davies (Meirionnydd Parent Governors Representative), Mrs Rhian Roberts (Dwyfor Parent Governors Representative) and Siôn Amlyn (Teaching Unions Representative).

1. DECLARATION OF PERSONAL INTEREST

The following members declared a personal interest for the reasons noted:

- (i) Councillor Linda Ann Wyn Jones for Item 9 – Autism, as she was Director of Cwmni Seren who offered day care to autistic individuals and she withdrew from the Chamber during the discussion on this item.
- (iii) Councillor Eryl Jones-Williams, pertaining to care issues, as his wife received care and he withdrew from the Chamber when matters regarding care payments were discussed.

2. MINUTES

The Chairman signed the minutes of the previous meeting of this committee held on 28 November 2013 as a true record, subject to adding the name of Councillor Alwyn Gruffydd to the list of apologies of those absent from the meeting.

3. **CONTRACTS WITH THIRD SECTOR ORGANISATIONS**

The report of the Cabinet Member - Care was submitted outlining recent concerns regarding contracts with third sector organisations in the care field.

(a) It was noted that the Chief Executive and the Corporate Director (AME) had met the Chief Officer of Mantell Gwynedd to discuss the situation and new steps were now in place to move on to work together effectively. In response to a query from a member, it was noted that information was received on the situation through the Liaison Group that meets quarterly, with the Corporate Director attending as a point of contact and she promised that she would do her best to keep communication open between the Council and third sector organisations.

(b) Disappointment was expressed that no representative from the third sector had received an invitation to attend the Committee meeting to effectively scrutinise and know why the relationship between the Council and the organisations had deteriorated.

(c) In response, it was suggested that the matter should be discussed further at a preparatory meeting to see what steps are being taken to improve the relationship with the sector. Following this, they could if they so wished invite a representative from the third sector to attend the Scrutiny Committee to report on experiences regarding the relationship and collaboration with the Council.

Resolved: (a) To accept and note the contents of the report.

(b) Request that the Corporate Director (AME) reports to a preparatory meeting of the Services Scrutiny Committee addressing the information highlighted in (c) above.

4. **ANNUAL REVIEW AND EVALUATION OF GWYNEDD COUNCIL'S PERFORMANCE 2012/13 – CARE AND SOCIAL SERVICES INSPECTORATE FOR WALES (CSSIW)**

The report of the Cabinet Member – Care was submitted outlining the responses of Social Services to the CSSIW inspection on those areas which require improvement in the future.

The Cabinet Member – Care gave the background and purpose of the review and drew attention to the possible risks, the Council's response to the review, together with the Service's vision for the future.

Members were given an opportunity to scrutinise the report and they highlighted the following points:

(a) Concern regarding the proposed partnership between the Council and Betsi Cadwaladr University Health Board and decisions that meant that individuals from Meirionnydd were offered residential care in homes outside the County in Llangefni, Llangollen and Denbigh, far away from their families.

(b) In response to the concern that beds for respite care were full, the Corporate Director explained that currently applications for respite care would have to be refused unless it was an emergency. A specific Respite Unit was opened on a pilot basis in the hope that specialist respite care could be centralised and received in one home. It would

be necessary to respond to this matter next year in order to enable the system to be more responsive and flexible.

(c) In response to a query regarding the performance of the Service it was reported:

- (i) that both commissioning schemes for older persons with learning disabilities were now dated and that discussions were on-going with the Betsi Cadwaladr University Health Board for a joint commission in accordance with the requirements of the Social Services Bill. The Senior Business Manager was confident that there were plans in place and through the relationship with the Health Board it was necessary to ensure resources and implement them.
- (iii) In terms of general performance, a great deal of work had been undertaken and percentages that were extremely low last year had now improved and attention was drawn to the specific steps within the action plan.
- (iii) There was a tendency for Gwynedd Council to spend more per head on services for people over 65 years old and they tended to refer older people to residential and nursing homes in comparison with other authorities. It was found that a greater range of services and ways of supporting people in their communities were required before they are referred to Social Services.

(ch) It was stated that Gwynedd attracted a great deal of incomers to retire and especially to coastal villages and consequently they were likely to be an additional cost for the authority to support them.

In response, the Corporate Director confirmed that expenditure within the Service was higher on the coast and evidence indicated following recent research that there had been an increase in the older population in south Meirionnydd and Abersoch and it was anticipated that there would be more demand for services for older people in Meirionnydd.

The Cabinet Member added that in the Abersoch area when the health of the older population deteriorated there was a tendency for them to sell their property and move back to live nearer to their families. He further noted that the Council was looking at the demography of the older population.

(d) The Corporate Director reported that many of the issues raised by the Inspectorate existed because Gwynedd was a traditional County and to satisfy requirements in the field of adult care it was necessary through the transformation system to ensure service choices to people and discuss how this would be undertaken with the third sector. They should respond to the challenge as a whole Council in order to identify the gaps through a spatial discussion with communities of their needs and what would work best and was acceptable to them.

(dd) In response to a query regarding direct payments, the Senior Business Manager noted that a Task Group had been established to review the system on the implementation of the payments to include statutory guidance, policies and internal structures. It was suggested that it would be beneficial to invite a local member to serve on the Task Group as well as organising a training session for Members on the direct payments system.

Resolved: (a) To accept and note the contents of the report.

(b) To request that the Corporate Director:

- **Submits a progress report to this Scrutiny Committee on the transformation plan in the adults field following discussion with the communities of Gwynedd about their requirements.**
- **Organise a training session for Members on the direct payments system.**

5. ROLE OF THE STATUTORY DIRECTOR OF SOCIAL SERVICES

The Chief Executive was welcomed to the meeting to respond to a concern highlighted at the preparatory meeting of this Scrutiny Committee that the arrangements linked to the statutory role of the Corporate Director addresses the requirements of the Care and Social Services Inspectorate Wales (CSSIW) and that the statutory role is implemented as a result of the structural changes that have occurred recently by splitting the Adults Service and the Children's Service.

The Chief Executive noted that one of the report's main recommendations was that the level of statutory functions should be promoted to Director level. In terms of undertaking the role, he noted further that re-structuring was on-going with appointments made recently to the post of Head of Children's Service and he had resolved to second an officer to the post of Head of Adult Services.

Members were given an opportunity to express their views and the following concerns were highlighted:

- (a) That the CSSIW report referred to the lack of experience of the postholder and the statutory role and arrangements for training of the appointed officer were questioned.
- (b) The way that decisions had been made regarding the changes in light of the importance of democratic accountability to the Council.

In response to the above concerns, the Chief Executive noted:-

- Following the appointment a development and mentoring package was agreed upon for the statutory Corporate Director with support, together with attendance of seminars, courses as a method of continual training. In terms of experience for the post, advice had been received from highly regarded national experts who were unanimous that it was not necessary for Directors / Heads to have qualified to lead in the field and that transformation skills to manage change were more important bearing in mind that all Service employees had skills and expertise at an appropriate level. One of the experts noted that over 40% of Heads in adult services had not qualified and that authorities were looking for individuals who were specifically experts in leading change.
- That possibly 23% of savings had to be found in Social Services, namely £14.3m, and therefore it was quite evident that the Corporate Director and the Heads had to have management of change skills in order that the change was swifter than in the past.
- In terms of restructuring Children and Adult Services, it was explained that the Cabinet was responsible for the decision to split these services, in accordance with the Chief Executive's recommendation, who was responsible for advising on suitable structures for the Council. By splitting the services it was anticipated that the outcomes for children could be improved and preventative work could be interweaved with caring for children which meant more effective collaboration.

- In the context of appointing a Head of Adult Services, the post had been advertised, however, they had not managed to appoint. Consequently, the Chief Executive's recommendation in accordance with his authority, to the Council Leader, relevant Cabinet Members and the Chair of the Appointment Committee for Chief Officers was to implement a secondment to ensure that an experienced officer was in post.
- That Adult Services in authorities in England had managed to make 20% savings and had to survive this very quickly. It was trusted that they could learn from the best practices to avoid the least damage to services.
- That the details of the new structure for April would be circulated to Members.

Resolved: To accept, note and thank the Chief Executive for the report.

6. DEMENTIA CARE

A report was submitted by the Cabinet Member - Care outlining the provision within the County in response to dementia needs.

The Cabinet Member- Care gave the background and noted that the forecast was that there would be an increase in the number of the population with some form of dementia in the future and he shared the concerns regarding the lack of dementia care, specifically in the Meirionnydd area, and the importance of collaboration with the Health Board.

Members were given an opportunity to scrutinise the report and they highlighted the following points:

(a) Why cannot the day care provision at Plas Hedd, Arfon be extended?

In response, it was explained that it was proposed to conduct a review of the whole service in Arfon and if it was resolved to extend the service, it would be necessary to find joint funding with the Health Board.

(b) Concern that if the Day Centre at Blaenau Ffestiniog that cares for individuals with dementia problems was to close as a result of the Health Board opening a one day service at Blaenau Ffestiniog Hospital. It was further noted that individuals from Meirionnydd were referred to out of county locations with their families having to travel many miles to visit them.

In response, the Service Manager explained that she would look into this information, however, the figure changed daily. This week no one was waiting for residential care or specialist residential care across Gwynedd but several individuals in hospitals were awaiting locations in nursing homes. It was further noted that some homes were full, however, residential bed provision was available but they were not the first choice of individuals.

It was recognised that unfortunately persons who have specialist respite were referred to locations such as Llangefni and Colwyn Bay. It was confirmed that the service jointly with the Health Board was considering how to get respite for the residents of Gwynedd by joint commissioning a bed at the Pines in Cricieth.

(c) That the adult population was four times greater than the child population and the Council had a responsibility as a corporate parent for children and should there not also be a statutory responsibility for adults.

(ch) Considering the Betsi Cadwaladr University Health Board's budget, that they could in conjunction with the Council build a purposeful provision in south Gwynedd to satisfy needs and save money.

(d) That there were empty wards at Ysbyty Alltwen and consequently a valuable resource was standing empty and not being used.

(dd) That this matter was a priority despite the financial challenges facing the Council considering that the forecast was that there would be an increase in patients with a lack of provision for them, and there were no plans in the pipeline for implementation to respond to this problem. It was further noted that older persons trusted the Council's services compared to private services.

(e) Reference was made to a scheme implemented in Finland where purpose built housing for residential care was offered within villages.

In response to the above comments, the Senior Business Manager referred to the strategic review conducted 3/4 years ago when it was noted that there was a lack of beds for individuals with dementia more specifically in Meirionnydd. Stemming from this external companies were invited to express an interest, but unfortunately no interest was shown. It was necessary to look at what the Council could do to manage the situation and was a matter of looking commercially at how to manage and develop a market and discuss with the Economy and Regeneration Department on how to support companies that may offer the provision to the County. Other options would be collaboration with the Health Board giving consideration on how to turn the Council's assets to be adapted to a nursing home, however, it was stressed that a great deal of homes were unsuitable with small rooms on sites that could not be extended and this meant a huge capital cost to adapt them to the required standard. It was further noted that the discussion had to be corporate.

Resolved: To accept and note the contents of the report together with the above observations.

7. AUTISM

A presentation was given by Mr David Oliver, Autism Key Worker, on autism. With a written copy and a power point presentation an overview was given of the history and definition of the autistic spectrum condition together with the criteria for Asperger's. The following were listed as a way of recognising the condition:

1. Social interaction
2. Communication
3. Imagination

together with secondary features that included difficulties with motor coordination (dyspraxia), repetitive activities, restricted to rules, specialist skills and interests, social isolation and matters that disturb a person's mood and sensory sensitivity.

In addition, a leaflet was presented giving examples of the objective, to prove the benefit of the post of Autism Developmental Worker for Gwynedd and Anglesey namely:

- Working jointly with the ASD Support Group/Asperger's Gwynedd and Anglesey

- Create opportunities for individuals with autism spectrum disorder to experience volunteering with local agencies
- Organise and support individuals to attend Further Education courses
- Joint working with the Mental Health Service
- Refer and support individuals to attend specific projects
- Attend BCUHB Adult Psychology meetings to review cases

A report was submitted by the Cabinet Member – Care outlining the support available to users together with information regarding the Planning and Stakeholders Group.

Members were given an opportunity to ask questions and the following points were highlighted:

(a) In response to a query regarding identifying the condition and how intense was monitoring during the early years, it was noted that the number of referrals had increased and the condition was identified by health visitors, GPs, nursery leaders and teachers, in children up to 9 years old. From 9 years old upwards it was CAMHS (Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services) who assess in Gwynedd.

(b) It was asked what was the provision in south Gwynedd? In response, it was noted that the number of referrals from south Gwynedd and Dwyfor had increased recently and through discussion the main priority would be to establish an Adults Group in south Gwynedd jointly with the Mental Health Services from Ysbyty Alltwen. Currently, it was noted that Day Services and the support services were available in south Gwynedd and one to one support was offered to take part in socialising/leisure. It was added that in terms of the waiting list to see clinical psychologists, it was ensured that the Council would not be criticised as this was the responsibility of the Board.

(c) That the role of the Gwynedd and Anglesey ASD Developmental Officer was quite unique and the service offered was valuable. The existence of the post was dependent on a grant from the Welsh Government.

(ch) Concern was expressed that there were gaps in the residential provision for young adults and work opportunities. Concern was noted that families moved from the County as young adults could not get services within the County.

In response, the Senior Business Manager acknowledged that the plan had not got to grips with autism and it would be necessary to assess the requirements of the condition with mental health and learning disabilities and build this into the assessments and make very difficult decisions of where to commission and how to release resources, try to get the third sector to offer services in order that it was possible to split them up fairer. An assurance was given that they would work closely with Service Managers and the relevant Teams to consider the way forward in detail. A report would be presented again with practical plans for the future.

(dd) Concern was expressed regarding the operation of the joint ASD Stakeholders and Planning Group for Gwynedd and Anglesey and specifically the workload of the Group Chair to be able to cope with the work, as well as how the grant of £80,000 from Welsh Government was allocated for plans across Gwynedd and Anglesey.

In response, the Chair noted that it would not be possible for this Scrutiny Committee to influence the operation of the above Group and this was the responsibility of the Group members. The Strategic Care and Health Manager added that in national terms the Government would look again at the action plan and during the consultation period there

would be an opportunity for Councils and Health Boards to assist by giving the Group a better direction in the future.

(e) The service should be for the whole of Gwynedd and the provision should be ensured in the users' choice of language.

Resolved: (a) **To accept, note and thank the officer for the presentation and report.**

(b) **To request that the Corporate Director gives due attention to adopting the post of Gwynedd and Anglesey ASD Developmental Worker.**

8. STATEMENT OF INTENT – PROVIDING INTEGRATED HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE

A report was presented by the Cabinet Member – Care on the new framework by the Welsh Government to provide integrated health and social care.

The Corporate Director stressed the need for much better collaboration than in the past and the vision was to discuss and have joint governance at regional level (north Wales). It was noted that the County Forum had been established with the Cabinet Member – Care, the Corporate Director and the Day Care Champion serving on it and was part of the Social Services Bill. The importance of reporting on the progress of the County Forum to the Services Scrutiny Committee was further noted.

Members were given an opportunity to scrutinise the report and they highlighted the following observations:

- Importance of taking into consideration local needs such as the Welsh Language and transport
- That there was a tendency for Government models to be based on the areas of south Wales.

Resolved: **To accept and note the contents of the report.**

9. SCRUTINY INVESTIGATION – WELSH LANGUAGE EDUCATION

A draft brief was submitted by the Senior Manager Corporate Commission Service following agreement and discussion at this Scrutiny Committee's preparatory meeting to investigate Welsh Language Education in order to assess:

- How the Authority's Language Policy is being implemented at grassroots in individual schools.
- The extent to which that provision assists in promoting the social use of Welsh by children and young people.

As a number of Members were absent as a result of damage in their wards due to the stormy weather, it was suggested that terms of reference be established and approved in the first meeting of the Investigation. It was agreed to circulate all Scrutiny Committee Members to find out if they were interested in serving on the Investigation.

Resolved: (a) To ask the Members' Support and Scrutiny Officer to circulate all the members of the Scrutiny Committee to seek who would be interested in serving as part of the Investigation.

If more nominations were received than required, the Chair and Vice-chair of the Services Scrutiny Committee would select the final Membership.

(c) Discuss and adopt the terms of reference at the first meeting of the Scrutiny Investigation - Welsh Language Education.

The meeting commenced at 10.00 am and concluded at 1.50 pm.

CHAIRMAN