

No.

HEALTHY LIVING AND SOCIAL CARE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Minutes of a Remote meeting held on 12th October, 2021.

The Committee agenda is available [here](#).

The Meeting recording is available [here](#).

Present: Councillor S.J. Griffiths (Chair); Councillor N.C. Thomas (Vice-Chair);
Councillors J. Aviet, J.E. Charles, O. Griffiths, R. Nugent-Finn and J.W. Thomas.

Also present: Councillors B.T. Gray (Cabinet Member for Social Care and Health)
and K.F. McCaffer (Cabinet Member for Leisure, Arts and Culture).

451 ANNOUNCEMENT –

Prior to the commencement of the business of the Committee, the Chairman read the following statement: “May I remind everyone present that the meeting will be live streamed as well as recorded via the internet and this recording archived for future viewing”.

452 APOLOGY FOR ABSENCE –

This was received from Councillor T.H. Jarvie.

453 MINUTES –

RECOMMENDED – T H A T the minutes of the meeting held on 14th September, 2021 be approved as a correct record.

454 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST –

No declarations were received.

455 ANNUAL SOCIAL SERVICES REPRESENTATIONS AND COMPLAINTS REPORT 2020/21 (DSS) –

The Operational Manager for Safeguarding and Service Outcomes presented the annual report, the purpose of which was to apprise Members of performance in relation to complaints and compliments regarding social services and to provide evidence about the impact upon the lives of individuals and their families. The report provided oversight of the number of issues raised, the responsiveness of the service and the learning opportunities from valued feedback being received.

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The Officer advised that, as at 31st March, 2021, 43 complaints were received, which was lower than the previous year where there were 52 complaints. Of the 43 complaints, 22 were for Adult Services, 17 were for Children and Young People Services and 4 related to the Resource Management and Safeguarding Division. Out of the 43 complaints 4 were investigated at both Stage 1 and then were also investigated at Stage 2. During the period, 5 complaints were referred onto the Ombudsman for investigation; out of these complaints, 2 complaints resulted in the Ombudsman deciding not to investigate any further, for 2 complaints the Ombudsman decided that no further action was required, and 1 complaint required Social Services to commission a Stage 2 investigation which was carried out.

In conclusion, the Officer advised Members on the priorities for improvement during 2021/22, as follows:

- The current Complaints Officer would be retiring during 2021 after 20 years' service and a supportive handover process would be carried out with the new Complaints Officer,
- Work would continue with independent investigators to make an improvement in the time taken to complete Stage 2 investigations by reviewing the support offered to investigators,
- Work would continue with managers and staff to make an improvement in the time taken to complete Stage 1 complaints and this would involve further developing the weekly complaints monitoring to involve the Heads of Service where the section was unlikely to meet the designated timescales for response. Quarterly reports for Heads of Services and Operational Managers would also be developed, and
- The Complaints Officer would also set up a procedure for contacting investigating officers to ensure they were on track with and were following the complaints process guidance. This would include requiring a monthly update on hours spent on the investigation.

Following the Officer's presentation, several Members complimented the report and in particular the inclusion of compliments. Members were also pleased by the decrease in numbers regarding complaints which was testament to the staff working under very difficult circumstances as a result of the national pandemic.

In conclusion, the Director of Social Services stated that the compliments included within the report were an under representation of the amount of good work and compliments received by the Directorate however, recognition was given to and shared with staff when compliments became apparent.

Scrutiny Committee, having considered the report and all the issues and implications contained therein,

RECOMMENDED –

- (1) T H A T the content of the Annual Social Services Representations and Complaints Report for 2020/21 be noted.
- (2) T H A T an annual update report in relation to complaints and compliments

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received by the Social Services Department be received by the Committee at its October 2022 meeting.

Reason for recommendations

- (1) To ensure effective scrutiny of performance in Social Services and to provide evidence about the effect upon the lives of individual service users and their families/ carers.
- (2) To ensure that oversight of this important area is maintained.

456 CITIZEN ENGAGEMENT ANNUAL REPORT (DSS) –

The Annual (Microsoft SWAY) Report highlighted the citizen engagement that had taken place across Social Services during 2020/21, to ascertain the views of citizens, their relatives and some of the Council's staff about the care and support provided and specifically communication and support during the COVID 19 pandemic.

The Operational Manager for Safeguarding and Service Outcomes advised that the Council consulted annually, via a variety of methods, with individuals who had received services. This was to ensure that the service was providing a high standard of care and support. The Officer also drew Members' attention to the current good practice identified in the Council's service provision throughout the report and areas of potential development such as increasing the level of engagement with individuals within residential care settings.

Following the Officer's presentation, and with no questions raised by the Committee, the Vice-Chair thanked officers for a good and reader friendly report.

Scrutiny Committee, having considered the report and all the issues and implications contained therein,

RECOMMENDED – T H A T the following aspects of the report be noted:

- the context and structure of the Social Services Citizen Engagement Annual Report for 2020-21 and the newly agreed priorities for consultation in 2021-22,
- the methods employed by the Council when obtaining the views of its citizens and their families,
- the improvement priorities for the service areas as highlighted by the recommendations within the Annual Report, and
- the impact COVID 19 has had on the service through the experiences of citizens and carers, and the resilience that the service has demonstrated.

Reason for recommendation

Having regard to the contents of the report relating to the outcomes and recommendations of the annual consultation programme for Social Services for 2020-21.

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457 REVENUE AND CAPITAL MONITORING FOR THE PERIOD 1ST APRIL TO 31ST AUGUST 2021 (DSS) –

The Operational Manager for Accountancy advised that the revenue position for 2021/22 would be challenging with the continuing pressure for the service both operationally and financially as a result of the COVID 19 pandemic. This would impact both as a result of incurring additional expenditure but also from a loss of income. Funding had been provided by Welsh Government to cover some of the issues.

Progress on the Capital Programme as at 31st August, 2021 demonstrated an increase in some of the costs associated with various schemes since the last report to Committee.

A savings target for the year had been set at £135k and the currently approved capital budget had been set at £5.249m.

The Officer added that there had been a slight deterioration in the financial position since the last update resulting in a potential unplanned transfer from reserves at year end of £1.15m. This equated to an adverse variance of around £650k for the Children and Young People Service and a projected £500k overspend relating to the Community Care Packages budget for the Adult Service.

In response to the Vice-Chair's question regarding the circumstances for the overspend, the Officer advised that both the Adult and Children and Young People's Services were experiencing significant demand and the Council was pro-actively claiming funds available from Welsh Government where possible. However, costs continuing to rise after the end of the current financial year would make the financial climate more problematic.

In addition, both the Director of Social Services and the Cabinet Member for Social Care and Health highlighted that the Council was due to receive a recovery fund from Welsh Government which could help support some of the additional financial challenges. However, this was a one-off fund available for the current financial year only.

Scrutiny Committee, having considered the report and all the issues and implications contained therein,

RECOMMENDED – T H A T the position with regard to the 2021/22 revenue and capital budgets be noted.

Reason for Recommendation

Having regard to the contents of the report and discussions at the meeting regarding the projected outturn for 2021/22.

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458 2ND QUARTER SCRUTINY RECOMMENDATION TRACKING 2021/22 AND UPDATED COMMITTEE FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME SCHEDULE 2021/22 (MD) –

The purpose of the report was to advise of progress on Scrutiny recommendations and to consider the updated Forward Work Programme (FWP) together with any slippage for 2021/22.

The Chair advised that the Committee's recommendation tracking was up to date with all points labelled as completed.

All reports expected during Quarter 2 had been received with the exception of the Children and Young People Services Annual Placement Review – Annual Update Report which had been slipped from the September 2021 meeting to the November 2021 meeting on the Director's request.

The Chair also proposed that in light of continued resource pressures for NHS colleagues, as a result of the national pandemic, progress around the three pending NHS Presentations be paused until the 2022-23 FWP.

Following the Chair's presentation, the Vice-Chair requested that all Committee Members study the current FWP and bring any suggested changes forward. The Committee subsequently agreed that the most appropriate opportunity to discuss the FWP content would be immediately prior to the next meeting of the Committee with the Director in attendance to advise on the reasons why items had historically been added to the FWP.

RECOMMENDED –

- (1) T H A T the status of the actions listed in Appendix A to the report be agreed.
- (2) T H A T the updated Committee Forward Work Programme Schedule attached at Appendix B to the report be approved and uploaded to the Council's website.
- (3) T H A T a workshop discussion be arranged immediately prior to the 9th November Committee meeting between Committee Members and the Director of Social Services.

Reasons for recommendations

- (1) To maintain effective tracking of the Committee's recommendations.
- (2) For consideration and information.
- (3) To provide all parties with the opportunity to discuss suggested changes to the Committee's Forward Work Programme following a period of reflection on the current content.