

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE CABINET COMMITTEE CORPORATE PARENTING HELD IN COMMITTEE ROOM 2/3, CIVIC OFFICES, ANGEL STREET, BRIDGEND ON MONDAY, 5 JANUARY 2015 AT 10.00 AM

Present

Councillor HJ David (Chair)

Councillors:

M Gregory
LC Morgan
MEJ Nott OBE
CE Smith
PJ White

Officers:

Susan Cooper	Corporate Director - Social Services & Wellbeing
Deborah McMillan	Corporate Director - Education & Transformation
Mark Shephard	Corporate Director - Communities
Colin Turner	Head of Safeguarding and Family Support

82. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from the following Member for the reason so stated.

Councillor D Sage – In hospital.

83. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None.

84. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the Corporate Parenting Cabinet Committee of 6 October 2014 be approved as a true and accurate record subject to a report on Pregnancies in Schoolchildren and Looked After Children being added to the list of reports in the resolution to Minutes no. 81 – Informal Forward Work Programme.

85. SOCIAL SERVICES AND WELLBEING (WALES) ACT 2014

The Committee received a presentation from the Head of Safeguarding and Family Support on the Social Services and Wellbeing Act (Wales) Act 2014 which received Royal Assent on 1 May 2014.

The Head of Safeguarding and Family Support informed the Committee that officers had been able to influence the legislative process by requesting that the word 'Wellbeing' be

inserted into the title of the Act. The Act would set out a new legal framework to bring together and modernise social services law and will take effect from April 2016. He stated that it was the intention of the Act to make social services sustainable by addressing economic challenges, taking into account demographic changes and would give people more control over their lives and their care and support.

The Head of Safeguarding and Family Support informed the Committee of what needs to change in that people were not being helped early enough, or stopping problems arising, which meant that when people finally do get care it was of a more intensive and costly nature. He stated that too much time, skills and resources went into over-elaborate assessment which did not help people with matters they are concerned about or achieve the outcomes they want for themselves. The Council had been proactive in this regard by co-locating staff with ABMU colleagues in hubs.

The Head of Safeguarding and Family Support outlined a new approach and the fundamental principles of the new system which were about people; wellbeing; earlier intervention and collaboration. He informed the Committee of the new legislative framework of the Act in that it set out powers and duties on local authorities and other bodies. Secondary legislation would be made under the Act and used where more detail or prescription is required and Codes of Practice issuing Guidance with the force of law to help people and organisations to work within the new framework. He highlighted the eleven components and the building blocks of the Act. He stated that the Act was much more than a social services and wellbeing way of thinking but about an us and not them approach. He highlighted the challenges and opportunities presented by the Act and how the Council will behave as employers.

The Head of Safeguarding and Family Support informed the Committee that local authorities and their partners will ensure successful implementation of the new approach and that the Deputy Minister for Social Services had announced a Delivering Transformation Grant last year and this year. The Corporate Director Social Services and Wellbeing informed the Committee that the grant would be for £220k across the Western Bay region. In order to access the grant funding a self-assessment would have to be made by the Head of Safeguarding and Family Support and Head of Adult Social Care which would be accompanied by a response from the Council which would be used by the Western Bay as the basis for their response to be submitted to the Welsh Government by 5 February 2015.

The Head of Safeguarding and Family Support informed the Committee of the timetable for implementation of the Act, in that formal consultation on two tranches of draft regulations and codes of practice would take place from November 2014 and the summer of 2015 in order that they made by the national Assembly from summer 2015. Staff training would take place in 2015 and 2016. The Act would be implemented in April 2016.

The Committee questioned the requirement of part 7 of the Act regarding the safeguarding of both adults and children at risk. The Corporate Director Social Services and Wellbeing informed the Committee that the Act will place adult safeguarding on the same footing as safeguarding for children. The Committee questioned whether adults at risk were at home or in care. The Corporate Director Social Services and Wellbeing informed the Committee there was much greater synergy with children and adults being at risk in the same home. She stated that the relationship between mental health children's services could be strengthened and there was the possibility of establishing a joint safeguarding team. The Head of Safeguarding and Family Support informed the Committee that the service hold regular meetings with the police to consider adults at risk.

The Committee questioned whether there would be Member representation on the Board structure. The Corporate Director Social Services and Wellbeing informed the Committee that there is Member representation on the Leaders' Board on Western Bay and safeguarding matters could be reported to that Board.

The Committee also questioned whether looked after children and young carers could have reduced to access leisure facilities. The Corporate Director Communities informed the Committee the Council had a duty to promote wellbeing and that the Group Manager Sports and Physical Activity had done some work on allowing looked after children to access leisure facilities at reduced rates and that work would need to be done on establishing the numbers of young carers and the cost of doing so.

The Cabinet Member Wellbeing informed the Committee that the Minister had stated that it was intended that the Act be cost neutral however the Council needed to do deliver services differently as a result of the Act. The Corporate Director Social Services and Wellbeing informed the Committee that there was a need for the Council to concentrate on people with complex needs and there was a need to nurture relationships with the third sector. The Corporate Director Social Services and Wellbeing also informed the Committee that the Group Manager Sports and Physical Activity would report back on young carers being granted reduced rates to leisure facilities.

The Committee questioned the support received by schools in reporting abuse. The Head of Safeguarding and Family Support commented that there is a robust arrangement in place with teachers being designated to recognise concerns of abuse and who to report abuse to.

The Committee requested clarification on the eligibility criteria so that an individual would be eligible for social care. The Head of Safeguarding and Family Support informed the Committee the service would assist individuals in what they could do for themselves and that a care and support plan would be put in place. The Corporate Director Social Services and Wellbeing informed the Committee that the introduction of the Act could raise expectations.

RESOLVED: That the content of the report be noted and that the committee would receive further updates throughout 2015-16.

86. **OUTCOME OF CSSIW'S INSPECTION OF BCBC'S SAFEGUARDING AND CARE PLANNING OF LAC AND CARE LEAVERS WHO EXHIBIT VULNERABLE/RISKY BEHAVIOUR**

The Head of Safeguarding and Family Support reported on the outcome of the recent Care and Social Services Inspectorate Wales (CSSIW) inspection into the Safeguarding and Care Planning arrangements for looked After Children and Care Leavers who exhibit vulnerable or risky behaviours. He stated that the inspection was carried out as part of CSSIW's national thematic inspection programme, with all local authorities in Wales subject to the same inspection. The findings will form a CSSIW national overview to be published later this year and would be brought to a future meeting of this Committee. The aim of the inspection in Bridgend was to assess the quality of care planning.

The Head of Safeguarding and Family Support reported that the inspection focused primarily on work undertaken with looked after children over eleven years of age and care leavers who were identified as being vulnerable and/or involved in risky behaviours, against defined criteria. As well as inspecting cases in respect of the assessment, care planning and review systems, the inspection also considered the extent to which the corporate parenting, management and partnership arrangements acted to promote improved outcome for children and care leavers. It also considered how organisational structures including, workforce, resources, advocacy and quality assurance mechanisms impacted on the quality of care planning. He outlined the five questions which the inspection assessed the Council against.

The Head of Safeguarding and Family Support informed the Committee that the CSSIW report had a significant number of positives, balanced with a similar number of areas for improvement and to address the areas for improvement, a post inspection action plan had been developed. He stated that the areas in need of improvement are green in status with plans in place to address any outstanding areas for improvement.

The Head of Safeguarding and Family Support reported that the CSSIW report acknowledged that Children's Services was recognised as a corporate priority parenting arrangements which were embedded through this Committee with a strong focus on the wellbeing and progress of looked after children. He informed the Committee a number of Welsh local authorities had asked if they could observe a future meeting of the Committee or receive a copy of the Committee's terms of reference. He stated that Members needed to assure themselves that strategic aims were being effectively owned and translated into action across the Council and partner agencies.

The Chairperson informed the Committee that the inspection had been commissioned by the CSSIW in light of the child abuse cases in Rotherham. He stated that it was worth reflecting on the lack of accountability in areas of the United Kingdom to ensure the most vulnerable are protected and highlighted the importance of ensuring that safeguarding arrangements were implemented effectively.

The Committee requested assurances that the actions currently showing red and amber in status be changed to green in status and whether the actions could be included in the Corporate Performance Assessment. The Head of Safeguarding and Family Support informed the Committee the actions shown as red and amber were not all pertinent to Social Services but would ensure there was oversight and scrutiny on the actions. The Corporate Director Social Services and Wellbeing informed the Committee that Red, Amber and Green would be properly monitored and any exceptions would be reported to the Committee. The Committee considered that safeguarding be monitored by the Local Service Board.

The Committee questioned whether there would be Member representation at Board level. The Head of Safeguarding and Family Support informed the Committee that the Health and Wellbeing Board had been established and is chaired by the Corporate Director Education and Transformation. The Corporate Director Social Services and

Wellbeing informed the Committee that the Care Partnership Board is chaired by the Leader and that the Cabinet Members Wellbeing and Children and Young People are also members of that Board. The Chairperson stated that the Committee would be advised if Members could have sight of the Board papers.

The Committee questioned whether the re-structure of support services for looked after children had reduced caseloads. The Head of Safeguarding and Family Support informed the Committee that a number of cases had been identified which were closed and he anticipated that many cases could be allocated to non-Social Work staff.

RESOLVED: That the Committee noted the content of the CSSIW report and its associated appendices.

87. LOOKED AFTER CHILDREN (LAC) ANNUAL AWARDS TO CELEBRATE THE ACHIEVEMENTS OF LAC

The Corporate Director Education and Transformation informed the Committee of the historical arrangements which had been put in place to celebrate the achievements of Bridgend's Looked After Children and sought the Committee's views on the future arrangements for celebrating the achievements of Looked After Children.

The Corporate Director Education and Transformation reported that over the past two years, the Council had invested approximately £7,500 to cover associated cost of arranging and hosting the annual event to celebrate the achievements of LAC. In addition, approximately 100 hours of senior officers' time was invested into arranging and managing the event each year. She stated that substantial feedback following the last two celebration events has posed the question as to whether the current arrangements for celebrating the achievements of Looked After Children were the most appropriate means for doing so. This year's event, though attended by over 100 people, highlighted an issue around poor attendance of many children who were due to receive an award. Questions were also raised about the duration of the event and approximately 25% of the children and young people who were invited to attend the awards did not turn up to the event. Many of these were teenagers who chose not to attend, while others did not attend as the event was held during the school holiday.

The Corporate Director Education and Transformation informed the Committee that one option to consider is a proposal to reduce the time and scale of the event by holding the annual event in the Council Chamber instead of the Grand Pavilion in Porthcawl.

The Committee considered the importance of recognising the achievements of Looked After Children and that officers give consideration to holding separate age related events and at a less formal venue than the Council Chamber.

RESOLVED: That officers be tasked to look at the feasibility of holding separate age related award ceremonies at different venues and report back to this Committee.

88. REVIEW OF AN ADOPTION ALLOWANCE POLICY

The Head of Safeguarding and Family Support sought approval of the Adoption Allowance policy which had been developed following an internal audit of the Adoption Service. The review of the Adoption Allowance Policy reflected the recommendations of the audit report and the report presented to Cabinet on 17 September 2013, with five key changes proposed. He stated that in order to enable the enactment of the policy, a range of tools and new procedures for adoption staff had been created. These documents had not yet been needed since the audit as there have been no new applications for an adoption allowance. However, recently this had changed and the forms would be piloted and revised as needed. All new and existing allowances would thereafter use the new procedures as set out within the policy.

The Head of Safeguarding and Family Support informed the Committee that the policy would also be adopted across the region.

RESOLVED: That the Committee noted and agreed the Adoption Allowance Policy noted the plans for the implementation of a process to review adoption and other permanence allowances to ensure compliance with the provisions of the Adoption Support Services (Local Authorities) (Wales) Regulations 2005 and Section 17 of the Children Act 1989.

89. INFORMAL FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME - JANUARY 2015 - AUGUST 2015

The Head of Safeguarding and Family Support presented a report which sought approval of the proposed Informal Forward Work Programme covering the period from January to August 2015. He stated that the topics detailed had previously been accepted for inclusion in the Informal Forward Work Programme.

RESOLVED: That the Informal Forward Work Programme be approved with the addition of the following reports to the meetings listed below:

Pregnancies in Schoolchildren and Looked After Children – July 2015

Social Services and Wellbeing (Wales) Act – Update in 12 months with a thematic report to be submitted to the next meeting

Integrated Family Support Service Outcome of Review to be included as part of the Edge of Care project.

The meeting closed at 12.05 pm