

SUBJECT OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE 2 - FRIDAY, 19 JANUARY 2024

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE SUBJECT OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE 2 HELD HYBRID IN THE COUNCIL CHAMBER - CIVIC OFFICES, ANGEL STREET, BRIDGEND, CF31 4WB ON FRIDAY, 19 JANUARY 2024 AT 10:00

Present

Councillor F D Bletsoe – Chairperson

E L P Caparros

D T Harrison

M Lewis

A Wathan

Present Virtually

S Aspey  
RL Penhale-Thomas

P Davies  
R Williams

D M Hughes

J Llewellyn-Hopkins

Apologies for Absence

H David

H Williams

L Kinsey

Invitees:

Councillor Jane Gebbie  
Councillor Neelo Farr

Deputy Leader of Council and Cabinet Member for Social Services Health  
Cabinet Member for Community Safety and Wellbeing

Mark Sheppard  
Carys Lord  
Claire Marchant

Chief Executive  
Chief Officer - Finance, Performance & Change  
Corporate Director Social Services and Wellbeing

Jacqueline Davies

Head of Adult Social Care

Deborah Exton  
Christopher Morris

Deputy Head of Finance  
Finance Manager – Social Services & Wellbeing / Chief Executive's Directorate

**SUBJECT OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE 2 - FRIDAY, 19 JANUARY 2024**

**Officers:**

Kelly Watson	Chief Officer Legal, HR and Regulatory Services
Rachel Keepins	Democratic Services Manager
Meryl Lawrence	Senior Democratic Services Officer - Scrutiny
Joanne Norman	Interim Group Manager - Financial Planning & Budget Management
Andrew Thomas	Group Manager Sports & Physical Activity
David Wright	Family Support Services Manager
Stephen Griffiths	Interim Scrutiny Officer/ Democratic Services Officer - Committees

**Declarations of Interest**

Cllr Maxine Lewis – Personal – SSW12  
Cllr Richard Williams – Personal – Terrorism Act – counter-terrorism – family member  
Cllr Paul Davies – Prejudicial – SSW12

**58. Approval of Minutes**

Decision Made	<b><u>RESOLVED:</u></b>  That the minutes of meetings of Subject Overview and Scrutiny Committee 2 dated 23 November 2023 and 6 December 2023, be approved as true and accurate records.
Date Decision Made	19 January 2024

**59. Medium Term Financial Strategy 2024-25 to 2027-28**

Decision Made	<b><u>RESOLVED:</u></b>  Following detailed consideration and discussions with Cabinet Members and Officers, the Committee made the following Recommendations:  1. The Committee recommended that to protect our most vulnerable, given the better than expected
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**SUBJECT OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE 2 - FRIDAY, 19 JANUARY 2024**

settlement equating to an additional £1M and any other potential additional funding received by the Final Settlement, that Cabinet be asked to reassess the following Budget Reduction Proposals for the reasons stated for each:

- a. **SSW16** - The Committee expressed concern regarding the removal of 50% of the budget to reduce or remove support for children and young people with additional needs and families to access community activities and opportunities, given the potential high impact upon the individual and their families and risks detailed in the report.
  - b. **SSW20** - The Committee expressed concern regarding the removal of the caseworker resource and efficiency savings from the third Sector Contracts - hospital discharge and that the loss of this service could impact negatively on timely support for people to return home from hospital.
2. Given that a number of Social Services and Wellbeing Budget Reduction Proposals include reference to Reviews, the Committee seeks clarity as to what is still under consideration going forward, the risks to the deliverability of any proposals that include reviews, and whether they can be relied upon to set a balanced budget.
  3. The Committee expressed concern regarding the lack of recognition of the difficulty of setting budgets based on short term reliance on Grant funding, the instability and uncertainty when short term Grant funding is removed and the impact on the stability of providing services. The Committee recommended that a letter be sent to Welsh Government lobbying for the discontinuation of short term Grant funding in favour of sustained long term funding included in the settlement.
  4. The Committee reflected on the high cost of Independent Residential Placements for Care Experienced Children and the cost of those placements that were Out of County and while recognising the complexities and difficulties and whilst supporting the plan in place and the work ongoing, recommended that bringing those placements back into county provision where possible be emphasised as a priority, to meet needs and work towards reducing the cost over two to three years.

**Additional Information**

Following detailed consideration and discussions, the Committee requested:

**SUBJECT OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE 2 - FRIDAY, 19 JANUARY 2024**

	<p><b>Independent Residential Placements for Care Experienced Children</b> - How many placements out of county and in county and the costs.</p> <p><u>Budget Pressures:</u></p> <p><b>SSW3 – Increased cost of Home Care for Adults with Learning Disabilities:</b> Information regarding the amount of lost grant funding in the Learning Disabilities budget and reductions in other Grant funding referred to that impacted on the Learning Disabilities budget.</p> <p><b>General</b> - Communications with Welsh Government Finance Committee be circulated to the Committee Members.</p> <p><u>Budget Reduction Proposals:</u></p> <p><b>SSW11 - BCBC to waive protections on concessionary pricing and discounted rates for the more vulnerable in leisure settings:</b> clarification of what else is included in that budget line of £1.271M and an explanation of whether this saving / budget line is from within the HALO Management fee of £1.399M or not.</p> <p><b>SSW22 - BCBC consider efficiency savings from Third Sector Contracts - Substance Misuse Services:</b> An explanation of the narrative why: “<i>no new referrals from BCBC have been made this year</i>”.</p> <p><b>SSW26 - Increasing Charges for in-house care homes:</b> Details of the charge and increase for those residents paying the full cost of in-house residential care charges, arising from this proposal for full cost recovery.</p>
Date Decision Made	19 January 2024

**60. Urgent Items**

Decision Made	None
Date Decision Made	19 January 2024

**SUBJECT OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE 2 - FRIDAY, 19 JANUARY 2024**

To observe further debate that took place on the above items, please click this [link](#) for Part One and this [link](#) for Part Two.

The meeting closed at 13:45.