

**SUBJECT OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE 1 - THURSDAY, 24 MAY 2018**

**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE SUBJECT OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE 1  
HELD IN COUNCIL CHAMBER - CIVIC OFFICES ANGEL STREET BRIDGEND CF31 4WB  
ON THURSDAY, 24 MAY 2018 AT 09:30**

Present

Councillor CA Webster – Chairperson

JPD Blundell  
DK Edwards  
KJ Watts

NA Burnett  
J Gebbie  
AJ Williams

RJ Collins  
M Jones

PA Davies  
RME Stirman

Apologies for Absence

SK Dendy, DG Owen, B Sedgebeer, LM Walters and JE Williams

Officers:

Sarah Daniel Democratic Services Officer - Scrutiny  
Mark Galvin Senior Democratic Services Officer - Committees

Invitees:

Susan Cooper	Corporate Director - Social Services & Wellbeing
Jackie Davies	Head of Adult Social Care
Carmel Donovan	Group Manager - Older People
Councillor Philip White	Cabinet Member for Social Services and Early Help

21. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor AJ Williams declared a personal interest in Agenda Item 5, as a member of a Charitable Community Group that had been financially supported by G4S.

22. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

RESOLVED: That the Minutes of a meeting of Subject Overview and Scrutiny Committee 1 dated 12 March 2018 be approved as a true and accurate record, subject to the reason for Councillor Webster's declaration of interest as referred to in Minute 11. of these Minutes being changed as follows:-

'As Chairperson of NAS at Heronsbridge School.'

23. FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME (FWP) UPDATE

The Scrutiny Officer presented a report on the above to:

- a) present the items prioritised by the Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee including the next item delegated to this Subject Overview and Scrutiny Committee;
- b) present the Committee with a list of further potential items for comment and prioritisation;

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- c) ask the Committee to identify any further items for consideration using the pre-determined criteria form;
- d) Consider and approve the feedback from the previous meetings of the Subject Overview and Scrutiny Committee 1 and note the list of responses including any still outstanding at Appendix A.

Attached at Appendix B to the report, was the overall FWP for the Subject Overview and Scrutiny Committees (SOSCs) which includes the topics prioritised by the COSC for the next set of SOSCs in Table A, as well as topics that were deemed important for future prioritisation at Table B. This has been compiled from suggested items from each of the SOSCs at previous meetings as well as the COSC. It also included information proposed from Corporate Directors, detail from research undertaken by Scrutiny Officers and information from FWP Development meetings between the Scrutiny Chairs and Cabinet.

Arising from consideration of the information detailed in the report, it was

RESOLVED: That Committee noted the report and supporting information attached to this in the form of Appendices A, B and C.

24. UPDATE ON THE WORK IN HMP PARC FOLLOWING THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE SOCIAL SERVICES AND WELL-BEING (WALES) ACT 2014, INCLUDING THE CONTRIBUTION OF THE PRISON TO THE LOCAL COMMUNITY AND THE BUDGET IMPLICATIONS OF MEETING THE NEW DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE ACT

The Chairperson welcomed the Invitees into the meeting, including The Head of Family Interventions from G4S. The Head of Adult Social Care then introduced the report to members and invited questions from the Committee. A Member noted the contents of the report, but was of the opinion that it was unfair that the future level of Welsh Government grant funding allocation that had been given to the Authority in 2016/17 and 2017/18 to establish and put into operation the Secure Estate team and service, was due to be decreased and shared amongst all 22 local authorities in Wales, as part of the overall Local Government Settlement. She felt that this was unfair, given that there were only prisons in Wrexham, Monmouthshire, Cardiff, Swansea and Bridgend. Other local authority areas therefore did not have to support secure estates. This meant that the level of funding for BCBC in 2018/19 was set to reduce from over 200k to £18k, which was a substantial reduction. This opinion was supported by all Committee Members.

The Corporate Director – Social Services and Wellbeing agreed with the comments, and added that the local authority had been of the opinion that the initial level of funding given for the above purpose, was to be recurring in future years.

She added that the Distribution Sub Grant group is established across Wales with representation on from all 22 local authorities in Wales, as well as from the WLGA and Welsh Government. This meeting met bi-monthly, and the topic of funding for the support of secure estate by Welsh local authorities in the future was under discussion, and she thought that it should be allocated based on the level of population where a Local Authority supported social care provision for prisoners under a secure estate arrangement. The Corporate Director – Social Services and Wellbeing added that she was hopeful, that something could be resolved by this group that would result in Bridgend hopefully receiving increased funding in the future.

A Member asked how Parc Prison differed to a state prison

The Head of Adult Social Care advised that Parc Prison was a Category B prison, all prisons have different levels of population with different types of offenders there, Parc in South Wales generally had longer sentences when compared to a other prisons.

The representative from G4S added that Parc Prison was able to accommodate Category A prisoners, so therefore it could cater for maximum security level prisoners, and there were some inmates there currently who were facing life sentences. Generally though, the prison accommodated medium to long term offenders, and likely re-offenders. Some of these prisoners also had complex needs that needed to be carefully managed. .

A Member asked what percentage of prisoners in Parc Prison are from outside the County Borough then settle in the area when their sentence has finished. . He asked this, as it could affect the funding allocation in respect of secure estate if they required support after coming out of prison.

The Head of Family Interventions from G4S advised that he could obtain some data outside of the meeting and feedback to Members.

The Head of Adult Social Care added that under the Social Services and Wellbeing Act, it was incumbent upon the local authority to support offenders both in and out of prison, regardless whether or not they came from within or outside the County Borough area. It is the choice for the individual where they chose to reside after being released, and again if this was within the County Borough, Social Services would support the individual for as long as required.

The Corporate Director – Social Services and Wellbeing added that ex-prisoners upon release would receive benefits such as Income Support, however, they still came under the responsibility of Social Services whilst they were being rehabilitated to face normal life in a community setting, as it often took some time for these individuals to adapt to this, particularly if they had been in prison for a long period of time.

A Member was aware that G4S as a private concern, were paid to house prisoners, and she enquired where this money went and how much was put back into the community.

The Integrated Community Services Manager advised that paragraph 4.4 of the report, gave details of the extensive community projects and community links that Parc Prison had developed.

The Cabinet Member – Social Services and Early Help advised that the social care needs of people in the secure estate were met by Social Services in accordance with legislative requirements However, the reduction in level of funding, meant that the cost of their needs in future would outweigh the level of funding that BCBC would receive. This was compounded by the fact that as Parc Prison was a Category B establishment, prisoners were there longer, and therefore, any support needs and requirements they may have, would have to be funded for longer by the local authority.

A Member asked how many prisoners currently required specialist health support in Parc Prison.

The Integrated Community Services Manager advised of the 70 prisoners being assessed, 37 required specialist physical support, 19 required mental health support, 5 had learning disability support, 1 suffered with medical problems as a result of substance abuse, while the remainder required some general emotional and wellbeing support. Plans of care were designed for all such prisoners who needed some kind of

specialist medical support she added. Prisoners also had other specialist plans devised for them, for example in life skills, in readiness for when they were due to be released back into society.

The Chairperson felt that it would be useful for Members of the Committee to receive data on the support need requirements that were in place for prisoners at Parc for the last 12 months, along the lines as stated above.

The Integrated Community Services Manager confirmed that she would pass this information to Members outside of the meeting.

A Member asked what methods staff at Parc Prison adopt to keep inmates healthy.

The Head of Adult Social Care referred to paragraph 4.4 of the report, and advised this included delivering a variety of keep-fit classes, walking groups and nutritional courses, including weekly weight loss classes to tackle any obesity issues. . These were carried out under the supervision of staff with the appropriate medical expertise. She added that the prison staff and secure estate team were working effectively to provide a variety of health and wellbeing support initiatives

The Head of Family Interventions from G4S added that he had been employed at Parc Prison since it had first opened in 1997, and even considering the nature of a prison Parc had been acknowledged for its innovative ways of keeping prisoners active, and with the support of the team from BCBC it had won awards for different initiatives it had been involved in that supported prisoners and their families, and this included the involvement of inmates with complex needs.

A Member noting that the Secure Estate grant funding was due to decrease and by a considerable amount, asked if the support BCBC was providing as an arm of the prison, was over and above that which was statutorily required under the Social Services and Wellbeing Act. If this was the case, he felt that this could not be continued in the future due to the significant reduced level of funding that the Authority was due to receive.

The Corporate Director – Social Services and Wellbeing advised that the initial amount of Welsh Government grant funding of £236k had developed the Secure Estate team at the prison with the above funding on a recurring basis in mind. ,In order to provide Social Care support for prisoners, and with this funding being greatly reduced, this would in the longer term reduce the level of support that the Authority could provide, although they would still provide what was required of them.

The Integrated Community Services Manager added that guidance under the Act also required Social Services to give support to released prisoners, and in instances where prisoners were to be domiciled in the County Borough, they became the responsibility of the local authority 12 weeks before their release.

A Member felt that consideration should be given under the Council's MTFs, to look to supplement funding for the purpose of the provision of the Secure Estate in view of the level of reduced funding from Welsh Government. He also noted that if anything, Parc Prison was taking more prisoners in recent times than it had in previous years. He was also concerned that prisoners may be prioritised for housing accommodation after their release, at the expense of other priority cases looking to be housed, such as one parent families. Finally, he made a plea to private sector organisations including G4S, for their continued support towards community initiatives, for example the Public Realm. He noted the list of community projects, community links and other work the Prison had developed (as shown in paragraph 4.4 of the report), but felt that some of these were lacking in substance, and that possibly more could be contributed from the prison to

support the community. Another member agreed with these comments and also felt that not enough was being done by Parc Prison to benefit the local community, and that more support could be given to this

The Head of Family Interventions from G4S confirmed that when the prison first opened it had occupied 800 prisoners. Now this number had increased to 1700, therefore there was a bigger demand on the prisons resources now than previously. He added that Parc Prison went above and beyond in terms of positively contributing to the local community, even though it was not obliged to. Examples of these were a shuttle bus service in order that families were able to visit their relations in prison. This alone cost a five figure sum on an annual basis which a state prison would not ordinarily provide. There were other schemes the prison had been involved in, such as supporting the Scouts, the Duke of Edinburgh Award, St. John's Ambulance, the Cadets, the Young Achiever Award, and Easter and Christmas events. He added that he would be more than willing to meet with the Local Member outside of the meeting, with a view to addressing her and other Members concerns regarding this.

A Member asked the Invitees if prisoners at Parc Prison were receiving sufficient medical support and treatment for any particular medical condition they may have. She also asked if any emergency medical support requirements were readily available, without any delay for those who needed these, and without any delay.

The Head of Family Interventions from G4S confirmed that they were, and that the quality of medical support for prisoners had progressed and improved the last 6 or 7 years. He added that palliative care was also available at the prison, if prisoners who were terminally ill preferred to stay there with the presence of their immediate family, as opposed to going to hospital.

A Member felt that it would be beneficial if the Prison, as well as working with Social Services, also worked with other third sector organisations, with the view of looking to provide opportunities for improving inmates' skills in order to help them possibly gain a training or employment opportunity following their release. Such opportunities would be a deterrent to them re-offending he felt.

The Head of Family Interventions from G4S advised that when prisoners were out 'On-Licence', they were given projects to do, such as renovating graveyards and designing school play areas, as a pre-cursor to hopefully going on to secure training and employment opportunities

### **Recommendations**

Members were disappointed at the decision made by Welsh Government to distribute grant funding across 22 Local authorities in Wales to provide a social care provision to the secure estate, as opposed to a specific distribution to those authorities with prison populations. The Committee therefore recommended that a letter be sent to the Department of Justice and Welsh Government stating that they should reconsider the Grant funding allocation as BCBC had been placed in an unfair financial disadvantage by having a Secure Estate within its boundary.

The Committee recommended that BCBC adopts a "One Council Approach" and that Officers from all Directorates meet with G4S to investigate the opportunity of those in the Secure Estate being able to contribute to the Public Realm to have a direct positive impact in the community.

Members recommended that BCBC should better publicise the local businesses that offer support and job opportunities to ex-offenders.

Members further recommended that this item stay on the Forward Work Programme and be revisited no sooner than 1 year.

**Further Information**

- What percentage of the prison population in Parc previously resided in Bridgend County Borough before they became an ordinary resident of BCBC as a result of being in the Secure Estate.
- Members requested a breakdown of those in the Secure Estate that require social care from BCBC and asked that they include the age range and what care packages they require.
- What are the total costs to BCBC to provide the current service to the prison. Members asked for the breakdown to include annual salary costs of the Secure Estate team, annual costs of providing equipment and the annual cost of providing personal care which BCBC currently pay to the G4S medical team.
- Members also asked to receive costs in relation to providing social care at the secure Caswell Clinic in Pen-Y-Fai.

25. **NOMINATION TO THE PUBLIC SERVICE BOARD OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PANEL**

The Corporate Director – Operational and Partnership Services submitted a report to nominate a Member to sit on the Public Service Board Overview and Scrutiny Panel.

**RESOLVED:** That Councillor KJ Watts be nominated to sit as a Member of Subject Overview and Scrutiny Committee 1 on the Public Service Board Overview and Scrutiny Committee Panel.

26. **CORPORATE PARENTING CHAMPION NOMINATION REPORT**

The Corporate Director – Operational and Partnership Services submitted a report which requested the Committee to nominate a Member as its Corporate Parenting Champion to represent the Committee as an Invitee to meetings of the Corporate Parenting Cabinet Committee.

**RESOLVED:** That Councillor J Gebbie be nominated to sit as a Member of Subject Overview and Scrutiny Committee 1 on the Cabinet Committee Corporate Parenting in the capacity of an Invitee.

27. **URGENT ITEMS**

None.

The meeting closed at 11:42