

SUBJECT OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE 2 - THURSDAY, 29 NOVEMBER 2018

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE SUBJECT OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE 2 HELD IN COUNCIL CHAMBER - CIVIC OFFICES ANGEL STREET BRIDGEND CF31 4WB ON THURSDAY, 29 NOVEMBER 2018 AT 10:00

Present

Councillor CA Green – Chairperson

MC Clarke
AA Pucella
SR Vidal

SK Dendy
KL Rowlands
A Williams

M Jones
SG Smith

JE Lewis
G Thomas

Apologies for Absence

PA Davies, J Gebbie, MJ Kearn, T Thomas and DBF White

Officers:

Sarah Daniel	Democratic Services Officer - Scrutiny
Andrew Rees	Senior Democratic Services Officer - Committees
Tracy Watson	Scrutiny Officer

Invitees:

Susan Cooper	Corporate Director - Social Services & Wellbeing
Jackie Davies	Head of Adult Social Care
Laura Kinsey	Head of Children's Social Care
Arron Norman	Finance Manager - Social Services Wellbeing, Resources & LARS
Councillor Dhanisha Patel	Cabinet Member for Wellbeing and Future Generations
Councillor Philip White	Cabinet Member for Social Services and Early Help

60. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor JE Lewis declared a personal interest in agenda item 4 – Medium Term Financial Strategy 2019-20 to 2022-23 as her grandson attends Flying Start.

61. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the meeting of the Subject Overview and Scrutiny Committee 2 of 18 October 2018 be approved as a true and accurate record.

62. MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL STRATEGY 2019-20 TO 2022-23

The Committee received the draft Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) 2019-20 to 2022-23, which sets out the spending priorities of the Council, key investment objectives and budget areas targeted for necessary savings. It also included a financial forecast for 2019-23 and a detailed draft revenue budget for 2019-20.

The Committee referred to the recent announcement by the Welsh Government of additional funding to local authorities which was likely to lead to a reduction in Revenue Support Grant of 0.33% compared to the reduction of 0.6% which was previously predicted. The Committee considered that it should defer consideration of the Medium Term Financial Strategy and it have an opportunity to revisit the budget of the Social Services and Wellbeing Directorate once the effects of the additional funding had been factored in. The Corporate Director Social Services and Wellbeing informed the Committee that the detail of the final settlement and the outcome of the budget consultation were not yet known, although the direction of travel for the budget would remain the same. The Cabinet Member Social

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Services and Wellbeing confirmed that negotiations were continuing with the Welsh Government on the additional funding and the final detail was awaited. He stated that the final settlement would not be known until 18 December 2018 and the implications of a reduction of 0.33% in Revenue Support Grant were being evaluated. The Committee considered that it would need to scrutinise and comment on the budget when the settlement is known.

The Corporate Director Social Services and Wellbeing informed the Committee that as at Quarter 1, the Directorate had an overspend of £1.8m split evenly between Children's Services and Adult Social Care. A two year financial plan with a clear recovery plan put in place with the overspend in Adult Social Care and Children's Services being £220k and £572k respectively, with a total overspend of £800k. She stated that additional money had come into the Directorate in October and the savings requirement of £350k had been achieved. Savings proposals of £1.28m are required in 2019/20, however the Directorate is in a much stronger position, although there was always the risk of a sharp increase in looked after children with additional families potentially coming into care. The Corporate Director Social Services and Wellbeing informed the Committee that the Welsh Government had given additional funding of £20m to local authorities across Wales and this Council was likely to receive additional Revenue Support Grant of £900k. She stated that an additional £30m Special Grant had been given, of which this Council's allocation was £1.3m for Social Services to support workforce pressures, living wage and domiciliary care. However this funding was not recurring. She informed the Committee that officers had to be very smart in its use of additional funding.

The Committee questioned how the Directorate intended to achieve the budget reduction proposals which have a Red or Yellow status. The Corporate Director Social Services and Wellbeing stated that many of the budget reduction proposals in 2019/20 and 2020/21 which are shown in Red or Yellow are in relation to the contract with Awen. There is a need for Awen to be in complete agreement that the budget reduction proposals are achievable. There was also a need to have full feedback on the outcome of the budget consultation process which was recently completed. The Corporate Director Social Services and Wellbeing informed the Committee that there is in place a 25 year contract with Awen, however since the commencement of the contract there had been no provision for inflationary uplift in fees and charges. There may also be a need for opening times of facilities to be considered as part of the budget reduction proposals.

The Committee the reason for the development of extra care and charging for Telecare services being shown as Yellow. The Head of Adult Social Care informed the Committee that the development of extra care was in its final stages and she was confident by the end of January that targets would be met. She stated that the Telecare service has been re-tendered and the new prices will generate additional income. The Remodelling of complex cases and the review of accommodation charges were taking place. Day services were also being remodelled by reviewing day time opportunities.

The Committee questioned the reason for staff re-configuration showing a yellow status. The Corporate Director Social Services and Wellbeing informed the Committee that a number of staffing re-structures are taking place across the Directorate. The Head of Children's Services had completed the re-structures of management and business support services, while the Head of Adult Social Care is continuing to re-structure the services which she is responsible for. The Committee questioned whether the re-configuration of staff had led to redundancies. The Corporate Director Social Services and Wellbeing informed the Committee that some redundancies have been made and it was likely that further redundancies would have to take place. She stated there was a need to deliver services differently and for them to be re-designed in order to achieve budget savings. She also informed the Committee that consultation has been taking place with service users and staff with the aim of preventing people becoming too dependent on Social Services. Redundancies have been avoided in certain situations in the Homecare service where staff have moved to work within Extra Care facilities as they are developed. The Cabinet Member

Social Services and Early Help informed the Committee that there had been 500 staff losses to date.

The Committee in acknowledging that additional funding was to be allocated to local government, also acknowledged that austerity measures remained in place in the public sector and for the Committee to scrutinise the budget properly it needed to be in possession of accurate budget figures.

The Committee questioned the impact grant funding would have on achieving budget savings. The Corporate Director Social Services and Wellbeing commented that grant funding and its timing was out of the services' control and there were times when there was a need to mainstream the service and it also requires smart thinking and careful planning. She stated the process of registering with the Care Inspectorate for Wales the Extra Care developments and the Hub.

The Committee requested detail on the funding of complex cases and whether that funding will continue as a result of the change in the health board boundary from Western Bay to Cwm Taf. The Corporate Director Social Services and Wellbeing informed the Committee that the proportion Bridgend will have of the Integrated Care Fund is being finalised which will support complex care cases. She stated that she was keen to protect the funding of cases in Bridgend in order to have continuity. She reassured the Committee there is strong programme management in place to deliver projects for people with complex needs.

The Committee questioned the sustainability of the delivery of Social Housing Grant given the proposed decrease in the base level budget from £5.8m to £1.6m. The Cabinet Member Wellbeing and Future Generations commented that the Council does not build social housing but assists in its delivery in partnership with Registered Social Landlords. Targets are set for the delivery of social housing but their delivery is dependent on funding.

The Committee requested an explanation of the budget reduction proposal on rationalising day service provision for older people and learning disability services including Bridgend Resource Centre. The Corporate Director Social Services and Wellbeing that the Bridgend Resource Centre provides facilities for 60 – 70 adults with complex needs. The services delivered from the Resource Centre have enabled people to remain living locally. The Corporate Director Social Services and Wellbeing stated that day services are delivered from 3 localities delivering community type provision and the Head of Adult Social Care is looking at strengthening that provision. The Head of Adult Social Care informed the Committee that day services are being remodelled and the development of community hubs looks at the prevention and wellbeing agenda. She stated that reduction in numbers of people coming into services is being experienced and day services are being reviewed looking at best practice for implementation by the end of the financial year. The Cabinet Member Social Services and Early Help informed the Committee that the Council is in the realms of the unthinkable with having to look at the reduction and the remodelling of services. He stated that the Council was looking to protect services but at the same time make reductions of £8m to the budget.

The Committee thanked the invites for their contribution.

Conclusions

Members recommended that a report on the MTFs proposals be brought back to the Committee once the final budget settlement from Welsh Government is announced. Members were in agreement that due to the settlement figure not yet being finalised, the figures in the report would not be accurate and therefore needed to be re-worked before members could consider them.

Members recommended that once the settlement was known and the figures had been re-worked by finance colleagues that members are presented with the budget as a whole for

each directorate so Members could determine the full expenditure in each directorate and not just the areas where reductions had been proposed.

Further Information

The Committee asked how sustainable the delivery of the supply of Social Housing was given the base level budget was proposed to decrease from £5.8 million to £1.6 million.

Members asked to receive information on the savings achieved for complex care in the Western Bay Partnership, specifically for Bridgend.

63. **FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME UPDATE**

The Scrutiny Officer reported on items which had been prioritised by the Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee, including the next item delegated to this Committee. The Committee received a list of further potential items for comment and prioritisation and was requested to identify any further items for consideration using the pre-determined criteria form. The Committee was also requested to consider and approve the feedback from the previous meetings of the Committee and note the list of responses outstanding.

Conclusions

The Committee expressed concern that feedback on the Post 16 ALN Review was still awaited. The Committee further expressed concern that the recommendations made by the Committee had not been considered by Cabinet which in turn could have been put forward to the Welsh Government to inform the Bill. The Committee requested that feedback be provided in a timelier manner.

The Committee determined that it would prioritise an item for the April meeting of the Committee at its February meeting. The Committee considered that there may be an opportunity to have an overview of the authority and what its priorities are so as not to lose track of monitoring recommendations made by scrutiny and requested that the Chairpersons of the Overview and Scrutiny Committees progress this course of action.

The Committee considered that the Welsh Government is looking at far reaching proposals to widen the powers of Town and Community Councils and it believed that there may be potential for Town and Community Councils to assist with services in terms of library provision and some aspects of social care that are not deemed to be specialised. The Committee welcomed the opportunity for greater partnership working with Town and Community Councils.

The Committee also considered that whilst the authority's discussions are consumed by finance it had to be mindful of its safeguarding and corporate parenting responsibilities.

64. **URGENT ITEMS**

There were no urgent items.

The meeting closed at 11:00