

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE PARTNERSHIPS AND GOVERNANCE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE HELD IN COMMITTEE ROOMS 2/3, CIVIC OFFICES ANGEL STREET BRIDGEND CF31 4WB ON THURSDAY, 29 OCTOBER 2015 AT 2.00 PM

Present

Councillor N Clarke – Chairperson

E Dodd	EM Hughes	M Jones	JR McCarthy
HE Morgan	AD Owen	M Thomas	RL Thomas
KJ Watts	C Westwood		

Officers:

Kym Barker – Scrutiny Officer

Sarah Daniel – Democratic Services Officer – Committees

Jo Deans – Democratic Services Officer (temporary) - Committees

Invitees:

Sue Cooper – Corporate Director – Social Services & Wellbeing

Sara Harvey – Regional Director – Western Bay

Caroline Dyer – Regional Manager – Youth Offenders

Val Jones – Regional Manager – Adoption

17. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

None

18. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor E M Hughes declared a personal interest in item 5

19. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

RESOLVED: That the minutes of a meeting held on the 16 September 2015 were approved as a true and accurate record of the meeting

20. FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME UPDATE

The Scrutiny Officer presented a report to the Committee on the items that were due to be considered at the Committees meeting due to be held on 2 December 2015 and sought confirmation of the information required for the subsequent scheduled meeting of 14 January 2016

Further Information requested

- The Committee requested clarification regarding the reference to a recommendation made by CYP OVSC in relation to the Community Care Information Solution (CCIS) item scheduled for P&G OVSC on 2 December.

Corporate Parenting

- Changes to the way that the Corporate Parenting Champion reports to Overview and Scrutiny Committees have been approved in the recognition that they can

greatly support the Committee by advising them of the ongoing work of the Cabinet Committee and particularly any decisions or changes which they should be aware of as Corporate Parents as part of the day to day business of the Committee rather than via a biannual report.

RESOLVED: That Committee:

- Noted the topics due to be considered at the meeting of the Committee for 2 December 2015
- Determined the invitees to be invited to attend, any specific information it would like the invitees to provide and any research that it would like the Overview and Scrutiny Unit to undertake in relation to its meeting for 14 January 2016
- Revisited and considered the list of future potential items for the Committees Forward Work Programme and re-prioritised as the Committees felt appropriate
- Nominated Councillor A D Owen to join the Chair on the Joint Research and Evaluation Panel for Sickness Absence

21. WESTERN BAY UPDATE

The Corporate Director – Social Services and Wellbeing provided an update to Committee on the Western Bay Health and Social Care Programme. During 2014-15, Western Bay established a Partnership Forum which provided a strategic overview of the programme. The membership consisted of the three Leaders of the three local authorities, portfolio holders, the Chairman of the ABMU Health board and non-executive members and the Chief Executives of the Health Board and the Local Authority.

A member asked how Western Bay was currently scrutinised and what panels scrutinised them. The Corporate Director – Social Services and Wellbeing informed the Committee that the project was scrutinised individually at a local level by the three local authorities involved in the collaboration and that no regional arrangements were currently in place, although this was a preferred model for Bridgend. She added that Neath Port Talbot Council were not in favour of this model. Members were concerned that no arrangements were in place for regional scrutiny as they commented there may be a duplication of scrutiny or an oversight of projects within the programme. They felt that collaborative arrangements should be put in place for the effective scrutiny of the whole programme and were disappointed that this wasn't already in place.

Members asked if information on the Partnership Forum that was established during 2014-15 by the Western Bay programme was available for the Committee to view. The Committee was particularly interested in having sight of the terms of reference and minutes of meetings. The Corporate Director – Social Services and Wellbeing stated that these were not available at the time of the meeting however they could be sent onto the Committee for information, as well as the Western Bay newsletter which was produced on a regular basis which the Committee may find of interest.

Members asked how effective Western Bay was to members of the public. The Corporate Director- Wellbeing explained that there were strict Governance arrangements in place for Western Bay. She added that each of the projects had performance measures that were submitted to Welsh Assembly as an indicator of the benefits of the project and to qualify for the funding. She added that the indicators were also submitted to Cabinet.

A Member asked how resources were being shared effectively in light of the reduction in the budget. The Corporate Director – Social Services and Wellbeing stated that if vacancies arose they were first recruited for internally. She added the teams worked effectively together to ensure the services were not duplicated. She further added that there was a dip in figures for re-offending but this was a national dip and that all other projects were achieving well against their measures.

Members asked if the project was sustainable with the budget reductions. The Regional Director for Western Bay stated that the project was sustainable but the task ahead was to ensure work was completed regionally to avoid the duplication of work whilst keeping services local which was proving to be a challenge

A Member asked what differences could be seen to people receiving the services of Western Bay. The Corporate Director – Social Services and Wellbeing stated that they were in the process of building up a library of this so that people in receipt of the service can have a voice and share success stories. She added that they were also monitoring a series of case studies to enable them to better tailor their approach to care for the benefit of service users.

A Member asked what mental health issues Western Bay had so far been involved in. The Corporate Director – Social Services and Wellbeing informed the Committee that self-help guides for people that suffer with depression had been published which she would share with Members. There had also been joint working to plan crisis services, this had been successful in Bridgend and there was a plan in place to roll out to the whole programme

A Member asked if there had been failures in the project and what the weaknesses were. The Corporate Director – Social Services and Wellbeing explained that the trust and collaboration was growing but that it would take time. She added that some of the challenges they had faced were three local authorities coming together to work as one as they all had different ways of working and different ideas about how the programme would work and also trying to work regionally but keeping services local. The Regional Manager for Youth Offending service added that there were some difficulties cross managing teams as some staff were still employed by their own local authority. Officers were in agreement that amalgamating three teams, from three local authorities all using three legacy systems and three different reporting mechanisms had been very challenging

Members asked how Scrutiny could add value to the Western Bay Programme. The Corporate Director – Social Services and Wellbeing stated that she felt a regional arrangement was needed to avoid duplication of work but added that local arrangements were beneficial for the communication of the programme to service users and that the local authorities involved had differing needs.

- Members thanked the Officers for the report and commented that it was comprehensive and that it enabled them to see clearly the scope of the programme and the amount and variety of areas and activities within it.
- Members were very concerned that there is currently no scrutiny of the programme being carried out at a regional level and that the programme will not be scrutinised and monitored effectively if it is carried out at a local level via three Local Authorities, an approach which may lead to duplication or oversight regarding the scrutiny of individual projects or activities within the programme.
- Members noted the drastic reduction in budget and the need to monitor the sustainability for the programme.

- Members queried whether the Terms of Reference or meeting minutes from the Partnership Forum could be made available. The Officer agreed to provide copies to the Committee, along with copies of the newsletter.

Recommendations

- The Committee strongly recommends that scrutiny of the Western Bay Health and Social Care Programme should be undertaken at a regional level to avoid the possibility of duplication or oversight regarding the scrutiny of individual projects or activities within the programme which may occur if the scrutiny function continues to be carried out at a local level only, via three Local Authorities.
 - The Committee recommends that scrutiny of the programme is politically driven.
 - The Committee recommends that regional scrutiny is progressed with Swansea whether or not Neath Port Talbot want to participate.
 - The Committee recommends that care should be taken to ensure that the regional scrutiny function is placed within the programme at the appropriate level to enable timely and effective scrutiny of key activities and decision making.

Further Information requested

- The Committee requested the minutes, Terms of Reference and newsletter from the Partnership Forum.
- The Committee requested information regarding the specific reasons why NPT are currently unwilling to participate in a combined regional Scrutiny programme and who is responsible for the decision not to participate.

22. URGENT ITEMS

None

The meeting closed at 4.05 pm