

SCRUTINY MANAGEMENT BOARD

Minutes of a meeting of the Scrutiny Management Board held on Wednesday, 12 October 2016 at 6.00pm in Meeting Room G3-G4, Addenbrooke House, Ironmasters Way, Telford, TF3 4NT

Present: Councillors A J Burford, S Bentley, N A M England, E J Greenway, K R Guy, J Jones, J Pinter, S A W Reynolds (Chair), J M Seymour,

Also Present: Councillor A R H England, Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care & Older People, Councillor P R Watling, Cabinet Member for Children, Young People & Communities and Dag Saunders (Co-optee on Health and Adult Care Scrutiny Committee).

In Attendance: Clive Jones (Director of Children's & Adult Services), Jessica Tangye (Senior Democratic Services and Scrutiny Officer)

Announcements: The Chair, Cllr Shirley Reynolds noted the sad and untimely passing of Councillor Clive Mollett. She paid tribute to his services to the Council and extended sympathies to his family

SMB-07 Apologies for Absence

Councillors V A Fletcher (Scrutiny Management Board), N Lowry (Children & Young People Scrutiny Committee)

Apologies were also received from Sheryl Fikeis (Co-optee – Children & Young People), Jean Gulliver (Co-optee Health and Adult Care Scrutiny Committee), Carolyn Healey (Co-optee – Children & Young People), and Barry Parnaby (Co-optee - Health and Adult Care Scrutiny Committee)

SMB-08 Declarations of Interest

None

SMB-09 Minutes

Resolved – that the minutes of the meeting of the Scrutiny Management Board held on 20 July 2016 be confirmed and signed by the Chairman

SMB-10 Holding the Executive to Account Session 1: Councillor Arnold England, Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care & Older People.

The Chair introduced the Holding to Account session and highlighted that it presented the opportunity for Cabinet Members to explain matters within their remit and for Members of the Scrutiny Management Board and the Health and Adult Care Scrutiny Committee who had been invited to the meeting, to scrutinise and review any decisions made or actions taken.

Councillor Arnold England: Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care and Older People and Clive Jones: Director of Children's and Adult Services were present for this item. The Chair welcomed the Cabinet Member and offered him the opportunity to provide an update on key achievements since he became the portfolio holder for Adult Social Care & Older People and the key challenges for the next 6 months.

Cllr England outlined the current position and stated that changes to Adult social care services had been achieved by outsourcing, which had taken about three years to come into effect with least detriment made to services as possible in the transitional period. It was noted that the Assistant Director who had overseen the transition of the service had been successful in consulting with the public. Early re-structuring had realised reduced back office costs, however, there had not been a reduction in numbers of social workers. The likelihood of additional pressures on the staff had been identified and mechanisms had been put into place to monitor this.

Key challenges highlighted by the Cabinet Member included

- the current re-structure that was in consultation stage; the impact on services resulting from the length of time it would take; the management of change particularly affecting people with needs
- domestic violence support, which the Cabinet Member felt required dedicated oversight rather than allocation across work streams
- the social worker role becoming more cost-effective and generic
- demand on hospitals resulting in pressure on services to support people in the community when discharged; greater joined up working with the CCG

The Chair asked if there were any issues of concern that he wanted to highlight to Scrutiny. The Cabinet Member reiterated that he thought domestic violence required greater oversight and expressed his opinion that the relationship with the voluntary sector needed some attention. This was particularly relevant due to the funding for A4E and MIND being limited to two years. It was highlighted that MIND had become a targeted support network and although the service would continue via A4E, losing MIND was significant because it was firmly established and well-known for raising mental health awareness.

The fragility of the care sector was noted in preventing people from being admitted to hospital and supporting those discharged from hospital, particularly with the onset of the winter period and the question was put forward as to whether the Council was in a position to play its part. In response, it was emphasised that the cost of care packages was not straightforward, high level costs were involved in some cases and there were out of county issues. The Director of Children's and Adults Services reported that there was much more joined up working to ensure capacity with Shropshire Partners in Care (SPIC). There had been a huge increase in domiciliary care in the past 12 months and a tool was being developed to deliver smarter working.

A concern was raised about the ever reducing budget against the service need and the Cabinet Member was asked to comment on this. It was noted that at some point, the Council would not be able to provide all of the care that people placed importance on. Alternative support and care was becoming more important to meet this need; inter-dependency within communities was an example, where

communities/ families would have to provide support where there was an expectation for the state to provide care. This was highlighted as a 'new way of working' and a new model was being established to help predict needs in four years' time in terms of packages of care and how these could meet demand. One of the key issues of the work stream would be sensitivity analysis, to determine the requirements for different types of packages. With the on-going re-structure, there was confidence that the service area could achieve more by finding alternative ways of doing things. The Members agreed that this was positive but requested that the Cabinet Member return to the Board when it became apparent that Officers could not meet the needs of the Borough.

There was a discussion about current capacity in residential homes and it was highlighted that recent media reports had suggested residential homes were closing because of the restricted funding from Councils. It was noted that there was a high rate of homes closing but these were small homes and had not had a big impact on the sector. Through SPIC, efforts were being made to have an open and transparent dialogue with residential care home providers about anticipated demand and capacity over the next 12 months. It was noted that in the present day it was more likely that people would enter care homes for palliative care much later in life and the Council was therefore working with care homes to diversify. This provided the residential care homes with the opportunity to develop a business model.

Day care centres also had the opportunity to prepare a business case and to have a dialogue about their offer. Capacity of day care centres was also discussed. The Director of Children's and Adult Services responded that the way of working with care plans had changed to permit a greater understanding of care needs and a more tailored support plan. There was question about the volume of domiciliary care. It was noted that domiciliary hours had increased recently but the Council was looking 5-10 years ahead in terms of preventative work which should help to offset the growth in demand. The strategy included PA hours and take –up of direct payments and the possibility of a care academy but these were not yet on offer. Care needs were being addressed in the Sustainability and Transformation plan. Work was ongoing to identify, assess and re-assess need, links with GP surgeries were being explored, shared support in the communities, streamlining of extra care, domiciliary and PA care. Telford and Wrekin Council was working closely with providers to increase and develop links with health colleagues, ultimately to reduce A&E need.

SMB-11 Holding the Executive to Account Session 2: Councillor Paul Watling, Cabinet Member for Children, Young People & Communities.

Members of the Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee were invited for this item. The Chair welcomed the Cabinet Member for Children, Young People & Communities and offered the Cabinet Member the opportunity to provide an update on key achievements since the previous Holding to Account session in November 2015 and key challenges for the next 6 months.

The Cabinet Member opened by stating that the Ofsted report for Children's Services was the second best in the West Midlands and he congratulated Officers of the Council who had reinvigorated the service over the last 4 years.

The Cabinet Member asked members to note the good work that had been done leading up to the Ofsted Inspection, and the continuous work of the Officers to ensure areas such as leadership and management would continue to progress to attain 'good'. Looking back to Children's services in 2011, huge improvements had since been made particularly where the budget had been reduced. He noted that Ofsted had positively scored safeguarding of children; the service had been recognised as acting quickly and effectively to protect children when at risk of significant harm. In areas such as Care Leavers and Adoption, the work of the Children's Service was deemed good and the review of multi-agency working against CSE had been acknowledged as a strength. Furthermore the Cabinet Member indicated that it was a model that other authorities were looking to in terms of partnership working against CSE. He highlighted a number of areas of importance:

- CAMHs
- Youth Offending Service
- Improvements in school attainment
- Children in Care

Councillor Nathan England declared an interest at this point, with regard to children in care places.

The Cabinet Member reported that increasing numbers of children in care was a national issue. Initiatives were in place to address the issues, such as the development of a new model of forecasting places for children in care to inform the budget management approach. The budget was flexible but the numbers of staff were not flexible. There was a buffer team and extra funding was available to deal with spikes in provision. This was managed by a monthly budget meeting and the Cabinet Member assured the Board that the Council would continue to provide resource when the need arose.

It was reported that outcomes were improving for young people in Telford and Wrekin, for example the thresholds were effective; meaning that only children who needed care were taken into care. There were no targets for numbers of children that could be brought into care and this had been recognised by Ofsted.

The Chair asked if there were any issues of concern that the Cabinet Member wanted to highlight to Scrutiny. It was noted:

- diminishing preventative services - the Council was looking at ways to continue to best run preventative services. It was noted that efforts were being made to fund and build sustainability with organisations, to ensure that services were not reduced for those who needed them.
- Ofsted had indicated that chronic cases were not being picked up as they should be by the Service, which meant that children had not been brought into care soon enough.
- statutory requirements were being met for adoption but there was a drive from central Government to look at how provision could be delivered differently. It was reported that the Council had spent three years looking at West Mercia services for adoption but it had become clear that being part of a broader service area did not work for Telford and Wrekin. Within the Cost Improvement Plan there was a move to streamline the adoption process as

far as possible to ensure the interests of the child would come first. The training and support for adoptive parents was reported to be good in Telford and Wrekin. It was noted that occasionally, the right care needs for the child would be out of the area and this was a problem due to the increased costs. There was a drive to recruit local foster carers.

There was a discussion about reduced funding for preventative services and it was noted that youth services had been decimated across the UK. There was a provable link between the cuts to preventative services and risks to statutory services. Members commented that it was a false economy. Targeted work was being done with some youth workers with social skills training to try to help prevent children needing to come into care. The support being provided was to strengthen families and would continue to be part of the model going forward. The challenge to keep early help to ease pressures on statutory services where possible was acknowledged. The Council was making every effort to retain services; neighbouring authorities had closed youth services up to four years ago.

It was also noted that measures and cuts would have an impact on mental health services in years to come. Services had been outsourced in neighbouring authorities' whereas Telford and Wrekin had established partnership working with communities. There was partnership working with the CCG on CAMHS and training of frontline staff to deliver different kinds of support to ensure they had the tools to support young people and families. Hundreds of workers were being trained over the following nine months.

There was a discussion about the Scrutiny review of CSE. High figures uncovered by the Scrutiny review had evidenced that a good system was in place in Telford and Wrekin for reporting, identifying CSE and supporting victims of CSE. It was agreed that CSE was different to CSA and that the media had caused confusion in relation to this. A robust discussion ensued about recent media activity on CSE in Telford and Wrekin. It was noted that a Daily Mirror journalist had asked detailed questions about the actions taken in response to the scrutiny review of multi –agency working against CSE, which had been responded to thoroughly by the Council, however, in the opinion of the Cabinet Member, the article that had been published had not accurately reflected the work done.

A concern was raised that there were still unanswered questions about partners and other organisations from the scrutiny review that needed to be addressed. 38 recommendations had been put to Telford and Wrekin Cabinet following the review, a response had been received and at the next Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee meeting in December, an interim report would be shared. The Chair concluded that if there were any outstanding concerns, these should be shared with the Scrutiny Management Board Chair and the Chair of the CYP committee. In his closing remarks the Cabinet Member repeated his plea that it was beholden on all elected members as Corporate Parents not to make comments that could be construed as warranting unnecessary fears. The Board agreed that it was of utmost importance that victims of CSE in Telford and Wrekin were not dissuaded from coming forwards and from seeking support.

SMB-12 New suggestions for Scrutiny Work Programme 2016/17

The Board noted the two new suggestions for the work programme that had been received since the Scrutiny Management Board meeting on 20 July.

Members agreed that, in respect of The Gorge Parish Council’s request to consider the Ironbridge Gorge World Heritage Site Steering Committee, a scrutiny committee had no power to undertake external scrutiny but that representatives on the committee who were also members of the Scrutiny Management Board could raise concerns and provide an update to the Board.

Members agreed that, in respect of Kynnersley Parish Council’s request to consider rural broadband in Kynnersely Parish, the service area would be best placed to assist and update the Parish Council. It was noted that by the end of 2017, a project jointly funded between the Council, BT and the Government’s Broadband Delivery programme would see 98% of homes in the borough have superfast broadband coverage.

SMB-13 Chair’s Updates

The Chair noted that the work programme for the Scrutiny Management Board had been circulated. This covered the Holding the Executive to Account sessions for 2016-2017. The work programmes for each of the scrutiny committees were at various stages of confirmation due to the majority of meetings not having taken place. Committee meetings that were in the pipeline were noted.

- Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee meeting: 1 November 2016 – the agenda was focussed on education; the Ofsted report would be the focus of the agenda at a meeting on 8th December.
- Customer, Community and Partnership Scrutiny Committee meeting was on 4th October and focussed on Waste Management; the next meeting was early December.
- Finance & Enterprise Scrutiny Committee meeting was on 10 November 2016 – the agenda was focussed on Civil Parking Enforcement.
- Health and Adult Care Scrutiny Committee meeting was on 11 October and focussed on Adult Care Services – performance, budget and savings; the next meeting wa on 6th December.
- Joint HOSC meetings were on 18th October and 2nd December.

The meeting ended at 8.04pm

Chairman:

Date: