
SERVICES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

19.06.14

Present:

Councillors: Alwyn Gruffydd, Eryl Jones-Williams, Beth Lawton, Dewi Owen, Peter Read, Dyfrig L. Siencyn, Ann Williams, Eirwyn Williams and Hefin Williams.

Co-opted Members with a vote on education issues only: Reverend Robert Townsend (Church in Wales)

Teachers' Unions: Siôn Amlyn and Dilwyn Hughes.

Others invited: Cllr Gareth Thomas (Cabinet Member for Education)
Cllr R H Wyn Williams (Cabinet Member for Care)

Also Present: Dewi Jones (Head of Education), Nicola Hughes (Secondary Schools Quality Facilitation Project Officer), Eleri Llywelyn Owen (Temporary Project Manager), Gwenan Parry (Head of Adults, Health and Well-being Department), Aled Gibbard (Service Manager – Resources), Ffion Johnstone (Transform and Integrate Services Officer), Arwel Ellis Jones (Corporate Commission Service Senior Manager), Gareth James (Members' Manager – Support and Scrutiny) and Glynda O'Brien (Members' Support and Scrutiny Officer).

Apologies: Councillors Elin Walker Jones, Linda Ann Wyn Jones, Llywarch Bowen Jones, Dilwyn Lloyd, Liz Saville Roberts, Mrs Rita Price (The Catholic Church), Morwenna Edwards (Corporate Director).

Councillor Dyfrig Siencyn took the opportunity to thank his fellow members, Cabinet Members for Education and Care and officers for their support to him in the Chair over the last two years. He gave special thanks to the Vice-Chair for his conscientiousness and support in terms of his expert knowledge in the care field.

1. ELECTION OF CHAIR

Resolved to elect Councillor Peter Read as Chair of this Scrutiny Committee for 2014/15.

2. ELECTION OF VICE-CHAIR

It was resolved to elect Councillor Beth Lawton as Vice-chair of this Scrutiny Committee for 2014/15.

3. DECLARATION OF PERSONAL INTEREST

No declarations of personal interest were received from any members present.

4. MINUTES

The Chairman signed the minutes of a meeting of this Committee that took place on 10 April 2014.

5. SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS AND INCLUSION REVIEW

- (a) A report was submitted by the Cabinet Member updating Members regarding the Special Educational Needs and Inclusion Review.
- (b) The report noted the aim of the review, engagement arrangements with stakeholders, good practice following a visit with Ceredigion Council, the next steps namely to submit a final Business Case to the Formal Cabinet at the start of September with 13 specific proposals that overlap and dependent on each other.
- (c) During the discussion the following matters were reported in response to members' questions:
 - (i) That the internal staffing arrangements would be restructured in order to make better use of current resources by considering the type of skills the Team already had. It was noted that the Trade Unions were aware of the importance of the review and there would be an opportunity to discuss restructuring further once the recommendations were clear.
 - (ii) Children with profound needs had increased and they had very complex conditions and it was necessary to ensure that they received the best educational support.
 - (iii) The Government's White Paper mentioned moving away from giving statements to pupils to introducing a formal agreement between the parent /child and the school to ensure that intervention was sufficiently clear for the child's development.
 - (iv) More attention should be given to the impact on the service in terms of accepting out of county pupils in Gwynedd. It was noted that the proposed Centre of Excellence to be located in Penrhyndeudraeth, would offer provision of a high standard in the Welsh Language including residential places. As part of the business plan it would be possible to attract nearby out of county pupils to the Centre to receive Welsh medium education if they so wished. It was assured that there was no threat to the workforce at Ysgol Hafod Lon as the school budget would transfer to the new Centre.
 - (v) It was premature to submit detailed proposals now as the work was continuing to evolve, however, an assurance was given that discussions had taken place during the year with regular discussions with a focus Group of Head teachers. It was proposed to submit the proposals in the White Paper to the Cabinet in September this year and it was anticipated that elements of the changes namely restructuring the service would be in the plan by September 2015.
 - (vi) Statements protect a child's rights and the White Paper ensured a provision to deal with the interests of every child within a special educational needs continuum.
 - (vii) Approximately 80 – 100 children received specific attention at the old centres, but having changed the system whereby the Cognitive and Learning Team went around different schools, there was an opportunity to refer many more children for attention.

Resolved: (a) To accept and note the contents of the report.

(b) To request that the Cabinet Member – Education submits a report on the proposals to a meeting of this Scrutiny Committee following their submission to the Cabinet in September/October 2014.

6. (i) DEVELOPMENT OF PROMOTING QUALITY IN SECONDARY SCHOOLS PROJECT

- (a) The report of the Head of Education and the Education Quality Project Officer was submitted on the development of the project in secondary schools.

During the discussion the following issues were considered:-

- (i) The Welsh Language – an assurance was given that there was provision through the medium of Welsh for examination boards used in Gwynedd.
- (ii) Attendance of teachers and the shortage of Mathematics supply teachers – consequently, the problems with the recruitment of Mathematics teachers who can teach through the medium of Welsh were considered. Collaboration with Bangor University was welcomed and the innovative ideas to support their training and it was suggested that a link should be made with the Coleg Cymraeg Cenedlaethol.
- (iii) The link between the outcomes at the end of KS2 and GCSE grades in the core subjects. It was noted that it was necessary to give attention to transition between primary and secondary by looking at what was happening in different catchment areas. It was also noted that the collaboration scheme from school to school was on-going and looked at specific areas and was part of the culture of sharing good practice.
- (iv) The importance of identifying schools before they went into special measures. It was noted that GwE System leaders were looking at last summer's results and had secured that there were comprehensive plans in place to raise standards. It was noted that the improvement prospects for 5 specific secondary schools were good and their results were likely to be higher than last year's results.
- (v) Defining and identifying the authority's role – it was noted that the authority had a role to set the correct ideal – the wellbeing of every child should be considered and they should not lose sight of this.
- (vi) Support for Governors - the difference of opinion was noted in the efficiency of the system, however, the Head of Education stated that good practice was being shared with schools. Further reference was made to the pilot scheme in the Moelwyn catchment area where the Head of the Secondary school acts as a Strategic Leader over the primary and secondary sector and one of his duties will be to collaborate with every Chair of Governing bodies in the catchment area.

Resolved: (a) To accept and note the contents of the interim report.

(b) To programme in this Scrutiny Committee's Work Programme for the Education Service to submit an Action Plan on the development of the recommendations of the Quality of Education Scrutiny Investigation.

(ii) ENGLISH GCSE EXAMINATIONS – January 2014

Submitted for information, the Head of Education's report regarding underperformance in English GCSE examinations in January this year.

Resolved: To accept and note the contents of the report.

7. REPORT ON AFTERCARE PROJECT "WHEN I'M READY"

- (a) A report was submitted by the Cabinet Member – Care on a leaving care scheme called ‘When I’m Ready’.
- (b) The Cabinet Member – Care set the context by stating that the scheme was part of the Welsh Government pilot and was a key part of the Social Services Bill. Specific reference was made to the Council’s activities as part of the scheme. The cost of the scheme for the Service in 2013-14 was £47,000 to support 7 young persons with the cost likely to increase to £90,000 for 2014-15.
- (c) During the discussion, the following matters were considered:
 - (i) The scheme offered stability for young people and therefore lead them to work/training. It was recognised that there was a lack of external provision for young people who leave care such as a lack of housing etc.
 - (ii) The Service had a framework in terms of outcomes with a series of formulated indicators. A great deal had been learnt from other Counties and the Service sees the scheme as being positive and constructive.
 - (iii) Feedback from young people – it was noted that there were sessions of discussions for 2 hours with young people where it was possible for them to be open with their views. Feedback was mixed, however, generally they considered the scheme to be good. There were also discussions with Foster Carers.

Resolved: To accept and note the contents of the report.

8. REPORT ON THE CARE SCRUTINY INVESTIGATION

The Vice-chair took the Chair to enable the Chairman to respond to queries as a result of his post of Chairman of the Care Scrutiny Investigation.

- (a) The report of the Scrutiny Investigation on the arrangements for discharging and transferring patients from hospital back home was submitted with a request for the Cabinet Care - Member stemming from the result of the investigation to respond to the following recommendations:
 - Check whether or not the Discharge Protocol of the Betsi Cadwaladr University Health Board (BCUHB) had been reviewed and was consistent with the operational arrangements of Gwynedd Council and partners within the community
 - Request that the Adults, Health and Wellbeing Service collaborates with the Hywel Dda Health Board to agree on a hospital discharge protocol and practical arrangements for its implementation
 - Review collaboration and communication arrangements between those teams that facilitate hospital discharges and transfers and those agencies offering support in the community in order to identify opportunities to improve the service for patients looking at good practice in other areas
 - Review the 7 day discharge and transfer service that had been temporarily offered at Ysbyty Gwynedd and consider any relevant matters when developing a similar service within the Intermediate Care Project in the same field

- Report back to the Scrutiny Committee on the progress of the Intermediate Care Project which is equivalent to expenditure of £1.3 million
 - Press for improvements to the Transfer Lounge making it comfortable and a purpose-built room that includes changing facilities and moving the disabled toilets closer to the Lounge for convenience
 - Ask BCUHB for an update on their schemes to implement 'More than Words'
 - Develop ways to compile data in terms of older patients' satisfaction on the discharge and transfer service in order to ensure that they have a voice in the process of developing the service further and improving provision
- (b) A Member stressed the point identified by the Investigation, namely that Hywel Dda Health Board did not implement a discharge and transfer service protocol and that a percentage of South Gwynedd residents referred to Ysbyty Bronglais, Aberystwyth and Ysbyty Glangwili, Carmarthen did not receive the same benefits.
- (c) The Cabinet Member – Care accepted all the Investigation's recommendations and noted that it was proposed to proceed with an action plan.
- (ch) Ffion Johnstone was welcomed to the meeting. She had been appointed on secondment as a Transform and Integrate Services Officer. She reported on the Intermediate Care Grant with £1.3m revenue funding and £600,000 capital funding, that was to be spent by the end of March 2015. She gave an outline of the issues that will receive attention.
- Improving communication
 - Joint-location of offices in order to enable Teams to come together
 - 7 day multiagency working
 - Access to care provision
 - Review support arrangements for carers
 - Dementia care
 - Pharmacists going out into homes/residential care homes
 - Look at increasing respite beds
 - "My Life" system programme to lead people to facilities
- (d) The need was noted to receive a report back to a preparatory meeting of the Committee regarding the use of the grant.

Resolved: (a) To accept and note the contents of the report.
 (b) To approve the recommendations of the Care Scrutiny Investigation to the Cabinet Member – Care as outlined in (a) above and request that he submits an action plan in response to these.

CHAIRMAN