
CARE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE, THURSDAY, 7 JULY 2022

Present: Councillor Eryl Jones-Williams (Chair)

Councillors: Menna Baines, Anwen J. Davies, Jina Gwyrfai, Dewi Jones, Elwyn Jones, Linda Ann Jones, Eryl Jones-Williams, Beth Lawton, Linda Morgan, Gwynfor Owen, Gareth Coj Parry, John Pughe, Rheinallt Puw, Meryl Roberts, Angela Russell and Sasha Williams.

Officers present: Bethan Adams (Scrutiny Advisor), Llywela Haf Owain (Senior Language and Scrutiny Advisor), Vera Jones (Democracy and Language Service Manager) and Sioned Mai Jones (Democracy Services Officer).

Others present:

Councillor Dilwyn Morgan (Cabinet Member for Adults, Health and Well-being), Aled Davies (Head of Adults, Health and Well-being Department), Hawis Melangell Jones (Adults, Health and Well-being Project Team Manager), Alun Gwilym Williams (Senior Business Manager), Councillor Elin Walker Jones (Cabinet Member for Children and Supporting Families) and Marian Parry Hughes (Head of Children and Supporting Families Department).

1. ELECTION OF CHAIR

Resolved to elect Councillor Eryl Jones-Williams as Chair of the Care Scrutiny Committee for 2022/23.

2. ELECTION OF VICE-CHAIR

Resolved to elect Councillor Linda Ann Jones as Vice-chair of the Care Scrutiny Committee for 2022/23.

3. APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from Councillors R. Medwyn Hughes and Einir Wyn Williams.

4. DECLARATION OF PERSONAL INTEREST

Councillor Linda Ann Jones noted that she is a director of the Seren company. This was not a prejudicial interest and she did not withdraw from the meeting.

5. URGENT ITEMS

None to note.

6. MINUTES

The Chairman signed the minutes of the previous committee meeting held on 17 March, 2022, as a true record.

7. PERFORMANCE CHALLENGE MEETINGS

A short report was submitted explaining the Performance Challenge arrangements and requesting the Members to nominate representatives to attend the Performance Challenge meetings. It was explained that there will be a need for two representatives for each field of work and that the Care Scrutiny Committee representatives will need to attend meetings twice a year. It was added that these meetings will be an opportunity to receive updates on priority projects and an opportunity to challenge and bring issues to the attention of the Scrutiny Committee.

RESOLVED:

To nominate the following Councillors to attend Performance Challenge meetings:

- **Adults, Health and Well-being work field: Councillors Sasha Williams and Meryl Roberts.**
- **Children and Supporting Families work field: Councillor Gwynfor Owen, with the second nomination to be confirmed at this Committee's meeting in September.**
- **Housing and Property work field: Councillors Dewi Jones and Menna Baines.**

8. SCRUTINISING MID WALES' HEALTHCARE ARRANGEMENTS

The Committee was asked to nominate three representatives of the Care Scrutiny Committee for the Mid Wales Joint Committee for Health and Care's Scrutiny Group. Information on the Group's background and its aim as well as its role was provided, including looking at the provision of health and care services in Mid Wales and issues affecting people living in the relevant areas.

RESOLVED:

To nominate Councillors John Pughe, Linda Ann Jones and Eryl Jones-Williams to represent the Scrutiny Committee on the Mid Wales Joint Committee for Health and Care's Scrutiny Group.

9. NORTH WALES MARKET STABILITY REPORT

A foreword was received by the Cabinet Member for Adults, Health and Well-being noting the importance of this document and how useful it is. It was reported that the report goes hand in hand with the North Wales Population Needs Assessment that was scrutinised back in February by the Committee that looked at the care and support needs. It was noted that this report responded to the Needs Assessment by measuring what was already in place in North Wales to respond to the needs and question if the provision in place was sufficient.

It was reported that the North Wales Market Stability Report would be submitted to the Leadership Team and the Cabinet before being submitted to the Full Council for approval. It was added that it was a regional document that showed trends across north Wales as well as local messages for Gwynedd. The Department officers were thanked for their hard work within the tight schedule noting that the report would continue to be a live document that will be adapted and will be a very useful document as a result. The opportunity was also taken to congratulate Councillor Eryl Jones-Williams on receiving the Chairmanship of this Committee.

The report was submitted by the Adults, Health and Well-being Project Team Manager, noting that the Report was very broad and dealt with the services for adults and children with important messages being conveyed. The report dealt with a number of themes such as residential and nursing care, adoption, fostering and home care services, as well as

aspects relating to the provision of safe accommodation. It was noted that the report also referred to preventative services and acknowledged their importance to reduce pressure on the services that were regulated.

It was explained that it was required under the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014 to draw up the report and it would be updated over the next few months and kept up to date. The messages about Gwynedd, that were noted in section 5 of the Report, along with the predictions about required progress in the care and provision available over the next few years were expanded on. To close, it was noted that what had been submitted was an attempt to summarise the main messages that were relevant to Gwynedd and the full report would be published in North Wales after approval by the Full Council in October.

During the discussion, the following observations were noted by members:

- Thanks and appreciation were expressed to the Officers who had successfully completed the report by the tight deadline.
- It was noted that it was interesting to see in the report how individual Councils in north Wales dealt with problems.
- An update regarding direct payments was requested noting that there was no information about Gwynedd in the report.
- An observation was made that there was a tendency to generalise the Adults field as a service for the elderly only; it was felt that there were tendencies to refer to the elderly when discussing supported housing whilst forgetting about others who received the provision. In response, the Head of Department noted that this reflected the size of the service for the elderly and ensured that each element of the Adults field received attention.
- Concern was expressed about the lack of Welsh language provision within the Autism and Mental Health fields in Gwynedd and the importance of receiving these provisions in Welsh was emphasised. It was believed that there was an opportunity here to offer specialist Welsh language provision and that other Counties could possibly take advantage of the provision.
- It was observed that there was a demand for specialist dementia care in the County but there was no provision available in Llŷn or Meirionnydd which caused concern. It was also added that Units could not offer empty spaces due to shortage of specialist staff. It was asked what was the intention in order to deal with this and if there would be enough staff in the near future and for the new developments opening in October. It was also questioned if the shortage in staff had led to empty spaces in care and residential homes.
- An observation was made about language issues and how important it was that residents received service in their chosen language. It was added that this was an issue when out-of-county placements were arranged and it made a difference to the care received. It was believed that more provisions were needed in South Meirionnydd as well as the rest of the County.
- It was acknowledged that the care field was challenging, considering that the age of the County's population, along with other Counties, was growing older. It was believed that there was a place for Gwynedd Council to take on the challenges but there was also a need for the Government to try to respond to these challenges.
- An observation was made that planning needed to be done beforehand and the report was referred to noting that there were 15 fewer Managers within the Care field across the north Wales region last year compared to the previous year. It was also noted that 230 out of 310 of the Managers across North Wales were over 51 years old. It was asked how Gwynedd Council compared with this situation and

what the Council's response was in order to deal with the situation. It was asked how the Council planned to attract new staff and develop Managers for the future.

- It was expressed that the staffing situation was very fragile; the opportunity was taken to acknowledge the work that Gwynedd staff did and the efforts made to retain and try to attract staff.

In response to the observations and questions from members above, it was noted that:

- Anyone who received care should receive an offer to receive direct payments to pay for their care. It was acknowledged that the number who received direct payments in Gwynedd was low; it was believed that this was partly due to the complexity of the process. It was reported that work was currently being carried out to simplify the process and over the next two years it was proposed to look at different options including internalising the service. It was confirmed that details would be passed to members so that they were able to share with families who inquired as soon as possible when the updating work was completed.
- It was agreed with the observation on the importance of providing Welsh language service and provision, noting that it was essential but not always easy. It was noted that it was necessary to ensure that language choice was available to individuals, especially those who suffered with dementia.
- Reference was made to the investment programme, referring to a series of presentations that had been held for members a year and a half ago, to provide an indication of how much investment had been made across the County. It was noted that in the last seven years, the Council had been able to double the number of Dementia Unit beds in the County. It was believed that the number available needed to be doubled again in order to meet the current needs.
- It was reported on the substantial investments required to realise the plans, noting that it was not easy to obtain funding for the buildings/capital and revenue needed to run services. It was noted that the Council had invested a lot and should be proud of what had been completed so far but it was explained that there would be a need for more capital investment and revenue over the next few years.
- It was added that Dementia Care Provision would be scrutinised by this Committee before Christmas and a further report would then be submitted on the current image and the anticipated needs.
- The following investments in Meirionnydd were mentioned:
 - Bryn Blodau - The unit was ready but had not opened yet due to Covid issues and inability to recruit sufficient staff. This had led to 9 empty beds in the unit for dementia patients which was an unfortunate situation.
 - Hafod Mawddach - The investment in the extension had been completed and managed to recruit staff but they were short of casual / cover staff. It was hoped that the unit would open in September.
 - Cefn Rodyn - It was reported that it was hard to make the proposed changes due to the nature of the location and building. Investment here to provide more intensive services without being a dementia Unit. It was noted that there were currently empty beds in Cefn Rodyn due to the broken lift. It was hoped that the lift would be fixed by the end of the summer.
- It was added that the image above on the general Meirionnydd situation was a fair reflection of the situation across the rest of the County; it was noted that the challenge of having sufficient staff capacity to fill the beds was difficult and not a problem that was unique to Gwynedd.

- Reference was made to Llys Cadfan and the initial successes but it was added that there had been recent pressure due to staff absences, which had caused difficulties and challenges to maintain services. It was noted that the recruitment situation was a challenging field and varied between areas within the County.
- It was explained that what had been noted in the report on the staffing situation, specifically managers, across North Wales was similar to the situation in Gwynedd. It was assumed that more than a third of the care workforce as a whole was over 55 years old in Gwynedd, this would lead to the risk of losing staff. It was expressed that the care service was facing a challenging period. It was agreed with the point that a substantial proportion of the solutions to these problems were dependent on the Government and their priorities in terms of funding the Local Authority. It was believed that firm and robust intervention was needed soon before the care service suffered further. There was concern that the challenges of maintaining services affected those receiving the service and their families and that a further issue of staff well-being caused concern due to the lack of and pressure on current staff.

It was reported that a final copy of the report would be submitted to the Government after receiving approval across six North Wales Councils as well as Health and the Regional Partnership Board. It would be fed into the Area Plan along with the Needs Assessments; everything would be combined to produce an Area Plan for North Wales. Gwynedd Council could then decide how to use the information to make decisions.

The Cabinet Member expressed his apologies as some of the paper copies that had been sent out were difficult to understand because of printing issues. He thanked the Chair for his suggestion to re-print the papers and send them out again.

It was noted that the recommendation was for the Committee to approve this Report before its submission to the Cabinet and Council. To close, the importance of the document was emphasised noting that the standard of the questions that were asked during the meeting showed that this document could steer a discussion as well as raise awareness of the problems facing the Council. The members were thanked for their questions and officers were thanked for their responses.

DECISION

- a) To accept the report and to note the information.**
- b) To express the Committee's support for the approval of the report by the Cabinet and Council.**

The meeting commenced at 14:00 and concluded at 15:15.

CHAIR