



MINUTES OF MEETING

SCRUTINY : SOCIAL SERVICES MEETING

TUESDAY, 21ST JANUARY, 2020

PRESENT: Councillors: W R Smith (Chair)
S Jago (Vice-Chair)

Councillors G Richards, T Rogers, D Sammon and I Thomas

Officers:

L Curtis Jones (Chief Officer (Social Services)), S Lyons (Performance and Scrutiny Officer), A Lloyd (Head of Children's Services), A Edevane (Head of Adult Services) and M Phillips (Democratic Services Officer)

ITEM NO.	AGENDA MATTER	DECISION
633	Apologies for absence	The Chair noted apologies for absence from the Cabinet Member for Social Services Councillor C Davies who was undertaking other duties as the Children's and Young Persons Champion.
634	Declarations of Interest (including whipping declarations)	No Declarations of interest were received.
635	Corporate Self-Evaluation - Question 2 (Provision and Service Delivery)	Lisa Curtis-Jones introduced the item to the committee and explained that it was in relation to Corporate Self Evaluation Question Two and highlighted the salient points within the report. The following questions were raised by the committee and responded to in detail by the officers in attendance.

		<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Due to efficiencies and staff leaving the department were you able to maintain the same level of service as in previous years• Are there still gaps in staffing within Social Services that need to be filled and do you have difficulties filling particular vacancies• Clarity was sought in relation to Social Services (Adult Services) relationship with the legal services department and whether the situation could be improved with training or whether regional working would be beneficial• Clarity was sought in relation to Human Resources policies and procedures in relation to recruitment of specialist posts within Social Services• Do you agree that it is always better to advertise vacancies internally• The report highlights issues within Adult Services where HR advisors were providing differing interpretations of the guidance, what measures are in place to resolve these issues in the future• Concerns was raised in relation to the lack of information and detail contained within the Areas for Development for both Children's Services and Adult Services• Concerns were raised in relation to the lack of capacity within specific areas and the fact that it isn't highlighted within the Areas of Development so therefore doesn't seem to be a priority• Is it possible that in future the report could delve a little deeper into individual areas within Adult and Children's Services which would provide the committee with more opportunity to scrutinise• Could the feedback from the managers in the individual areas within Adult and Children's Services be provided as appendices to allow the committee to better understand the process and understand how they self-evaluate their service area• Regional Board Meetings – Do you receive feedback form the meetings and can the information be brought to the committee to show what the priorities are• The Chair raised concerns around the staffing issues within Social Services
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636	Adult Social Care Strategies	<p>Angela Edevane introduced the item to the committee and highlighted the salient points within the report.</p> <p>The following questions were raised by the committee and were responded to in detail by the officers in attendance.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can you provide the committee with a brief outline of the sort of queries you receive from the people being supported by the ‘stay well at home’ scheme and whether you think that the scheme should be a 24 hour around the clock service • Clarity was sought in relation to the repeated use of the word ‘Continue’ in the What We Need To Do Next section of the report • How much money was received through the Transformational Funding from Welsh Government <p>The Chair thanked the officers for the report.</p>
637	Corporate Parenting Board Update	<p>Annabel Lloyd introduced the item to the committee and highlighted the salient points within the report.</p> <p>The following questions were raised by the committee and were responded to in detail by the officers in attendance.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clarity was sought in relation to the figures quoted in 5.9 Age Range Profile as at 31.03.18 and at 31.03.19 and whether the increase in 0-4 age group is a developing crisis • At the end of quarter 2 2019 -2020 what is the actual number of looked after children

- Clarity was sought in relation to 5.6 of the report which stated at quarter 2 end 2019-20 we noted a reduced demand for looked after services and the rate of which children have become looked after has reduced by 50%, as the figures do not reflect this
- Can you confirm that there has been a significant increase in Merthyr Tydfil Foster Carers during the period 31.03.18 to 31.03.19
- Clarity was sought in relation to the figures in 5.10 and whether the change of placement was connected to inexperienced foster carers
- An update was sought in relation to a question that was raised when the committee received the first annual report for corporate parenting last year in relation to what early intervention work has been carried out in relation to care leavers to stop the perpetuating cycle of poor outcomes for children
- What are the roles and responsibilities of elected members as corporate parents given that only six of the thirty three members sit on Social Services Scrutiny, as officers what do you expect from members and what boundaries should members be aware of
- Clarity was sought in relation to how many children are placed in care homes outside of the County Borough
- How many children are currently in Residential Care
- As Corporate Parents are Councillors expected to carry out visits to these homes
- Clarity was sought in relation to the care home which was stated as being 'Out of the Country'

The Chair raised concerns in relation to the current figure of Children looked after especially the figures in the 0-4 year age group which would also mean there are young parents who would need support and assistance.

- In relation to the significant increase in the 0-4 year olds have you considered looking deeper at the profile of these children and mapped where these children are within the local authority and overlaid the findings with the level of support services available to see if the needs are prevalent in particular areas within the Borough

The chair thanked the officer for a very informative report.

638	Budget Update for Scrutiny Committee	<p>Lisa Curtis-Jones provided the committee with a budget update on the Month 7 position and highlighted the key points within the report.</p> <p>The following questions were raised by the committee and responded to in detail by the officers in attendance.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supported and Accommodation Services for the elderly is currently showing a possible overspend of £310,000. In many cases the elderly have a debt to the authority, when they pass away and debt is reclaimed by the authority is that included in the figures in the report <p>The Chair thanked the Officers for the update.</p>
639	Forward Work Programme 2019/20	The Scrutiny Officer updated the committee on the work programme and explained that the additional items could be slotted in before the end of the municipal year.
640	Scrutiny Referrals, Feedback and Follow up Actions	The Chair advised the committee that no referrals, feedback or follow up actions had been received.
641	Reflection and Evaluation of Meeting	The Chair and the Committee reflected on the issues that had been considered.
642	Any other business deemed urgent by the Chair	No other business was deemed urgent by the Chair.