



MERTHYR TYDFIL
County Borough Council
Cyngor Bwrdeistref Sirol
MERTHYR TUDFUL

MINUTES OF MEETING

SCRUTINY : SOCIAL SERVICES MEETING

TUESDAY, 5TH APRIL, 2016

PRESENT: Councillor W R Smith (**In the Chair**)

Councillors A Jones, T Lewis and J McCarthy

Cabinet members:

Councillor Linda Matthews and P Williams

Officers:

Annabel Lloyd (Head of Children's Services) and Lisa Curtis Jones (Chief Officer (Social Services))

Matthew Phillips (Democratic Services Officer) and Howard Jones (Scrutiny Officer)

ITEM NO.	AGENDA MATTER	DECISION
1262	Apologies for absence	Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Brian Mansbridge.
1263	Declarations of Interest (including whipping declarations)	No Declarations of Interest were made
1264	Looked After Child Prevention Strategy	Councillor Linda Matthews introduced the report and highlighted that the Authority had already achieved the target set for 2018 by reducing the number of the looked after population to 138 and that a more ambitious target will now be set by the department. The following questions were raised by the committee and were responded to in detail by the appropriate officer.

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In relation to the budget cuts are we able to provide the same service in relation looked after children • Has the quality of living improved in the home environment thus reducing the number of looked after children • There is a mention that preparations are in place for an Information, Advice and Assistance Service, how will this work • In the last meeting relating to Looked After Children you mentioned you are considering allowing other authorities to make use of our surplus fosters carers. How does that link in with your comments that you now need to assess and approve more Merthyr Tydfil foster carers. • At the last meeting you mentioned high caseloads with Social Workers under strain as workloads increase, while local authority funding cuts continue to bite. How are this Authority's social workers coping at the moment and are their caseloads under control • The report states that you were unable to place all children who have become looked after recently, with Merthyr Tydfil foster carers. What is the position with the numbers of Merthyr Tydfil foster carers • How closely does children services work with family officers and the schools within the Authority <p>The Chair thanked Annabel Lloyd for he attendance at the meeting.</p> <p>Resolved that:</p> <p>Scrutiny Committee Members receive the report and raise questions and challenges that will support effective delivery and improvement in this area of work.</p>
1265	Fostering Service - Social Services response to CSSIW report	<p>Councillor Linda Matthew introduced the item to the Committee and gave a brief outlined of what was contained within the report.</p> <p>The following questions were raised by the committee and responded to in detail by the appropriate officers.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There were 8 areas identified as having improved since the last inspection, can you assure this committee that where necessary these improvements are sustainable, bearing in mind the budget restraints we face • The report says that this inspection was a focused inspection. When is the next baseline inspection due and was the inspection carried out in response

		<p>to concerns or was it merely routine</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This is a positive inspection outcome, are you confident that you now have a stable workforce and appropriate budget to maintain the level of service that is currently being provided. Are there any concerns you wish to raise with the committee • Is it correct that there is a new policy being implemented that will allow young people at the age of 18 to remain with their foster parents • In relation to the three recommendations listed in the report, can you provide the committee with timescales of when they will be completed • In relation to the sustainability issues mentioned can you provide an update in relation to the 1st sector <p>The Chair thanked the officers for their attendance.</p> <p>Resolved that:</p> <p>The Scrutiny committee considers the report and raises questions and challenges that will improve practice and outcomes.</p>
1266	Looked After Children Strategy Implementation	As agreed by the Chair this item was considered under Item 3.
1267	Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014	An update was provided by Lisa Curtis Jones in relation to the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014.
1268	Scrutiny Referrals, Feedback and Follow up Actions	The Chair advised that there were no referrals, feedback and follow up actions.
1269	Reflection and Evaluation of Meeting	The Chair and the Committee reflected in detail on the issues that had been considered at the meeting.
1270	Forward Work Programme	Howard Jones discussed the forward work programme and explained that the committee had come to the end of the current work programme and that there were a number of reports that need to be carried forward into the new work programme.
1271	Any other business deemed urgent by the Chair	The Chair advised that there was no other business deemed urgent and closed the meeting.