



Cyngor Bwrdeistref Sirol
MERTHYR TUDFUL
MERTHYR TYDFIL
County Borough Council

MINUTES OF MEETING

CRAFFU: PWYLLGOR GWASANAETHAU CYMDEITHASOL / SCRUTINY : SOCIAL SERVICES MEETING

TUESDAY, 20TH SEPTEMBER, 2016

PRESENT: Councillor W R Smith (In the Chair)

Councillors A Jones, T Lewis and J McCarthy

Cooptees:

Brian Lewis

Cabinet Member:

Councillor L Matthews (Social Services)

Officers:

Lisa Curtis Jones (Chief Officer (Social Services)), Annabel Lloyd (Head of Children's Services), Mark Anderton (Head of Adult Services) and Ewan McWilliams (Corporate Performance Manager) Howard Jones (Scrutiny Officer) and Matthew Phillips (Democratic Services Officer)

Outside Bodies:

Nicola Kingham (Cwm Taf Safeguarding Board)

ITEM NO.	AGENDA MATTER	DECISION
313	Apologies for absence	Apologies for absence were received from Councillor R Braithwaite and Councillor B Mansbridge.
314	Declarations of Interest (including whipping declarations)	No Declarations of Interest were made.
315	Children Looked After Reviews and Child Protection Conferences 2015/16	<p>Councillor Linda Matthews introduced the item and provided the committee with a brief background on children looked after reviews and child protection conferences 2015/2016.</p> <p>The following questions were raised by the committee and were responded to in detail by the appropriate officers.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • You say that your performance has been excellent in these areas for the last few years but you don't qualify this statement in any way. <p>How do you measure your performance?</p> <p>Who else says your performance is excellent?</p> <p>Can you provide this committee with some comparative information please?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How has the role of the Independent Reviewing Officer strengthened? • Why do you think neglect is increasing? <p>You say that it is increasing across Cwm Taf, however is this the case nationally?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • You say that the CLA strategy and ongoing preventative work is the reason there has been a decline in looked after children. <p>How is this impacting on the LAC budget which we have been overspending on for a number of years?</p> <p>The Chair requested that in the future the Committee be presented with data in the format of 'where we were', 'where we are now, and 'where we aim to be'.</p> <p>The Chair thanked the officers for their responses.</p> <p>Resolved that:</p> <p>Scrutiny Committee members note the content of the report.</p>

316	Corporate Safeguarding Reference Group	<p>Councillor Linda Matthews introduced the report and provided a brief overview of the Corporate Safeguarding Reference Group.</p> <p>The following questions were raised by the committee and were responded to in detail by the appropriate officers.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is safeguarding still on the Corporate Risk register? If yes why? • Has safeguarding training been provided for all its members? • You say that the initial action report was too lengthy and it was developed to the Corporate Safeguarding Reference Group to develop and implement. • It was mentioned that Corporate Safeguarding Reference Group need continued support. Are you finding any barriers to the effectiveness of the Group, and if so is there anything that this scrutiny committee can assist you with? <p>The chair thanked the officers for their responses.</p> <p>Resolved that:</p> <p>Scrutiny Committee note the contents of the report..</p>
317	Children Looked After Prevention Strategy	<p>Councillor Linda Matthews introduced the item to the committee and summarised the Children looked after prevention strategy.</p> <p>The following questions were raised by the committee and were responded to in detail by the officers.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can you explain the reasons for the increase in demand for residential placements, and the effect it has on your budgets and any additional pressures on your department? • Why was the “Success, Stability and Transition Panel” set up? • Who sits on the “Success, Stability and Transition Panel”? • Can you provide some examples of work that is planned in partnership with education to close the gap between the achievement of our looked after children and their peers? • Is the children’s school attendance monitored as this can impact on their achievements?

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • You say that ongoing work is a reason there has been a decline in looked after children. In respect of the 12 children within that month becoming looked after, have they been subjected to ongoing preventative work, or are these new cases? • At a previous meeting you mentioned high caseloads, with social workers under strain as workloads increase, while local authority funding cuts continue to bite. <p>How are this Authority's social workers coping at the moment and are their caseloads under control?</p> <p>The Chair asked that Officers report back to the committee in the future in relation to the social workers caseloads.</p> <p>Resolved that:</p> <p>The Committee raise questions and challenges that will support effective delivery and improvement in this area of work.</p>
318	CTSCB Annual Plan 2016-17 / CTSAB Annual Plan 2016-17	<p>Nicola Kingham introduced the Cwm Taf Safeguarding Children's and Adult Annual Plan 2016-2017 and provided the committee with a brief overview of the plans and highlighted what outcomes they aim to achieve this year.</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"> • Do Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council (MTCBC) and Rhondda Cynon Taf (RCT) have their own Multi Agency Safeguarding Hubs (MASH) or is it one MASH that services the MTCBC and RCT area? • You provide figures showing the financial contributions from Partners. Are you satisfied at this early stage that the partners' contributions for next year will continue? • In an earlier report the committee heard that the category of Neglect in Merthyr has steadily increased over the last twelve months and across the Cwm Taf area. <p>How will the board address this issue?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Does the Authority work with other groups/agencies within the local authority to identify neglect? • Do all the partner organisations contribute as they should do to the work of the Cwm Taf Safeguarding Children's and Adults Board?

		<p>What happens if any Partner doesn't contribute as it should?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How will the Board need to change to ensure it meets the requirements of the Social Services and Wellbeing Act? • Outcome 3 is about the Board being proactive in engaging with its community. Generally this is an area that local authorities have not been successful. <p>What will you be doing that is new and innovative to engage with the public?</p> <p>The Chair thanked the Nicola Kingham for presenting the report and her responses.</p> <p>Resolved that:</p> <p>Scrutiny Committee notes the content of the Cwm Taf Safeguarding Boards Annual Plans for 2016-2017</p> <p>Scrutiny Committee considered the priorities identified for 2016-2017.</p>
319	Performance Report - Corporate Plan (Priority Area 2 - Promoting Independence)	<p>Ewan McWilliams presented the Performance Report – Corporate Plan (Priority Area 2 – Promoting Independence) to the committee.</p> <p>The following questions were raised by the committee and were responded to by the appropriate officers.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • By 2017 you want to see an improvement in the proportion of the adult population that can live independently. <p>Surely you have limited influence over this, so how can you influence our partners to help achieve this?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is there adequate budget available to assist in the improvement of the proportion of the adult population that are able to live independently? • This project to find a provider to deliver direct payments support has been going on since April 2015. Is it having any detrimental effect on the service users? • The proportion of carers of adults offered an assessment at 66.2 percent is significantly below your expectation of 100 percent. How are you going to address this; and by when?

		<p>It was requested by the committee that the figures in relation to the proportion of carers of adults offered an assessment be reported every quarter.</p> <p>Resolved that:</p> <p>Scrutiny Committee note the judgements and evaluations.</p>
320	<p>Performance Report - Corporate Plan (Priority Area 3 - Meeting the Needs of Vulnerable Children)</p>	<p>Ewan McWilliams presented the Performance Report – Corporate Plan (Priority Area 3 – Meeting the Needs of Vulnerable Children) to the committee.</p> <p>The following questions were raised by the committee and were responded to by the appropriate officers.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In order to achieve “good” you need to have effective early intervention and preventative services. Do we have sufficient budgetary and human resources to achieve this? • What are the main reasons for the increase in the proportion of looked after children (LAC) with three or more placements? <p>Could a reason be that we don’t have a good selection of foster carers for example?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Why was it found necessary to introduce this project? Have the judgements of practitioners been questionable in the past? • Are we on track to do what we are expected to do in terms of the Wellbeing Act and the Future Generations Act? <p>Are there any areas where you feel we are struggling to adapt?</p> <p>Resolved that:</p> <p>Scrutiny Committee note the judgements and evaluations.</p>
321	<p>Performance Report - Corporate Plan (Priority Area 4 - Active lifestyles)</p>	<p>The Chair advised the committee that this item had been deferred to a future meeting in December or January 2017.</p>
322	<p>Scrutiny Referrals, Feedback and Follow up Actions</p>	<p>The Scrutiny Officer explained that the Regeneration Scrutiny committee are looking at Disabled Facilities Grants (DFG) and the relationship between COTs and housing to uncover any issues and will be looking at how the issues</p>

		<p>can be addressed.</p> <p>The Chair advised the committee that a date had been set to meet as a sub group to discuss the Regeneration Committees findings which will be fed back to the Social Service Committee at a future meeting.</p>
323	Reflection and Evaluation of Meeting	The Chair and the Committee reflected in detail on the issues that had been considered at the meeting.
324	Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014	Lisa Curtis-Jones provided the committee with an in depth update in relation to the Authorities position in the implementation of the Social Services Well Being (Wales) Act 2014.
325	Scrutiny Work Programme 2016-17	Howard Jones highlighted the current work programme and advised that a number of requests made by the Committee at today's meeting would be added to the future work programme for consideration.
326	Any other business deemed urgent by the Chair	The Chair advised that there was no other business deemed urgent and closed the meeting.