

Minutes



Performance Scrutiny Committee - People

Date: 9 April 2019

Time: 10.00 am

Present: Councillors D Williams (Chair), J Cleverly, H Thomas, C Townsend, J Watkins and S Marshall

Co-opted Members: Dr A Daly (Diocese Representative)

In Attendance: D Cooke (Scrutiny Adviser), L Davies (Governance Officer), J Harris (Strategic Director - People) and S A Jenkins (Head of Children & Young Peoples Services)

Apologies: Councillors K Critchley, R Hayat, T Watkins and J Richards

1 **Declarations of Interest**

None

2 **Minutes**

The minutes of the meeting held on 19 February 2019 were approved as a true and accurate record.

3 **Transition from Children's to Adult Social Services - Verbal Update**

Attendee:

- James Harris – Strategic Director - People,
- Sally Anne Jenkins - Head of Children and Young Peoples Service,

The Head of Children and Young People Services presented a brief overview of the transition from Children to Adult services, as requested by the Members of the Scrutiny Committee. The Officer explained that there were 4 groups of children that fall into the following categories;

- 1) Children with signification needs, disabled, combined physical and mental dependencies, these children have clear and defined requirements, meaning the care and support they require through the entirety of their lives would be provided by Social Services.
- 2) Children subject to statement, children with a high degree of function being able to attend school with some form of support, where possibly in later life be able to attend college, hold down a job and live in a supported living facility as an adult. Support will not continue in to adult hood and will be subject to the young person's continuation with education.

- 3) Children with additional needs that were looked after by the authority. This was a small group of around 4/5 per year. The Authority can be responsible for the individual until 25 years of age.
- 4) Children that are looked after but have more challenging emotional needs, children that could not live in a residential setting, where as an adult it would be difficult to meet their needs, become more challenging and will need support until 25 years of age.

The Officers explained that for those children in Category 2, who had been dependant on educational services provided by the Authority, it had become difficult for parents to cope once those services stopped. The Authority had extra accountability because of the introduction of the Additional Learning Needs (ALN) Act, but not the additional funding required to meet those extra responsibilities. It would not be a simple continuation until 25 years of age; it would be guided by individual circumstances, parents were already asking questions regarding the level of support that would be offered or stopped for young people when they leave full time education.

Members asked the following:

- A Member of the Committee asked Officers if additional funding for the additional ALN responsibilities had been received, and if so, what plans were in place for that funding. The Head of Children & Young People Services explained to Members that any funding would come from the Welsh Government, and not necessarily to the Local Authority. The additional funding might be provided to higher and further educational establishments. Currently there was no information on the funding, but meetings with all stakeholders and the Welsh Government would take place to discuss planning within 18 months.
- The Committee asked the Officers to confirm if the support provided by the Authority in the past had altered in anyway, in comparison to the four categories currently accommodated. Officers replied explaining that the level of support had not been reduced, there had been changes to services and challenges with the models of provision, but no services were diminished. Officers confirmed that broadly the level of services had improved. Key budgets were overspent providing certain services, but the Authority were looking at better and more sustainable ways of delivering services. Officers explained that the volume of children falling into one of the four categories had increased, the Authority was far more aware of the requirements needed for those children today than in the past.
- A Member enquired about how the Wellbeing of Future Generations Act was impacting the partnership working arrangements in Gwent, especially when transitioning young people from Children to Adults Social Services. Officers replied to Members confirming that the 22 Authorities in Wales were in the same position with the transitioning of young people from Children to Adult Services. The five Gwent Authorities have good partnership working arrangements, and the Intermediate Care Fund is allowing further partnerships working on Health and Social Care related issues between statutory bodies. Officers explained that Adult Services run a Community Connectors Scheme, which runs across Gwent, it includes working with social housing partners, and receives a small amount of funding, the Authority were going to look at the possibility of running a similar scheme for Children Services, this scheme would highlight all available projects and programmes available to young people. Another way the Authority was working in partnership to support these young people was the development of supporting housing, in collaboration with the local housing associations.

- A Member asked Officers to confirm the total number of children out of the four categories do Newport hold responsibility for, and if the parents of those children were aware that care/support would now end at the age of 25. Officers confirmed that parents have the opportunity to get involved with the upbringing of their children when appropriate. The Authority do a lot of work with the parents of looked after children to re-engage the families to support the young people to return home, as long the circumstances have changed and the risk to the young person has diminished. The Officer stated that they try to reintegrate a young person into the family setting around the age of 14 or 15.

The young people that cannot reengage with their family, could receive support from the Authority until the age of 25. These young people had normally created their own support network, through relationships established with foster carers, friends and in some cases families they have started themselves.

- Members felt that there would be a need for greater partnership working with the Third Sector, when support received through the young person being in education finishes. The Members enquired if the young people were eligible for Personal Independence Payment benefits? Officers explained that many children were not entitled to Personal Independence Payments, and would need to look at other benefits for support. Officers confirmed that there were many ongoing Third Sector projects targeting the specific group of young people being discussed. These Third Sector projects were dependant on funding, which made future planning difficult due to the uncertainty of continuity.

The Chair thanked the Officers for attending.

4 **Draft Annual Forward Work Programme**

Attendees:

- Daniel Cooke (Scrutiny Adviser)

The Scrutiny Advisor introduced the Draft Annual Forward Work Programme to the Committee and discussed each item individually with the Members, the following draft agenda items were discussed;

- The Service Plans, for the Year End of 2018/19 and the Mid-Year 2019/20. The Committee were informed that for this year there would be more information on the finances and risks associated with the service area included in the service plan. The Committee were reminded that due to the changes in how data from schools was used by local and regional bodies there would be less targets and measures available for Education.
- The NCC Carers Strategy 2019 – 2022 was the next item on the draft Annual Forward Work Programme. This item was a referral from Adult and Community Social Services, and its addition the Committee accepted at their previous meeting.
- The Members were informed that the Looked After Children Reports inclusion to the draft work programme was done at the request of the Head of Children and Young Peoples Services.
- The Scrutiny Adviser explained to the Committee that the Director of Social Services report had been included in the PSC People Work Programme due to their knowledge and experience in scrutinising social services related items. The report historically sat underneath the Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee but Officers had decided that the People Committee might be able to provide a more substantial challenge to the Director of Social Services.

- The Free School Meals Strategy had been included at the request of the Chief Education Officer, the Committee were informed that this report would set out what the Council were doing to improve the outcomes of young people in receipt of Free School Meals.
- The Older People's Commissioning Strategy was a Scrutiny Topic Referral that was accepted by the Committee at a previous meeting. The report aims to outline the work being carried out by Adults and Community Services regarding the commissioning of services.
- The Additional Learning Needs / Out of County Placements Performance Report will update the Committee on the performance of the specific cohorts of young people. The Scrutiny Adviser explained to the Committee that this report was related to the briefings the Committee had received in the previous year relating to those young people with additional learning needs and those placed out of county.
- The Recommendations Monitoring upon the Implementation of the 2018 – 19 Cabinet Budget Proposals were the next item introduced to the Committee. It was explained that this is an annual item that looks at the implementation of the budget proposals the committee received during the previous year's Cabinet Budget Proposals. The Committee understood that as they only received one Cabinet Budget Proposal last year, this agenda item would be attached to another education item.
- The last of the potential agenda items on the draft Annual Forward Work Programme was the 2020/2021 Cabinet Draft Budget Proposals. This was a reoccurring, annual agenda item that the Committee received.

The Committee were happy to receive each of the agenda items throughout the year and understood that they would be able to change any item, invitee or the focus of the agenda item during the Scrutiny Adviser and Forward Work Programme section of a Committee Meeting.

The Scrutiny Adviser explained each of the Information Reports included in the report, and moved onto explain the outstanding Committee Briefing relating to the 'S33 Pooled Budget'. The briefing was due to be held towards the end of 2018 but had to be cancelled. The briefing will be scheduled over the summer.

The Committee agreed the draft Schedule of Meetings, including the additional meeting on the 9th July 2019.

The meeting terminated at 12.00 pm