

COUNTY BOROUGH OF BLAENAU GWENT

REPORT TO: **THE CHAIR AND MEMBERS OF THE SOCIAL SERVICES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

SUBJECT: **SOCIAL SERVICES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE – 19TH OCTOBER, 2017**

REPORT OF: **BUSINESS SUPPORT OFFICER (DEMOCRATIC & CORPORATE SUPPORT)**

PRESENT: COUNCILLOR S.C. THOMAS (CHAIR)

Councillors D. Bevan
S. Healy
J. Millard
M. Moore
J. P. Morgan
K. Pritchard
T. Smith
B. Summers
J. Wilkins

WITH: Corporate Director of Social Services
Head of Children's Services
Scrutiny Adviser

AND: Bobby Bolt – Director, Aneurin Bevan Health Board
Hannah Caple – Aneurin Bevan Health Board

<u>ITEM</u>	<u>SUBJECT</u>	<u>ACTION</u>
-----	<u>ORDER OF AGENDA</u> The Chair agreed that Item No. 6 would be considered first on the agenda.	
<u>No. 6</u>	<u>TREDEGAR HEALTH AND WELL-BEING CENTRE</u> Consideration was given to the report and presentation of the	

Corporate Director of Social Services and the Associate Director of Aneurin Bevan University Health Board which provided information on the current position relating to the development of a Health and Well-Being Centre in Tredegar.

At the invitation of the Chair the Associate Director, Aneurin Bevan University Health Board presented the report and outlined the background and current position of the Health and Well-Being Centre.

Following a question regarding whether any engagement with the local community will take place the Associate Director informed Members that an Officer would be carrying out appropriate events within the Tredegar area with one being scheduled with local groups in November.

A Member felt that it would not be sustainable to knock down and rebuild the building and the Associate Director stated that intensive work was being carried out on developing a model and work will progress as soon as the plans are submitted.

The Corporate Director commented that Social Services work closely with the Health Board and have a very good working relationship. He explained that the Health and Well-Being Centre was very much about the GP capacity in Tredegar and integrated working and how the centre will support the community for the better.

A Member enquired as to the current position of attracting services to the Centre such as Dentist, Pharmacy etc. The Associate Director referred to the presentation and responded that the slide entitled Service Provision were the services that were already committed to providing a service at the centre, and it was understood that the Dentist at Castle Street, Tredegar had expressed an interest in moving into the Centre as an expansion of their business.

A Member welcomed the respiratory facilities to the Centre but expressed concern in relation to the drug and alcohol unit and how it would be managed. The Chair responded that in the past the Kaleidoscope Project had proved to be a valuable asset to the community, as well as the GAP Project, and following the first 4 monthly Monitoring Committee meetings the facility was running to high level and there had been no further need to meet. The Corporate Director advised that he understood that an officer from the Gwent Drug and Alcohol Service would be at the centre one day per week to

provide advice and it was unlikely that the centre would provide methadone as there is currently a facility in Tredegar that provides this service but discussion will be held regarding this.

Following a question regarding whether the drug and alcohol facility would be purely for residents of Tredegar, the Associate Director undertook to research this information.

Bobby Bolt

Following a question regarding timescales for the centre. It was noted that following the Business Case being completed early in the new year and subsequently a report being presented to the Scrutiny Committee and Health Board and final sign off by Welsh Government. Then discussions would progress with the architects and estimated that the building would be ready for use in 2 years. The Associate Director explained that the building was not a listed building but was in a conservation area and the new build would be an extension of the current building not a complete rebuilding.

RESOLVED to recommend that the report be accepted and the Social Services Scrutiny Committee approve the preferred Option 1, namely to support in principal the development of an Integrated Health and Social Care Well-Being model in Tredegar and recommend to the Executive Committee.

No. 1	<u>SIMULTANEOUS TRANSLATION</u>	
	It was noted that no requests had been received for the simultaneous translation service.	
No. 2	<u>APOLOGIES</u>	
	Apologies for absence were received from: Councillors: J. Holt, G. A. Davies, K. Hayden T. Sharrem Councillor John Mason – Executive Member	
No. 3	<u>DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND DISPENSATIONS</u>	
	There were no declarations of interest or dispensations reported.	
No. 4	<u>SOCIAL SERVICES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE</u>	

The Minutes of the Social Services Scrutiny Committee held on 7th September, 2017 were submitted.

RESOLVED that the Minutes be accepted as a true record of proceedings.

No. 5

ACTION SHEET

The Action Sheet arising from the Social Services Scrutiny Committee held on 7th September, 2017 was submitted, whereupon:-

Adult Services Assisted Transport

A Member made reference to the Action Sheet Response regarding recent discussions with Merthyr and asked what were the challenges faced by the staff at Merthyr. The Corporate Director informed members that the service at Merthyr had been running a long time and staff were faced with cultural change which was still proving to be a challenge.

Another Member referred to the Social Service Transport Staffing Structure grades and asked why the Driver column did not indicate pay grades and requested these be included as well as an overall cost of the staffing structure. The Corporate Director undertook to bring this information to the next Scrutiny Meeting.

RESOLVED, subject to the foregoing, that the action sheet be noted.

**Damien
McCann**

No. 7

**UPDATE ON THE LOOKED AFTER CHILDREN POPULATION IN
BLAENAU GWENT AND IMPLEMENTATION OF THE SAFE
REDUCTION OF LOOKED AFTER CHILDREN STRATEGY**

Consideration was given to the report of the Head of Children's Services which provided information in relation to numbers of children who are looked after and the progress made in relation to the implementation of the Safe Reduction of Looked After Children Strategy.

At the invitation of the Chair the Head of Children's Services spoke to the report and highlighted points contained therein along with Appendix 2 and the Safe Reduction of Looked After Children 2017 – 2020.

- Objective 1 – To support families to stay together
- Objective 2 – To manage risk confidently and provide support at the ‘Edge of Care’
- Objective 3 – To provide and commission a flexible and affordable mix of high quality placements

A Member made reference to a Briefing Session held where Court Judgements were mentioned as well as children being placed with grandparents, and he asked if these children were classed as ‘Looked After Children’. The Head of Children’s Services advised that this was the case and it was intended that a group of Managers would meet to explore the case law and the Social Services and Well-Being Act in order to challenge this and move away from a blanket approach.

Edge of Care Team

A question was asked as to whether funding had been acquired in relation to the Edge of Care Team and the Officer explained that the directorate had received a grant from Welsh Government for the Team of £147,000, but as the cost of the Team was £343,000 this resulted in a shortfall. However, there was a Gwent wide Integrated Family Support Service that Blaenau Gwent allocated £175,000 to each year but as of April, 2018 the amount would reduce and Blaenau Gwent would only passport £50,000, this would automatically provide £120,000 for the Edge of Care Team, however there would still be a shortfall and the Directorate was considering how existing budgets could meet this shortfall and report would be presented to the Corporate Leadership Team.

It was noted that the job advertisements for the Edge of Care Team had been advertised externally as well as internally and a Member asked what the impact would be on the Department if internal staff were successful in obtaining a post within the Edge of Care Team and would those jobs then be advertised. The Officer responded that a recruitment process had been undertaken for the Edge of Care Team and it was intended that the unsuccessful applicants would be considered for the vacant positions within the Department to alleviate going through the recruitment process again.

A Member asked if numbers were known on how many applications had been received from residents of Blaenau Gwent and the Officer

stated that there had been a combination of applicants from Blaenau Gwent and other areas.

It was explained by the Head of Children's Services that the 'Edge of Care' name would be changing and the new name would be a decision for the new Team.

Independent Fostering Agency

Following a question regarding the cost of Independent Fostering it was noted that it costs considerably more to place children with independent foster carers than it does to place children into foster care through the provision in Blaenau Gwent.

A Member asked how Social Services would ensure good working relationships are maintained with Foster Carers and staff. The Officer assured Members that the Foster Carers were very loyal to Blaenau Gwent and the Corporate Director explained that Blaenau Gwent were attracting independent foster carers as the Directorate provide much more support and training to foster carers.

A Member requested to know the process of who decides where a child is placed and the Head of Children's Services explained that consideration was given firstly to Blaenau Gwent's own carers and if it was found that there wasn't a family to take a child then other Local Authorities would be asked. It would only be after there being no provisions in other authorities would Independent Foster Carers be considered.

Reference was made to the accommodation at Ty-Parc, Tredegar, and it was noted that these were for emergency accommodation cases only.

Confirmation was given that a Members Briefing Session would be provided for Members on Fostering.

RESOLVED to recommend, subject to the foregoing, that the report be accepted and Option 1 be supported namely that:

- Consideration be given to the information contained within the report and comments provided on areas requiring further clarity, and

**Tanya
Evans**

- Issues in relation to the report being identified as appropriate for referral to the Executive Committee.

No. 8

REGIONAL PARTNERSHIP BOARD UPDATE

Consideration was given to report of the Corporate Director of Social Services which was presented to provide an update of the work and decisions taken over the last 6 months by the Regional Partnership Board.

The Corporate Director spoke to the report and highlighted salient points contained therein:

- Background and Context
- Risk Implications
- Financial Implications
- Staffing
- Options for Consideration

Background and Context

A Member referred to the background and context and asked how were the partnership arrangements being developed in relation to the Regional Partnership Board and the Corporate Director commented that the Board had not met often because of the elections in May, 2017 and since then there has been new Members and Directors sat on the Board and it was recognised that a Development Day was needed for Board members to establish priorities and a focus on moving forward.

Financial Implications

A Member referred to the £400,000 Delivering Transformation Grant and enquired that due to the ongoing financial cuts being made would Blaenau Gwent receive less funding. The Officer explained that the amount received is based on population, which for Blaenau Gwent would equate to approximately £30,000, however if the 5 authorities were combined, there may be potential savings.

RESOLVED to recommend that the report be accepted and Option 1 be endorsed, namely:

- To support the decision of the Regional Partnership Board for Option 2 together with 3 and 4 to implement Part 9 to establish integrated commissioning and pooled funds on a phased approach (detailed in paragraph 5.1) for approval by the Executive Committee.

Councillor Derrick Bevan left the meeting at this juncture.

No. 9

DEPRIVATION OF LIBERTY SAFEGUARDS (DOLS)

Consideration was given to report of the Corporate Director of Social Services which provided an update on the numbers of Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards (DoLs) referrals received during 2016-2017.

At the invitation of the Chair the Corporate Director presented the report and highlighted key points therein:

- Background and Context
- Key Changes
- Performance Evidence
- Risk Implications
- Financial Implications
- Staffing

RESOLVED to recommend that the report be accepted and Option 2 be endorsed, namely:

- To scrutinise the report and recommend that the Executive agree the approach adopted by the Directorate to meet the demand placed on the Team as a result of the Supreme Court Judgement and continue to use these arrangements until the law changes at which point the position will be reviewed.

Councillor J. Millard left the Meeting at this juncture.

No. 10

AGENDA ITEMS FOR THE NEXT MEETING OF THE SOCIAL SERVICES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

It was agreed to remove the Alternative Methods of Service Delivery Task and Finish Group Report to be presented at a future meeting.

The Corporate Director referred to the Corporate Safeguarding Policy being developed and noted that as the Joint Safeguarding Scrutiny Committee was not meeting until March of next year, it had been agreed with both Chair that this item be on the Agenda for the next Social Services Scrutiny Committee Meeting and the next Education and Learning Scrutiny Committee Meeting.

Congratulations were expressed by a Member on the well-presented Briefing Session that had been held on 18th October, 2017.

RESOLVED subject to the foregoing that the items be agreed for the next meeting scheduled to be held on the 30th November, 2017 with the inclusion of the Corporate Safeguarding Policy, as follows:-

- Corporate Safeguarding Policy
- Year End Financial Position for Social Services
- Quarterly Report of the Director of Social Services – Quarter 1 and 2
- SEWAS Performance Reporting