

COUNTY BOROUGH OF BLAENAU GWENT

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

SUBJECT: SOCIAL SERVICES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE – 20TH JANUARY, 2022

REPORT OF: DEMOCRATIC & COMMITTEE SUPPORT OFFICER

PRESENT: COUNCILLOR S. THOMAS (CHAIR)

Councillors D. Bevan
G. A. Davies
G. L. Davies
P. Edwards
K. Hayden
W. Hodgins
J. Holt
M. Moore
G. Paulsen
T. Sharrem
B. Summers
T. Smith

WITH: Corporate Director of Social Services
Head of Children's Services
Head of Adult Services
Service Manager, Children's Services
Communications & Policy Officer
Scrutiny & Democratic Officer / Advisor

ITEM	SUBJECT	ACTION
No. 1	<u>SIMULTANEOUS TRANSLATION</u> It was noted that no requests had been received for the simultaneous translation service.	

<p>No. 2</p>	<p><u>APOLOGIES</u></p> <p>Apologies for absence were received from Councillors G. Collier and K. Rowson.</p>	
<p>No. 3</p>	<p><u>DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS AND DISPENSATION</u></p> <p>Councillor Wayne Hodgins declared an interest in the meeting as some of his clients may also be service users of the Social Services Directorate.</p>	
<p>No. 4</p>	<p><u>SOCIAL SERVICES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE MINUTES</u></p> <p>The Minutes of the Social Services Scrutiny Committee Meeting held on 18th November, 2021 were submitted.</p> <p>The Committee AGREED that the Minutes be accepted as a true record of proceedings.</p>	
<p>No. 5</p>	<p><u>ACTION SHEET - 18TH NOVEMBER 2021</u></p> <p>The action sheet arising from the meeting of the Social Services Scrutiny Committee held on 18th November, 2021 was submitted, whereupon:-</p> <p>The Committee AGREED, subject to the foregoing, that the action sheet be noted.</p>	
<p>No. 6</p>	<p><u>CORPORATE PARENTING PROGRESS REPORT 2021-22</u></p> <p>Consideration was given to the report of the Service Manager, Children's Services which was presented to inform Members of the progress made by Blaenau Gwent Corporate Parenting Board (CPB) throughout 2021 to improve outcomes and services for our Children Looked After (CLA).</p> <p>The Committee AGREED to recommend that the report be accepted and endorse Option 1; namely that Members</p>	

	<p>acknowledged progress made throughout 2021 and feel confident that the Local Authority and its partners are doing well to improve outcomes for our looked after children as part of our corporate parenting responsibilities.</p>	
<p>No. 7</p>	<p><u>ANNUAL REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF SOCIAL SERVICES 2021/2022 (QUARTERS 1 AND 2)</u></p> <p>Consideration was given to the report of the Corporate Director of Social Services which was presented to highlight key points from quarters 1 and 2 of the Annual Report of the Director of Social Services 2021/2022 (Appendix 1).</p> <p>The Committee AGREED to recommend that the report be accepted and endorse Option 2; namely that the report be accepted as provided.</p>	
<p>No. 8</p>	<p><u>SOCIAL WORKER VACANCY RATES IN CHILDREN'S SERVICES, PAY AND INCENTIVES</u></p> <p>Consideration was given to the report of the Head of Children's Services which was presented to provide information on the following:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The social work staffing pressures being experienced in children's social services; • What is being done to manage these pressures; • Comparisons of social work pay scales across Wales in particular Gwent; • Additional incentives offered to Blaenau Gwent social workers. <p>The Committee AGREED to recommend that the report be accepted and endorse Option 1; namely that Members scrutinised the report on social worker vacancy rates in children's services, pay and incentives and contributed to the continuous assessment</p>	

	of the effectiveness of the directorate.	
No. 9	<p><u>FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME: 3RD MARCH 2022</u></p> <p>Consideration was given to the report of the Chair of the Social Services Scrutiny Committee which presented the Forward Work Programme for the meeting scheduled to be held on the 3rd March, 2022.</p> <p>The Chair advised Members that due to a Special Council meeting being held on the 3rd March, 2022, it was proposed that the Social Services Scrutiny Committee scheduled for the 3rd March, 2022 be cancelled and the agenda items be considered in the next Committee cycle.</p> <p>The Committee AGREED that the report be accepted and endorse Option 1; namely that the Social Services Scrutiny Committee Forward Work Programme for the meeting scheduled to be held on 3rd March 2022 be cancelled and the agenda items be considered in the next Committee cycle.</p>	
No. 10	<p><u>DEVELOPMENT OF A CAERPHILLY / BLAENAU GWENT COLLABORATION IN PROVIDING LEGAL SERVICES FOR CHILDREN'S SOCIAL SERVICES</u></p> <p>Having regard to the views expressed by the Proper Officer regarding the public interest test, that on balance the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighed the public interest in disclosing the information and that the report should be exempt.</p> <p>RESOLVED that the public be excluded whilst this item of business is transacted as it is likely there would be a disclosure of exempt information as defined in Paragraph 14, Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended).</p> <p>Consideration was given to the report of the Head of Children's Services which was presented to provide information in support of a collaborative arrangement with Caerphilly County Borough Council providing legal services for Blaenau Gwent Children's Social Services Department.</p>	

<p>The Committee AGREED to recommend that the report which contained information relation to the financial/business affairs of persons other than the Authority be accepted and endorse Option 1; namely that the Social Services Scrutiny Committee support the collaboration between Blaenau Gwent and Caerphilly, for Caerphilly County Borough Council to provide legal services for Children's social services.</p>	
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