

POLICY AND PERFORMANCE - FAMILIES AND WELLBEING COMMITTEE

Tuesday, 19 January 2016

Present:

Councillor	M McLaughlin (Chair)	
Councillors	D Roberts	J Williamson
	P Brightmore	W Clements
	A Davies	B Berry
	T Johnson	D Burgess-Joyce
	T Norbury	C Povall
	W Smith	A Brighthouse
	I Williams	

Also Present:

Mr M Harrison, Parent Governor
Ms K Prior, Healthwatch Wirral
Dr P Naylor, Wirral Clinical Commissioning Group
Ms S Edwards, Cheshire Wirral Partnership
Ms V McGee, Wirral Community NHS Trust

Deputies:

Councillor T Anderson (in place of Councillor P Hayes)

36 **MEMBERS' CODE OF CONDUCT - DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST / PARTY WHIP**

No declarations of interest were received.

37 **CHAIRS ANNOUNCEMENT**

The Chair welcomed all Members to the first meeting of the Policy and Performance, Families and Wellbeing Committee of 2016, and in particular Mr Mark Harrison, who had been nominated for an appointment as a Parent Governor Representative to this Committee (Minute 40 refers).

The Chair further indicated that she would be considering Item 8 – Meeting the Housing Needs of Vulnerable People up the agenda to be considered following Item 6.

38 **MINUTES**

RESOLVED:

That the Minutes of the Families and Wellbeing Policy and Performance Committee held on 1 December 2015 be approved as a correct record.

39 **MINUTES OF THE CHILDREN SUB-COMMITTEE - 16 DECEMBER 2015**

RESOLVED:

That the Minutes of the meeting of the Children Sub-Committee held on 16 December 2015 be noted.

40 **APPOINTMENT OF A PARENT GOVERNOR REPRESENTATIVE TO THE CHILDREN SUB-COMMITTEE**

The Committee was informed that Council had recently appointed Mr Mark Harrison to the vacant position of Parent Governor Representative to sit on the Family and Wellbeing Policy and Performance Committee.

In accordance with the procedure it was proposed that Mr Mark Harrison be nominated to be a member of the Children Sub-Committee.

The Chair on behalf of the Committee again welcomed Mr Harrison to the meeting and indicated that she hoped that he would enjoy his time serving as a Parent Governor Representative.

RESOLVED:

That Mr Mark Harrison be appointed Parent Governor Representative to the Policy and Performance Families and Wellbeing Committee and the Children Sub-Committee.

41 **REPORT OF THE CHAIR FROM MEETING OF THE HEALTH & CARE PERFORMANCE PANEL**

The Chair of the Health and Care Performance Panel introduced the report which provided feedback on the key issues arising from the meeting held on 12 January 2016.

The Chair introduced the report and updated Members on the following activity undertaken by the Panel.

- Macular Degeneration – Panel members would be discussing this at a future meeting

- Continuing Healthcare - Panel members would be discussing this at their next meeting

RESOLVED:

That the report of the meeting of the Health and Care Performance Panel held on 12 January 2016 be noted.

42 **SAFEGUARDING ADULTS ANNUAL REPORT (14-15) AND PRIORITIES (15-16) - PRESENTATION**

The Committee considered a presentation in relation to the Annual Report 2014-15 and priorities for 2015-16 from the Wirral Safeguarding Adults Partnership Board (SAPB).

Mr Bernard Walker, Independent Chair of the SAPB highlighted the statutory objectives and functions of WSAPB as detailed in the Care Act 2014; SAPB attendance and Adults Local Authority Designated Officer (ALADO) data and progress to date against the 2013-2015 objectives.

The priorities for the WSCB for 2015/16 were detailed in the presentation which included:

- Adults who may be at risk are safe, outcomes are improved and they feel safe
- Partnership arrangements for Safeguarding Adults in Wirral are improved;
- A range of responses are developed to enable earlier identification of need
- The implementation of the multi-agency Domestic Abuse Strategy ensures professionals are equipped to quickly respond to domestic abuse in all its forms.

Mr Walker indicated that the PDF version of the Annual Report was not yet complete but would be made available shortly, he highlighted a piece of work that the Board was undertaking alongside John Moores University in relation to Self-Neglect.

Mr Walker indicated that Wirral was part of a pilot scheme "Making Safeguarding Personal" following its success this now sat alongside the Care Act. The aim was to ask people what they wanted as a resolution to make them feel safe and to also ensure that outcomes were appropriately monitored.

Mr Walker further highlighted a piece of awareness raising work to be undertaken in relation to "mate-crime" in particular those with special needs who may be being exploited by those who present themselves as "friends".

In response to a Member in relation to attendances at the Board and Case Conferences, Mr Walker indicated that the Board meetings were well attended and he as Chair always tried to ensure that officers in attendance made a contribution at each meeting; he went on to highlight the contributions made by Healthwatch Wirral and the Older People's Parliament and indicated that the support given to the Board by all parties had been excellent. He further indicated that for case conferences and strategy meetings, attendance was scrutinised by the executive group to ensure that those that should attend, were actually in attendance, he reiterated that generally statutory officers were always in attendance.

In response to a Members question, Mr Walker explained that the ALADO data was monitored by the Performance and the Executive Groups, and that he felt that the significant spike referred to in March 2015 was an indication that awareness raising had worked and that more referrals were being made.

In relation to training, Mr Walker indicated that workforce data for people working in the adult social care sector were monitored by, Skills for Care the sector skills council via a minimum data set which includes staff training. The training programme was available for all providers but not generally for volunteers. Access to training, including the on-line training will be via the Safeguarding Boards' Website following its launch in April.

RESOLVED:

That the update be noted and Mr Walker be thanked for his presentation.

43 **MEETING THE HOUSING NEEDS OF VULNERABLE PEOPLE**

The Committee considered the report of the Director of Adult Social Services outlining the approach used for identified demand for housing; setting out the range of Housing Support services available for Vulnerable People in Wirral Council; the current plan for "Extra Care" in the Wirral; details of the "Supported Living" Review which had started in January 2016; details of the "Gap Analysis" for housing need and outlining the current challenges, in relation to land, legislation and delivery.

The Chair raised concern regarding the challenges to be faced in providing extra care housing given the changes to the welfare system in relation to capping of Housing Benefit, the 1% rent reduction, impacts of the Bedroom Tax and the Government's intention to extend welfare changes with social rents to be capped at local housing allowance rates.

Officers indicated that they had recently met with the HCA regarding the impacts of the changes in relation to supported housing; at present all extra care housing/supported housing schemes had been put on hold until further guidance had been received.

In relation to the funding of a domestic abuse refuge on Wirral, a funding bid had been submitted for a six bed accommodation as part of a pilot scheme.

Officers indicated that in relation to the Extra Care housing, in the event that the RSL's (registered Social Landlords) were no longer able to supply housing they were looking at suitable alternatives, officers were also lobbying the Government regarding these issues and the future of Extra Care/Support housing. Officers were awaiting the outcome of the review in relation to this as there maybe exemptions which may be applied.

Officers reiterated that discussions with partners were still on-going and that the RSL's were still keen to provide these houses and work is on-going with RSL's to get these schemes which had already received planning permission ready for development. Discussions were also being held with private developers regarding the possibility of mixed tenure schemes with an extra care scheme.

RESOLVED: That

- (1) Cabinet notes this Committee's concern regarding the challenges to be faced in providing extra care housing given the changes to the welfare system in relation to capping of Housing Benefit, the 1% rent reduction, impacts of the Bedroom Tax and the Government's intention to extend welfare changes with social rents to be capped at local housing allowance rates; and**
- (2) Officers be requested to submit an update report to this Committee in six months' time.**

44 **SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN SCRUTINY REVIEW**

The Committee considered the report of the Members of the Safeguarding Children Task & Finish Group providing background information regarding the Final Report.

The Chair and Members of the Panel expressed their thanks to all those who had assisted the review by so readily giving their time, experience and suggestions in particular Alan Veitch, Scrutiny Support Officer and Simon Garner, Corporate Safeguarding Manager. The Chair gave her personal thanks to the members of the Panel who had also given up their time and had made an excellent contribution to the review and the Final Report.

The Final Report, 'safeguarding Children in Wirral' was attached as an appendix to the report.

The Members echoed the Chair in thanking those officers who worked tirelessly to keep Wirral's children safe.

A Member commented that in relation to Recommendation 9 detailed within the report she felt it was important that Special Guardians undertook the same robust training that was given to foster carers and adoptive parents.

RESOLVED: That

- (1) the contents and recommendations of the Safeguarding Children in Wirral Scrutiny Review be noted.**
- (2) the Safeguarding Children in Wirral Scrutiny Report be referred to the next appropriate Cabinet meeting;**
- (3) an update report regarding the progress being made towards the implementation of the recommendations be presented to this Committee in six months' time; and**
- (4) Alan Veitch, Scrutiny Support Officer and Simon Garner, Corporate Safeguarding Manager be thanked for all their support and guidance in completing the review.**

45 DRAFT CHILDREN'S STRATEGY - PRESENTATION

The Committee considered a presentation from the Director of Children's Services in relation to the Draft Children Strategy.

The Director of Children's Services indicated that the strategy was still in working progress but was based on what young people and families had told them.

The presentation highlighted the strategy's clear approach to ensure that:

- Children are ready for school;
- Young people are ready for work and adulthood;
- Vulnerable children reach their full potential.

The Director of Children's Services highlighted some of the key statistics based on the information received regarding the Wirral; some of the key principles and highlighted the department's ambitions.

The presentation highlighted some of the things young people, children and families had told them and how given this information the department would

adapt to meet their requirements where possible .In relation to the key themes the Director of Children's Services highlighted the priorities for early action in relation to the three key priority areas.

She further indicated that in relation to children being 'school ready' early years played a big part in achieving this and work was being undertaken to identify those vulnerable two years olds who were not in any early years setting to ensure they too were 'school ready'.

In relation to the transition from Primary to Secondary and the sharing of information, the Director of Children's Services indicated that since September 2015 a new arrangement for providing school to school support is in place in each constituency area. This will continue to support better working arrangements between primary and secondary schools and should improve the transition process.

In response to a Members question about the role of the LA in respect of academy schools, the Director of Children's Services indicated that although these schools were not under LA control, her role along with her officers was to act as champion for children with these schools and forge good working relationships. As the Director of Children's Services she had the authority to intervene if she felt it was necessary and if needed would issue schools with a warning notice or report them to the Education Funding Agency if it was felt that the school was not doing right by a particular child in relation to their educational development, or for example in terms of governance and leadership.

In relation to the high reported turnover of Social Work staff, the Director of Children's Services indicated that this was monitored on a monthly basis. Improvements have been made to the pay grade which includes progression criteria supported by training. Work is underway to reduce the high turnover rates and fill all vacancies with permanent staff.

RESOLVED:

That the updated be noted and the Children's Services Director be thanked for her informative presentation.

CHILD POVERTY STRATEGY

The Committee considered a verbal presentation from the Director of Public Health in relation to the Improving Life Chances Strategy which included Child Poverty. The Strategy was currently being developed and was due to be discussed and agreed by Cabinet in the near future.

The Vision was to continue to work with partners to look at opportunities to tackle child and family poverty in Wirral communities. Sadly, 21.5% of children in Wirral currently lived in low income households. The long term ambition was to ensure that no child in Wirral lived in poverty and that the Public Health Department would work with partners to reduce this over the five years of the plan.

The Director of Public Health highlighted the strategy's scope and development; what was known so far; priorities; outcomes; impacts and next steps.

There were four key priority areas, which included:

- Improving life chances for children
- Supporting families to be financially resilient
- Tackling the immediate impacts of poverty
- Supporting parents into sustainable employment

In relation to the key priorities, the Director of Public Health indicated that she was working with the Chamber of Commerce on a project enabling young people and schools to prepare for work upon leaving education.

In relation to financial resilience, work would be undertaken on advice and guidance to ensure people could be appropriately signposted to get help where and when needed.

Work had been undertaken in relation to fuel poverty, in particular help and guidance.

In supporting parents into sustainable employment, work was being undertaken with local partners, colleges and businesses to help those that could work, to work. Further discussions were being held with Merseytravel to give people an enhanced opportunity to access work, as transport was often the biggest barrier.

In response to a Members question regarding the impacts of the Welfare Reform, the Director of Public Health indicated that National Policy impacted on all work, potential impacts had been discussed at stakeholder groups. It was recognised that the Council could not control these changes but could control its response to them.

RESOLVED:

That the Director of Public Health be thanked for her informative presentation.

47 **POLICY INFORM BRIEFING PAPER**

The Committee considered the report of the Strategic Director, Families and Wellbeing presenting Members with the January 2016 Policy Briefing papers which included an overview of ongoing and recent national legislation, bills presented to Parliament and emerging policies.

RESOLVED:

That the contents of the Policy Briefing papers be noted.

48 **WORK PROGRAMME**

The Committee considered the report of the Chair of the Committee, updating on the progress and the activity proposed for this Committee in relation to its agreed Work Programme.

The Chair updated the Committee on the following:

- Avoiding Hospital Admissions Task and Finish Group – evidence gathering was progressing well with several sessions already held. It was hoped to conclude evidence gathering by the end February.
- Budget Scrutiny – Outcomes from the Budget Scrutiny Workshop held on 11 January would be reported to the Coordinating Committee on 16 February.
- There will be a Focus on... Session with Wirral Community Trust on Wednesday 17 February at 5:30pm
- The CQC report inspection of Cheshire and Wirral Partnership Trust resulted in a rating of 'good'. This would be an item on the agenda for the next meeting of the Health & Care Performance Panel

A Member requested a future review to look at the implications of Modern Slavery Act. In particular, the Member requested that the obligations on Local Authority and partners be investigated. In response the Chair requested that a report on this issue be presented to a future meeting of the Committee.

The Chair indicated that the Ready for School Task & Finish Group had been established and the review was progressing well.

RESOLVED: That

- (1) the Work Programme be noted; and**
- (2) the work programme be amended to add a report on the implications of the Modern Slavery Act and an update report on**

the housing needs of vulnerable people, in particular the impact of rent reductions.