FAMILIES AND WELLBEING POLICY AND PERFORMANCE COMMITTEE

Monday, 3 November 2014

Present:	Councillor	M McLaughlin (Chair)	
	Councillors	D Roberts	W Clements
		P Brightmore	B Berry
		T Johnson	P Hayes
		T Norbury	C Povall
		W Smith	A Brighouse
		C Spriggs	P Cleary
		J Williamson	

Also Present:

Ms Val McGee, Cheshire and Wirral Partnership NHS Trust

Deputies:

Councillor L Rowlands (in place of Councillor Hornby)

23 **MEMBER CODE OF CONDUCT - DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST/ PARTY WHIP**

Councillor Rowlands declared a personal interest by virtue of his wife's employment within the education department.

Councillor Norbury declared a personal interest by virtue of his sister employment at a childrens centre.

24 **MINUTES**

RESOLVED:

That the Minutes of the Families and Wellbeing Policy and Performance Committee held on 9 September 2014 be approved.

25 **MINUTES OF ATTAINMENT SUB COMMITTEE**

RESOLVED:

That the Minutes of the meeting of the Attainment Sub-Committee held on 1 September 2014 be noted.

26 **FUTURE COUNCIL CONSULTATION FINDINGS**

The Committee received a presentation from the Corporate Marketing Officer, Neighbourhoods and Engagement, on the process of the Budget Options consultation. The consultation was launched on 8 September with an extensive online promotion and finished on 31 October, 2014. A total of 7,874 responses had been received with a breakdown as follows:

- Residents 6,872
- Members of Staff 1,079
- Voluntary, Community, Faith sector 260
- Partner Organisations 62
- Local Businesses 176

He also provided details of the demographic and geographic breakdown of the responses and of a number of petitions which had been received in respect of the Budget Options.

For 2015/16 £18 million savings were required, the Future Council project had been able to identify potential savings and efficiencies of £15.5 million. If implemented, these savings would potentially reduce the budget gap to £2.5 million in 2015/2016. Options had been proposed by the Chief Executive which would achieve a combined saving of just under £4million for 2015/2016.

The Corporate Marketing Officer then provided a breakdown of the responses in respect of the four budget option proposals relevant to this Committee:

- West Kirby Marine Lake
- All Age Disability Service
- Youth and Play
- Girtrell Court

RESOLVED:

That the report be noted.

27 **FUTURE COUNCIL BUDGET OPTIONS SCRUTINY REVIEW**

The Committee received the findings of the Scrutiny Review into the four budget options which fell under its remit.

The Chair thanked all those Members who had sat on the Scrutiny Reviews, the officers for all their time and work on the review, in particular Alan Veitch, Scrutiny Support Officer who had facilitated the report.

The Chair commented upon the review and the positive way in which the review was conducted with a great level of detail provided by officers. The conclusions were a fair representation of what the Panel had decided.

The Committee considered each of the options as follows;-

Youth and Play

The Head of Targeted Services introduced the review on the Youth and Play option to the Committee.

A Member commented that, with regard to the Wirral Civic Award and Duke of Edinburgh Award Schemes, although the financial contribution from the Council was relatively small (£6,500 and £16,600 respectively) the numbers of young people impacted was significant (approximately 400 and 470 respectively).

Members acknowledged the importance of outreach work as part of the youth and play service provision. The role of Kontactabus in delivering the outreach service was, in particularly, noted. Members raised concerned that the proposals would reduce the operating hours of the bus.

Members drew attention to the strength of public feeling which had become apparent during the recent Future Council public consultation exercise in opposition to the youth and play option. This view was evidenced by the percentage of the consultation respondents who either disagreed (29%) or strongly disagreed (35.7%) with the proposal. Representations in the form of letters and petitions had also been received by the Council as well as representations received by individual members of the Families and Wellbeing Policy & Performance Committee.

In response to Members comments, the Head of Targeted Services explained that in relation to the proposal on play schemes, the £22,000 contribution to be allocated to each of the Constituency Committees could be used, not just for play schemes but also to enable young people to access services for e.g. travelling to youth clubs.

On a motion by the Chair, duly seconded, it was –

RESOLVED – That the Scrutiny Review be referred to Cabinet and that this Committee endorses the conclusion of the Panel as follows:

1. **Members recognised that the youth service was a much needed preventative service relevant to young people's health, safety and personal development. The contribution of the service's work in tackling issues such as anti social behaviour, sex education and teenage pregnancy, drugs and alcohol, and so on was recognised. Youth and play services helped to prevent young people going into more costly social care or restorative justice systems. There was concern that a consequence of a reduction in the budget for this form of early intervention and preventative work could be a later increase in demand for more costly specialist services.**

2. **Members recognised that the broader strategy for youth provision was to move away from a universal service offer towards a more targeted approach. However, there was concern that the service still required adequate resources to meet the demand.**

3. **Members were concerned that the proposals appear to have been developed in response to a target figure that had been imposed rather than a level of efficiency that the service had determined possible whilst still providing an acceptable level of provision. Members stressed that further work was required to develop an alternative vision for the future service prior to savings being made.**

4. **With regard to the three play schemes, the members believed that the geographical areas served by the schemes remained areas of high deprivation. Data showed that the schemes were widely used and that there was high community engagement. Therefore it was suggest that, prior to any service reductions, further work took place to develop alternative provision and that the possibility of partnership working with any other providers was explored. Members also suggested that the most appropriate allocation and use of the £88,000 made available to Constituency Committees required further detailed examination.**

5. **Members expressed concern that the proposals still require the identification of a further £100,000 in savings and proposals to secure other sources of funding to meet this are not clear at this stage.**

6. **Members note that, with regard to the Wirral Civic Award and Duke of Edinburgh Award schemes, although the financial contribution from the Council is relatively small (£6,500 and £16,600 respectively) the numbers of young people impacted is significant (approximately 400 and 470 respectively).**

7. **Members acknowledge the importance of outreach work as part of the youth and play service provision. The role of Kontactabus in delivering the outreach service is, in particular, noted. Therefore, members are concerned that the proposals will reduce the operating hours of the bus.**

8. **Members draw attention to the strength of public feeling which has become apparent during the recent Future Council public consultation exercise in opposition to the youth and play option. This view is evidenced by the percentage of the consultation respondents who either disagree (29%) or strongly disagree (35.7%) with the proposal. Representations in the form of letters and petitions have also been received by the Council as well as representations received by individual members of the Families and Wellbeing Policy & Performance Committee.**

Girtrell Court

The Director of Adult Social Services introduced the review on the Girtrell Court option to the Committee.

On a motion by the Chair, duly seconded, it was –

Resolved - That the Scrutiny Review be referred to Cabinet and that this Committee endorses the observations from individual Panel members as follows:

1. **Members welcomed the direction of this proposal and were particularly pleased with the commitment to the proposal registered by the Cheshire & Wirral Partnership Trust (CWP)**

2. **Given the envisaged investment in the fabric of the building, the proposal would provide a positive future for the facility and a more positive outlook for the service. However, it was noted that the building design work was yet to be completed and agreed by both Wirral Council and CWP**.

3. **Members noted that the proposal to integrate the service demonstrated a local example of the national progression towards closer integration of health and social care provision.**

4. **Members raised concerns and hoped that the proposals did not lead to a restriction in choice of provision for clients of the respite service. However, it was noted that officers had provided reassurance that alternative sources of provision would remain available to clients.**

5. **Members expressed concern regarding the significant amount of work that remains to be delivered for this option prior to the commencement of the financial year in April 2015. Further work is required to develop the business case in order to ensure that the option is financially viable.**

6. **It is noted that appropriate capital resource will need to be secured and the appropriate consultation processes need to be completed.**

7. **It is recognised that further work will be required to align the charging policies of the health and social care provision within the service as currently health care is provided free at the point of need whereas social care is provided on a means tested basis.**

All Age Disability Service

The Head of Specialist Services introduced the review on the All Age Disability Service option to the Committee.

On a motion by the Chair, duly seconded, it was –

Resolved - That the Scrutiny Review be referred to Cabinet and that this Committee endorses the observations from individual Panel members as follows:

1. **Members agreed that not enough detail was currently available to formulate a definitive conclusion on this option. There was, therefore, a question mark regarding the achievability of the savings within the required timescale, although senior officers did remain confident that the efficiencies could be found from the within the service's budget. Further work was required to develop a coherent plan to demonstrate how the efficiencies could be delivered from within the Disabilities Service and what the specific impacts of those changes would be.**

2. **Members stressed that the overriding aim must be that the needs of children and families within the service must be met.**

3. **Members welcomed the proposal to reorganise the school transport arrangements for children at Willow Tree, while**

recognising that the proposed saving (approximately £30,000) is a relatively small part of the total saving (£600,000).

4. **Members were supportive, in principal, of further work taking place to enable less children being linked to a social worker where that was in the best interests of the child and family.**

West Kirby Marine Lake

The Director of Adult Social Services introduced the review on the West Kirby Marine Lake option to the Committee.

On a motion by the Chair, duly seconded, it was –

Resolved - That the Scrutiny Review be referred to Cabinet and that this Committee endorses the observations from individual Panel members as follows:

1. **This Future Council option was dependent on identifying a suitable partner organisation to whom the operation of the Sailing School could be transferred. Members noted that no interested partner organisation had yet been identified.**
2. **During the time of the scrutiny review, an alternative approach had emerged. Officers were developing new proposals, the intention of which was to remove the need for the current annual subsidy to the service of approximately £25,000. This would be achieved by a combination of reducing staff costs by £10,000 and raising income by £15,000.**

3. **Members acknowledged and welcomed the alternative approach.**

4. **Members proposed that the officers be requested to explore the option for enhanced income generation in greater detail to ensure that, as a minimum, the funding gap could potentially be bridged and the service become self-sustainable.**

5. **If the service was to become self-sustainable, the financial drive to outsource the service, at least in the short-term, would be removed.**