

Minutes



Performance Scrutiny Committee - People

Date: 16 January 2024

Time: 10.00 am

Present: Councillors W Routley (Chair), J Cleverly, P Bright, B Davies, D Jenkins, R Howells and D Mayer

Samantha Schanzer (Scrutiny Adviser), Robert Green (Assistant Head of Finance), Sally Ann Jenkins (Strategic Director - Social Services), Sarah Morgan (Chief Education Officer), Natalie Poyner (Head of Children Services), Mary Ryan (Head of Adults Services) and Mandy Shide (Service Manager)

In Attendance:

Apologies: Councillors C Townsend and P Drewett

1 Apologies

Councillor Drewett and Councillor Townsend

2 Declarations of Interest

None.

3 Minutes of Previous Meeting

The minutes of the previous meeting held on the 12th December 2023 were agreed as a true and accurate record.

4 2024-25 Budget and Medium Term Financial Projections

Invitees:

- **Meirion Rushworth – Head of Finance**
- **Robert Green – Assistant Head of Finance**
- **Sally Ann Jenkins – Strategic Director – Social Services**
- **Mary Ryan – Head of Adult Services**
- **Natalie Poyner – Head of Children Services**
- **Caroline Ryan-Phillips – Head of Prevention and Inclusion**
- **Mandy Shide – Service Manager**
- **Rhianydd Williams – Service Manager Integrated Family Support**

This document is available in welsh / Mae's ffurflen hon ar gael yn Gymraeg

- Sarah Morgan – Chief Education Officer
- Sarah Davies – Deputy Chief Education Officer

-
The Assistant Head of Finance introduced a brief overview of the budget process.

New Pressures and Investments

The following was discussed:

- The Committee enquired about the SEN Out of County and Local Provision pupil demand and noted the increase of 4 places in both Sporting Chance and Catch 22 and asked for more information about this. The Chief Education Officer (CEO) informed Committee that Budget demand for Education is now being met by the Council and this looks at the need to support children that might have to go out of county due to complex needs. The CEO assured the Committee that work is being undertaken to establish local provision where possible and the contracts with current providers will be maintained as they provide around 30 places, but this will provide an additional 4 places if required. The CEO informed Committee that if they aren't used, it would be considered an underspend in the Budget, but the places are needed, and they are positive will be utilised. There is consistent monitoring taking place around who need places and what is available to us and when contracting additional places Quality Assurance checks are carried out to ensure pupils welfare and that the ratios of teacher to student are correct.
- The Committee enquired about the ALN Provision for schools and noted that last year funding was to be confirmed and we were unable to meeting ALN requirements and would like reassurance that this investment will meet requirements. The CEO informed the Committee that there has always been cost pressures around ALN pupils and this has been identified more than ever before. The CEO informed the Committee that due to more complexities with children and people, this investment amount doesn't mean it will necessarily meet all needs however schools have responsibility with wholistic budget to provide for all children, so this investment is in addition to an individual school budget. The CEO informed the Committee that they know the demand on schools, and this won't necessarily provide everything, but it is one additional step to support those recognised challenges. The Committee stated that it is a good thing that there is this additional investment to support ALN students.

-

Domiciliary care support to be enhanced with assistive technology to reduce the levels of care hours required.

-
- The Committee enquired how assistive technology will be used to help reduce the levels of care. The Head of Adult Services informed Committee that they have already started to implement this and there is a smart HUB exhibition in Newport Market which demonstrates how this can be used for things like automatic curtains, and communication with family. They informed Committee that feedback from the public has been positive, but they are ensuring that it is tailored to meet individual needs.
 - The Committee enquired that if domiciliary care is looking to be replaced in part by assistive technology that there is an assumption of family support to carry out these

checks in place of the domiciliary care. The Head of Adult Services informed the Committee that during the Pandemic there were more family support which is not the case now but for unpaid carers this assistive technology has been a lifeline. They assured Committee that it will never replace the need for domiciliary care but is an addition to it.

Fees and Charges

-

- The Committee enquired who pays fees and charges to the Council. The Assistant Head of Finance informed the Committee that the headings highlighted in green on the report show who pays these fees and charges, the first set is other Local Authorities and the second is Newport Residents. The charges are the same amounts, but they differentiate between who is paying. The Head of Adult Services informed the Committee that if there is a vacancy that a neighbouring authority wishes to use, they get charged at the same rate as Newport residents as it is means tested.
- The Committee queried the percentage increase of Appointeeship by 102% and wanted to know why it is such a large increase. The Assistant Head of Finance informed the Committee that this is now reflective following a thorough review and recosting exercise of the service area that has taken place and in cash terms it is not as significant an increase as other services even though the percentage is high. The Head of Adult Services informed the Committee that anyone who requires the Appointee services is subject to a full financial assessment of their circumstances.

The Chair thanked the Officers for attending.

5 Conclusions of Committee Reports

Comments to the Cabinet on the following proposals:

- a) The Committee noted the budget proposals relevant to the People Directorate and agreed to forward the minutes to the Cabinet as a summary of the issues raised.
- b) The Committee wished to make the following comments to the Cabinet on the Proposals within the People Directorate:

-

New Pressures and Investments

- The Committee highlighted that the ALN investment is good for students with complex needs and the Committee are glad that it is now reflected in the Budget.

Domiciliary care support to be enhanced with assistive technology to reduce the levels of care hours required.

- The Committee wanted to ensure that where domiciliary care is being replaced by assistive care that there is sufficient family support in place.

- The Committee wanted to ensure that the delivery of services of important and must not be impacted and highlighted the importance of the continuation of service delivery quality.
- The Committee noted that they are content for proposals to go ahead as they are.

6 **Scrutiny Adviser Reports**

a) **Actions Arising**

The Scrutiny Advisor provided an update to the Committee on the outstanding actions and the figure for the 1.2% of Education employees has been circulated to the Committee.

b) **Forward Work Programme**

The Scrutiny Advisor informed the Committee that the next Committee meeting date is the 20th February for the Regulated Service Reports and then the final meeting for this year is on the 26th March for the Recruitment and Retention Reports and an additional item of Key Stage 4 Outcomes.

The meeting terminated at Time Not Specified