

Health & Social Services Scrutiny Committee

Annual Report

2022 – 2023

Scrutiny in Carmarthenshire

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Chair's Foreword



Welcome to the Annual Report for the Health and Social Services Scrutiny Committee for the Civic Year 2022/23. As Chairperson I am pleased to present this report to you detailing the work undertaken by the Committee during the year.

Following the local elections in May 2022, all apart from two Members were new to the Committee including myself. This in itself brought challenges and with this in mind it was agreed to arrange visits to different centres so that we as Members got a better understanding of what each department is responsible for. This is an ongoing programme until we have covered each section of Social Care & Children's Services.

We were again, during this year, subject to the Authorities (coronavirus) (meetings) Wales Amendment) Regulations 2020 which came into force on the 22nd April 2020. Whilst the re-elected Members were familiar with remote working this has been an additional learning for new Members. With all of this and the excellent training programme immediately after the May elections our first Scrutiny did not happen until October 2022. Remote working makes it a better option for some Councillors who are able to join remotely who might not otherwise be able to be a part of Scrutiny. All options are good but for getting to know each other and officers, I think it would be helpful to meet in person at least once during the year.

The Communities Department continue to work well on many aspects and also jointly on many services with the Hywel Dda Health Board which is hugely beneficial to service users. I believe that this is the way forward as there are so much integration of areas that will benefit from joint working. Carmarthenshire is leading the field in this and hopefully others will follow suit. There have been challenges since Covid with a shortage of Domiciliary Care workers, this is being address with a vigorous recruitment campaign which hopefully will assist in these vital services being fully staffed without having to rely on agency staff. Llesiant Delta Well-being is also working hard to support people with the Delta Connect programme and their response services. Children's Services are also continuing to respond to the current placement capacity crisis, coupled with the increase in the demand for mental health service provision needs for young people post-pandemic.

We as a Scrutiny Committee have committed to undertake a Task and Finish project to look at Active Start for 0 – 11 year olds which will be reported in the next Annual Report. I am looking forward to a full programme for the coming year and to gain a greater knowledge of the services and skills coming under this vital portfolio.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank my fellow Members for their participation, to all the officers and staff for their care and ambition for a well looked after population in this County. I would also like to thank Emma our Democratic services support officer for her knowledge and guidance which has been invaluable in this our first year.

Councillor Hazel Evans

Chair of Health & Social Services Scrutiny Committee

1. Introduction

The scrutiny function is a key element of the County Council's governance arrangements and decision-making process. Although not a decision-making body, Scrutiny is at its most effective when it grasps the potential to influence and inform decisions made by both the Council and partner bodies affecting the County.

Article 6.2 of the Council's Constitution requires all Scrutiny Committees to "*prepare an annual report giving an account of the Committees activities over the previous year.*"

The main aim of the report is to highlight the work that has been undertaken by the Health & Social Services Scrutiny Committee during 2022/23. It aims to provide Members with an opportunity to reflect on the achievements during the year and to identify what worked well and where improvements could be made. This analysis is instrumental in developing scrutiny. In addition, this report may aid to facilitate discussions on items which could be identified for inclusion within future work plans.

The Committee is chaired by Councillor Hazel Evans and is made up of 14 Elected Members. Support is provided by the Democratic Services Unit and other Council officers as and when required.

2. Overview of the work of the Committee in 2022/23

2.1 Number of Meetings

The Scrutiny Committee held 4 meetings plus a joint meeting regarding Substance Use with the Place, Sustainability and Climate Change Scrutiny Committee during the 2022/23 municipal year. Two meetings were cancelled during the year.

2.2 The Forward Work Plans

Scrutiny plays a key role in promoting accountability in the decision-making process of the Local Authority. It is also useful in ensuring that Council policies reflect current priorities, as well as promoting efficiency and encouraging partnership working with external agencies.

In order for Scrutiny Committees to take on greater ownership of their own Forward Work Plans, a pre-decision method of scrutiny was introduced in September 2022 which allows Scrutiny Committees to decide which reports from the Cabinet Forward Work Plan they wish to come before them. As per normal process Committees are also able to identify their own topics and Cabinet are still able to invite a Scrutiny Committee to scrutinise a decision which was in the pipeline.

The concept and development of the Forward Work Plan and the process for its agreement has allowed each Scrutiny Committee to determine its own

agendas. The benefits of such an approach has led to an improved level of debate and input during Scrutiny Committee meetings.

The Committee also consulted with officers to identify items to be considered by the Committee for the forthcoming year. Additional reports were also requested by members at meetings throughout the year and the Forward Work Plan was amended accordingly. In the main, meeting agendas were consistent with those outlined in the Forward Work Plan.

Following the May 2023 elections, the Scrutiny Committee remits were updated by Council and each Scrutiny Committee became responsible for the overview and scrutiny of specific Cabinet Portfolios and their respective services.

The Health & Social Services Scrutiny Committee is responsible for the scrutiny of Cabinet's Health and Social Services portfolio and the respective service areas as detailed below:

Adult Social Services	Ageing Well
Residential Care including in-house residential homes	Assessment and Care Management
Home Care including in-house home care and reablement services	Older People and frailty
Learning Disabilities	Integrated Services to include NHS liaison and collaboration between health and social care
Mental Health	Physical Disability and Sensory Impairments
Direct Payments	CYP Board Member
Carers	CAHMS Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services
Dementia Care	Corporate Parenting Lead
Children's Social Services	Community Support Services
Adult Safeguarding	Fostering Services
Adoption Services	Respite
Care Inspectorate Wales	Prevention Strategy
Older Peoples Commissioner	Supporting Families
Commissioned Services	Safeguarding Children
Early Years, Family Support and Prevention	Complex Needs Transition
Parenting and Child Welfare	Child Protection Coordinator
Safeguarding West and Adoption	Safeguarding East and Service Improvement
Age Friendly Champion	

To compliment the work undertaken during formal meetings, the Committee also undertakes other scrutiny functions such as Task and Finish, visits to establishments falling within its remit together with member development sessions.

The Committee held a total of 3 Forward Planning meetings.

2.3 Performance Monitoring / Strategic Issues

Performance Monitoring Reports - One of the principal roles of Scrutiny Committees is to monitor the performance of services and functions within its remit. They undertake this work mainly through the consideration of performance monitoring reports and various action plan monitoring reports. The performance monitoring reports provide a balanced picture of performance across the relevant service areas. The Health & Social Services Scrutiny Committee received the Performance Monitoring Report for the Council's Wellbeing Objectives at the meeting in January and March 2023. The reports mainly focussed on underperforming indicators.

Draft Divisional Delivery Plans 2023-24 for: Integrated Services, Commissioning and Business Support & Adult Social Care Services - As part of its performance monitoring role the Committee received relevant information from the Council's key strategies and plans. In March 2023 the Committee considered the Draft Divisional Delivery Plans. These plans set the strategic actions and measures that the services within the Division would take forward in order for the Council to make progress against its Well-being Objectives, thematic priorities and service priorities.

It was noted that action and measures for the delivery of the Cabinet Vision Statement Commitments were also included.

Outcomes

- A letter be sent to the Health Board expressing concerns regarding the current inequality of S.117 funding arrangements.

Children's Services Draft Service Delivery Plan 2023-24 - As part of its performance monitoring role the Committee received relevant information from the Council's key strategies and plans. In March 2023 the Committee considered the Draft Service Delivery Plan which set out the strategic actions and measures that the services within the Division would take forward in order for the Council to make progress against its Well-being Objectives, thematic priorities and service priorities.

Statutory Director of Social Care Services' Annual Report 2021/22 - There is a statutory requirement for the Director of Social Services to report annually to their Council on the delivery and performance as well as plans for the improvement of the whole range of Social Services. This report was considered by the Committee in October.

Outcomes

- Recommended to Cabinet that the report be received.
- that a letter be sent to Welsh Government by the Committee Chair reiterating the importance of strengthening the structures in place with regard to Electively Home Educated children.

Communities Departmental Draft Business Plan 2020 - 2023 – In March the Committee considered the Communities Departmental Draft Business Plan 2020 - 2023 which detailed the department's aims, objectives and priorities during 2020-23. This provided the Committee with an opportunity to consider and comment upon the priorities outlined for the department for the three-year period.

Actions & Referrals - During the course of the municipal year several requests for additional items are made by members of the Committee to assist them in discharging their scrutiny role. Actions & Referrals updates are presented to Committee which provide an update on progress in relation to these requests.

2.4 Revenue & Capital Budgets

Budget Monitoring Reports - The Committee received quarterly reports on the departmental and corporate revenue and capital budgets at the meetings held in October, January and April. These reports enabled members to monitor the level of spend in each area and the progress made in connection with any capital works.

Revenue Budget Strategy Consultation 2023/24 to 2025/26 - As well as monitoring the current budget, the Committee was also consulted on the Revenue Budget Strategy 2023/24 to 2025/26. The report provided the Committee with the current proposals for the Revenue Budget Strategy for 2023/24 together with the indicative figures for the 2024/25 and 2025/26 financial years.

Revenue Budget Outturn Report 2021/22 – At its meeting in October, the Committee considered the Revenue Budget Outturn Report for 2021/22 which provided an end of year financial position.

Outcomes

The Committee resolved that a position statement be provided regarding the vacant social work posts.

The position statement was circulated in October.

2.5 Regional Adult Advocacy Strategy

The Committee considered the above-mentioned report at the Committee meeting in March the purpose of which was to seek endorsement of a new regional adult advocacy strategy that has been developed with stakeholders through the Advocacy Working Group . The Strategy aimed to shape

commissioning arrangements to meet requirements to ensure good quality advocacy is readily and equitably available to those who want, or need it, in the West Wales region of Ceredigion, Carmarthenshire and Pembrokeshire.

2.6 Youth Justice Management Plan 2022/23

The Committee considered the above-mentioned report at the Committee meeting in January 2023 which outlined the provision of the Youth Support Service and the Youth Justice Team under a single management structure which provided a holistic approach to the delivery of youth support services across Carmarthenshire. Section 8 of the Youth Justice Plan detailed the performance of the partnership during 2021/22 and also set out the priorities and improvement planning objectives for the forthcoming year in accordance with the overarching 'child first' principles and an ethos of continuous improvement.

2.7 Health & Social Services Scrutiny Committee Annual Report 2021/22

The Committee considered the above-mentioned report at the Committee meeting in October which in accordance with Article 6.2 of the Council's Constitution provided an overview of the Committee's activities over the previous year.

2.8 West Wales Care Partnership's Dementia Strategy

The Committee considered the report at the Committee meeting in October. This Strategy had been produced in partnership between officers of the 3 Local Authorities, the Health Board and third sector partners as well as people living with dementia, their carers, and family members. It supported several key objectives within the Corporate Plan, and wellbeing objective to 'support older people to age well and maintain dignity and independence in their later years'.

2.9 Domiciliary Care Strategy Update

At the request of the Committee, it considered the above update at its meeting in January 2023. The update included information surrounding the current pressure on domiciliary care and the impact that this was having on hospital discharges. The report was to provide assurance that patients were being safely supported to leave hospital and outlined the pressures and how Carmarthenshire County Council was responding to those pressures. A further update was provided at the meeting held in April 2023.

Outcomes

The Committee requested regular updates regarding domiciliary care and progress with the Health Board. It was agreed that updates would be included systematically within the performance and data monitoring reports.

An additional performance update was provided in the meeting in April.

2.10 Loneliness in Carmarthenshire Task & Finish Review Update

The Committee received for consideration at its April meeting an update report in respect of the progress made with the four recommendations emanating from the Task and Finish Review on Loneliness in Carmarthenshire undertaken during the 2018/19 municipal year.

Outcomes

The Committee requested an update report on the wider prevention work, including the progress made on the mapping exercise of all preventative services in Carmarthenshire for early 2024.

2.11 Annual Report on Adult Safeguarding & Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards (DoLS)

The Committee received a report in April which detailed the role, functions and activities undertaken by the Authority in relation to Adult Safeguarding and Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards during the 2021/22 financial year.

2.12 Additional Reports & Information Requested

During the course of the year, the Committee requested reports on the following topics to be included in the Forward Work Plan:-

- Domiciliary Care Update
- Loneliness in Carmarthenshire Task & Finish Review Update
- External Review Update on the TB outbreak in Llwynhendy (pending the outcome of enquiries, consideration to be given to the submission of a letter to Welsh Government seeking financial support for the ongoing TB issue).

3. Other Scrutiny Activity

3.1 Task and Finish

“An Active & Healthy Start”

At the Committee’s Forward Planning Meeting the Committee considered a number of potential suggestion and agreed to undertake a Task & Finish review into childhood obesity in Carmarthenshire. The membership of the Task & Finish Group are as follows:

- Cllr. Hazel Evans (Chair)
- Cllr. Hefin Jones
- Cllr. Meinir James
- Cllr. John Jenkins
- Cllr. Louvain Roberts
- Cllr. Rob Evans
- Cllr. Michelle Donoghue

The Task & Finish Group will aim to finalise the scope of the Group for approval by the Committee in July 2024.

3.2 Development, Training & Briefing Sessions

The following member development sessions / member seminars were held during 2022/23:-

- Introduction and overview of how to use Zoom
- Introduction and overview of mod.gov
- Code of Conduct, Ethics, Standards, Legal Duties & Responsibilities
- Introduction to Carmarthenshire County Council & Launch of Induction Programme
- Constitutional Matters & Meeting Preparation
- Local Government Finance
- External Regulators
- Scrutiny in Carmarthenshire
- Climate Change, Mitigation and De Carbonisation
- Planning
- Equalities & Diversity
- Carbon Literacy
- Personal Safety and Self Care, Stress Management, Personal Resilience, Work-life balance
- Violence Against Women, Domestic Abuse & Sexual Violence
- Cyber Security
- Introduction to Marketing and Media
- Armed Forces
- Complaints Policy
- Transform, Innovate and Change
- Emergency Planning
- Speed Reduction Legislation
- Council Owned Companies
- Section 106 Legal Agreements
- Council Performance Management Framework
- Modernising Education Programme Review
- Future Waste Changes
- Dyfed Pension Fund Training
- Sustainable Communities for Learning
- Member Enquiries
- Corporate Strategy Workshop
- Housing Repairs Briefing
- Conservation Areas Briefing

In addition to the above, several departmental budget seminars were held.

The Committee also received the following updates / presentations at meetings during the course of the year:-

- Forward Plan Session (January, February and April)
- Substance Use - jointly with Place, Sustainability & Climate Change Scrutiny (March)

3.2 Site Visits

The Committee undertook a site visit in November as an introduction to Adult Social Care and Integrated Services.

4. Challenges

The past year has been a challenging period for the Committee following changes to the reporting process. The Constitutional Review Working Group agreed the move from the systematic referral of reports and replaced it with a pre-decision process. This enabled Scrutiny to request reports from the Cabinet Forward Work Plan at any time. Unfortunately, there were a limited number of reports on the Cabinet Forward Work Plan that were fell under the remit of the Health and Social Services Scrutiny Committee resulting in some meetings being cancelled.

Additionally, the Committee received several non-submissions:-

- Q1 Performance Management Report (October)
- Annual Report on the Wellbeing objectives (October)
- Business Plan (January)
- Annual Report on the Wellbeing objectives (January)
- Annual Safeguarding Report (March)
- Corporate Strategy (March)

5. Future Work

The Committee has made progress and will continue to concentrate on topics where Members' input will result in positive outcomes to drive forward service improvement.

The future work of the Committee will be considered as part of the Forward Work planning session. The FWP will continue to be monitored during the course of the year, together with the Cabinet Forward Work Plan.

6. Support for the Scrutiny Function

Support for Carmarthenshire County Council's Scrutiny function is provided by the Democratic Services Unit, based in the Administration & Law Division of the Chief Executive's Department.

Support for the Scrutiny function includes:

- Formulating, in according with the FWP, and despatching agendas for Scrutiny Committee meetings a minimum of 4 working days prior to the meeting;

- Providing support and constitutional advice to the Scrutiny Committees and to members of those Committees as well as producing minutes of their meetings and ensuring items arising from those meetings are actioned;
- Giving support and advice in relation to the functions of the Council's Scrutiny Committees to executive and non-executive members of the Council and its officers;
- Managing the strategic development of Scrutiny in Carmarthenshire through engaging in national and regional Scrutiny networks and initiatives, supporting the Chairs and Vice-Chairs of Scrutiny Forum and meetings of the Scrutiny Chairs and Vice-Chairs with the Executive Board;
- Advising and supporting the implementation of the requirements of the Local Government (Wales) Measure 2011 as and when guidance is published;
- Managing the co-ordination and development of the Scrutiny Committees' forward work plans in conjunction with Scrutiny Committee members;
- Managing and co-ordinating Scrutiny review work, including the administration of scrutiny task and finish groups, assisting in writing reports in conjunction with the groups and assisting in the implementation and monitoring of completed reviews;
- Assisting with the Scrutiny member development programme.

For more information on Scrutiny in Carmarthenshire including forward work plans, task and finish reports and annual reports, visit the County Council's website at: www.carmarthenshire.gov.wales/scrutiny

To contact the Democratic Services Unit, please call 01267 224028 or e-mail scrutiny@carmarthenshire.gov.uk

7. Attendance

Attendance by members of the Health & Social Services Scrutiny Committee during the 2022/23 year is shown in the table below. A total of 4 meetings were held between 1st May 2022 and 30th April 2023.

Scrutiny Committee Member	No. of meetings attended	%
Cllr. Bryan Davies	4	100
Cllr. Karen Davies	2	50
Cllr. Michelle Donoghue	4	100
Cllr. Alex Evans	4	100
Cllr. Hazel Evans	4	100
Cllr. Meinir James	3	75
Cllr. John Jenkins	1	25
Cllr. Hefin Jones	4	100
Cllr. Denise Owen	2	50
Cllr. Louvain Roberts	3	75
Cllr. Jacqueline Seward	0	0
Cllr. Fiona Walters	3	75
Cllr. Phil Warlow	4	100
Cllr. Janet Williams	4	100
Substitutes	No. of meetings attended	
Cllr. Dai Thomas	1	
Cllr. Jean Lewis	1	
Executive Board Member	No. of meetings attended	
Cllr. Jane Tremlett	4	
Cllr. Alun Lenny	2	