



City and County of Swansea

Minutes of the **Scrutiny Performance Panel - Joint Social Services**

Remotely via Microsoft Teams

Monday, 17 February 2025 at 1.00 pm

Present: Councillor P R Hood-Williams (Chair) Presided

Councillor(s)

W G Lewis
M S Tribe
Y V Jardine
S Joy

Councillor(s)

A M Day
V A Holland
S M Jones

Councillor(s)

M W Locke
C A Holley
J W Jones

Other Attendees

Alyson Anthony
Louise Gibbard
Hayley Gwilliam

Cabinet Member - Wellbeing
Cabinet Member – Care Services
Cabinet Member – Community Support

Officer(s)

Lucy Friday
Amy Hawkins
David Howes
Liz Jordan
Jane Whitmore

Interim Head of Adult Services & Tackling Poverty
Interim Director of Social Services
Director of Social Services
Scrutiny Officer
Strategic Lead Commissioner

Apologies for Absence

Councillor(s): K M Griffiths, E T Kirchner and C L Philpott
Co-opted Member(s): T Beddow

1 Disclosure of Personal and Prejudicial Interests

Chris Holley declared a personal interest.

2 Prohibition of Whipped Votes and Declaration of Party Whips

No declarations were made.

3 Public Question Time

No questions were received.

4 Draft Budget Proposals

Councillors Louise Gibbard, Alyson Anthony and Hayley Gwilliam along with relevant officers attended and went through the budget proposals in relation to Adult Services, Child and Family Services and Tackling Poverty, highlighting the main issues and answering questions.

The Panel agreed the following views and recommendations on the budget proposals in relation to Social Services it would like to make to Cabinet:

- Budget increase - Panel is pleased to see quite a significant increase in the proposed Social Services budget for 2025-26 of £25.5m which is 14.9%, but it has some concerns around the savings proposals.
- Transparency – Panel feels it is important the budget proposals are really transparent, and the inclusion of percentages is a good way forward.
- Level of support for people - Budget proposals talk about realignment, but the Panel has concerns about a potential reduction in the level of support for people and maintaining the quality of service.
- Increase in Living Wage and National Insurance - The potential increase in the living wage and national insurance cost to employers is of concern to the Panel, as these increased costs are likely to be passed onto the Council by external service providers. Also, it is not yet clear whether the government will fully compensate Councils for the additional cost of the NIC increase as a result.
- Preventative agenda - Panel feels the number of savings the Department is hoping to make is dependent on the preventative agenda and this will require careful monitoring going forward.
- Reducing external Foster Care - One of the savings in the proposals is to reduce external foster care. Panel is concerned that if this is reduced, whether there will be sufficient capacity in Foster Wales to pick up the extra.
- Home adaptations – These need to be in place before people can be discharged from hospital and go back to their own home. Panel feels there is a need to ensure this process works more effectively so people can leave hospital sooner and stay at home longer.

The Convener of the Service Improvement, Regeneration and Finance Panel will attend Cabinet on 20 February to feed in the collective views of the scrutiny performance panels and write a letter to the Cabinet Member.

The meeting ended at 2.05 pm