

Social Services, Housing and Community Safety Scrutiny Committee
(Microsoft Teams / Hybrid Council Chamber)

Members Present:

15 December 2022

Chairperson: Councillor C.Galsworthy

Vice Chairperson: Councillor H.C.Clarke

Councillors: J.Jones, A.R.Lockyer, A.Lodwig, P.D.Richards,
M.Spooner, S.Rahaman and A.R.Aubrey

Officers In Attendance A.Jarrett, A.Thomas, K.Warren, R Davies,
J.Hodges, S.Waite, C.Jones, C.Millis, C.Morris,
R.Turner, D.Harding, G.Liley, C.Frey-Davies,
M.Potts, N.Jones and A.Thomas

Cabinet Invitees: Councillors S.Harris, A.Lockyer and J.Hale

1. **Chair's Announcements**

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting.

2. **Declarations of Interest**

There were none.

3. **Minutes of Previous Meeting**

The minutes of the meeting held on 10 November 2022 were approved as a true and accurate record.

4. **Environmental Health - What is a Statutory Nuisance**

Officers updated members in relation to 'What is Statutory Nuisance'

Members asked in regards to an abatement notice, what the procedure would be if someone was to break the notice

Officers explained it depends on what the nuisance is, the notice would come down to legal action or prosecution. It would come down to what the specific case is, noise is the most common one, music noise from a domestic premise, find it more effective to arrange the seizure of the that noise making equipment as opposed to carrying out a prosecution procedure.

When Officers do the seizure of noise making equipment we would keep it for a period of time and the person it has been seized from would have to pay a reasonable cost in order to get the equipment returned.

Members asked if someone has a vacant property, does the councillor come to the officer directly. Officers explained Environmental Health had set up an online system for a number of years and they do encourage that everything is put through that online report purely because the public will receive an instant notification back with a reference number and will go straight to the Officer.

Members mentioned they had dealt with a number of complaints in privately rented properties regarding noise, what sort of legal or statutory powers do local authority have under the environmental health act to get the landlord involved.

Officers explained that the action they can take in terms of services of abatement notice is on the person responsible for causing the statutory nuisance. Officers do get landlords involved in the process and if there is a structural issue or a property related problem, then the law says those structural issues are the responsibility of the owner.

5. **Pre-Decision Scrutiny**

Members agreed to scrutinise items 7, 8,9,11 and 12 from the Cabinet Board agenda.

Children & Young People and Adult Services - 2nd Quarter Performance Report (April 2022- September 2022)

Members were presented with a report relating to the background and summary of the content of the Children & Young People and Adult Services - 2nd Quarter Performance Report (April 2022- September 2022)

Members asked, in relation to the reregistration of children, the indicator was red, was there any more information. Officers explained when children were reregistered, there was a multi-agency decision. Our partners would take a view as to whether a child needs to be placed on the register, when a child is placed on the register that would result in a manager's review and officers were notified of the reregistration.

Members asked in relation to children going into care could they explain the emergency situation. Officers explained there was an action plan where we were working to in to link in children's right across Children's Services and had been successful in getting what officers think would be best described as a kite mark in children's rights. When children do enter care in an emergency that they do or are furnished with as much information as possible in respect of placement on where they were going, where they'll be sleeping, who the foster carers are etc. Officers explained it was red because it was being worked upon and the quality practice leader was linking in with engagement, looked after children and fostering to ensure that all the foster carers had pen portraits etc. Officers suggested that a report would be brought back to committee in relation to reregistration.

Members asked in relation to the wellbeing objectives, it states the significant increase of new assessments completed compared to the same period last year, was there a reason for the numbers increase. Officers explained they had seen a huge increase of referrals and there was a huge demand during the cost of living crisis. Officers explained there were additional members of staff to meet the demand and was something that was looked at on a daily basis. Members asked for more information on Single Point of Contact, officers were happy to provide a report on this topic.

Members asked in relation to the number of overdue reviews, why had the numbers increased by 150 since the end of April. Officers explained these were receiving statutory services, they were either in residential care or domiciliary care.

Following scrutiny members were supportive of the recommendations to be considered by the Cabinet Board.

Quarterly Performance Management Data 2022-2023 - Quarter 2 Performance (1st April 2022- 30th September 2022)

Members were presented with a report relating to the background and summary of the content of the Quarterly Performance Management Data 2022- 2023 – Quarter 2 Performance (1st April 2022 – 30th September 2022)

Members asked in relation to the figures, it stated there were four new referrals during quarter one, where were the referrals from.

Officers explained there were a number of sources from education, police and social work were the reporting people for the four cases. They go into police, they come to local authority social care and then between us and counter terrorism Wales, then officers decide on the next steps or safeguarding will always trump any kind of criminal response. However, it would be done in conjunction with police so wouldn't be interfering with any police investigation.

Members asked why the figures were red.

Officers mentioned the system operates on a 5%, so if goes over 5% the system automatically shows as red. With the IT system, the way it was set up, if it went over a 5% margin it would automatically tip into the ref category. It is the system itself that makes it red.

Members noted the report.

Directors Annual Report

Members were presented with a report in relation to the Directors Annual Report.

Members commented that the report was excellent.

Members asked in relation to Neurodiversity and LGBTQ, was there any support for the children and families especially in schools. Officers explained they had been fortunate this year and the end of last year to have a piece of work done by the junior safeguarding board whereby they engaged with the LGBTQ plus community and developed a program LGBTQ. Officers stated they could have a more of an understanding in respect of what the young people's kind of lived experiences and following on from that, there had recently been a guidance document shared with the safeguarding board to ensure that across schools the response to LGBTQ was better understood.

Officers explained they were happy to share the reports and the guidance document with members.

Members asked about the action plan and were happy that it was developed. Members asked was the report focusing on Neurodiversity, Autism or both. Officers explained they will find out more information on this and get back to the committee.

Members asked in relation to the safe and well service, why their roles are in education and not in wellbeing. Officers explained in terms of safe and well, it sits in adult services, officers were linking closely in terms of the food poverty with other teams and partnerships.

Officers explained it doesn't need to sit in one directorate, and tackling the disadvantage of poverty was everyone's business. If officers were going to tackle poverty and food poverty, the best way of doing that was to ensure that people had enough finance coming into the house and to do that, they need a job. Officers explained they could see why under Education, Leisure and Lifelong Learning, they had somebody that led Education, Poverty and Skills.

Members stated the following proposals were approved and successfully established with three schemes approved for ongoing funding, would it be possible to have the three organisations to come in and speak to us about the projects that they were running. Officers explained they were happy for that to happen.

Members noted the report.

Leasing Scheme Wales

Members were presented with a report in relation to the Leasing Scheme Wales.

Members asked if Officers could give examples when they had looked at empty houses and brought them back.

Officers explained there had been a couple of different schemes. There had been the empty property lawn scheme and which was about to start again where the Welsh Government provided funding for works to bring these properties up to standard, they can be let out again and officers need to know who the landlords were. Some of the ones that members had mentioned there maybe absent landlords which environmental health had got various ways of trying to find

who the landlords were. With this particular scheme, the landlord had to bring the property to us and then officers mentioned they can offer for grant funding to bring it up to standard as well.

Members mentioned it stated that local authorities would not be able to supplement the rent to owners as an incentive, does that mean that officers wouldn't be able to use DHCP payments. Officers explained, in this scheme, the level of the rent is the local housing allowance where the issue we get in with this scheme potentially is that some of the landlord they can get a higher rent in the private market and whereas this scheme it is only local housing allowance.

Following scrutiny, the Committee was supportive of the proposal to be considered by the Cabinet Board.

Grant Arrangements For The Provision Of Warm Spaces Funding

Members were presented with a report in relation to the Grant Arrangements for the Provision of Warm Spaces Funding.

Members asked were the grants going forward to building that were already open or was it supporting those who would be opening to create warm spaces. Officers explained that they would be their priority, the ones that were open in extended hour and potentially to establish a warm hub, we would obviously consider the applicants within that. However, they were looking at what they were offering and whether or not they were part of business as usual and what additions they're asking for in terms of that, so they would be part of the consideration also.

Members asked would this be a joint approach. Officers explained from the development of the warm spaces, the coordinators and members had been involved in the development of them, so officers were aware of some of them were more engaged with many of them. There were plans to monitor and keep a weekly update as part of what they do on the number of people that were coming to the venues and that was part of the grant requirements from Welsh Government aswell.

Following scrutiny, the Committee was supportive of the proposal to be considered by the Cabinet Board.

6. **Forward Work Programme 2022/23**

Officers asked if the items that were discussed today could be put on the Forward Work Programme.

7. **Urgent Items**

There were none.

CHAIRPERSON