

SOCIAL CARE, HEALTH AND HOUSING SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

(Committee Rooms A/B - Neath Civic Centre)

Members Present:

9 February 2017

Chairperson: Councillor Mrs.D.Jones

Vice Chairperson: Councillor Mrs.A.Wingrave

Councillors: A.Carter, J.S.Evans, H.N.James,
Mrs.S.Paddison, C.Morgan, L.M.Purcell,
Mrs C.Edwards and D.Whitelock

Officers In Attendance A.Jarrett, N. Jarman, Mrs.A.Thomas L. Jones,
S.Adie, G. Evans, , Ms.S.Jenkins,
Mrs.J.Duggan, G. Pascoe, and N.Evans

Cabinet Invitees: Councillors P.D.Richards and J.Rogers

1. **TO RECEIVE THE MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS SOCIAL CARE, HEALTH AND HOUSING SCRUTINY COMMITTEE HELD ON 13 DECEMBER 2016**

The minutes were noted by the Committee.

2. **TO RECEIVE THE SCRUTINY FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME 2016/2017.**

The Committee noted the work programme.

3. **CORPORATE IMPROVEMENT OBJECTIVE - PROSPERITY FOR ALL (HOUSING) QUARTER THREE HIGHLIGHT REPORT 2016/2017**

Members considered a report on the Corporate Improvement Objective – Prosperity for All in respect of the Housing element.

Members asked why the number of private rented tenancies made available that were available and likely to be available for at least 6 months had reduced. Officers responded that there had been properties secured in the private sector and that subsequently more

funding had become available to more would be made available in due course.

Members asked for the reasons why a review of homelessness had been delayed given that the individuals are some of the most vulnerable. Officers stated that the review had in fact commenced and was approximately 60% complete any outcome from the review will be implemented during the next financial year.

Following scrutiny the report was noted.

4. **CORPORATE IMPROVEMENT OBJECTIVE - IMPROVING OUTCOMES IMPROVING LIVES QUARTER THREE HIGHLIGHT REPORT 2016/2017**

Members considered the report on the Corporate Improvement Objective; Improving Outcomes Improving Lives.

Members noted that the take up of Direct Payments had increased however, concern was raised that the number of hours of care and support had reduced. Officers explained that this was because the care and support packages were now more tailored to individuals.

Officers noted the concerns of Members that the percentage of referrals screened within 24 hours was 58% as opposed to 74% for the previous year. Officers explained that this was because of capacity and a lack of resources but this has been addressed and the figure will increase by the end of the year.

Members noted that there had been a significant increase in the number of adult safeguarding referrals and asked whether this was due to increased awareness. Officers stated that it was due to a number of factors including an increased awareness. Officers also stated the majority of the increase was in respect of residential care homes that were in escalating concerns.

Members asked for an update on phase 2 of the Gwalia contract. Officers stated that the process was ongoing and negotiations had been difficult. It is hoped that agreement will be reached shortly and then a full update will be provided.

Officers were asked whether there was any delay in people receiving direct payments. Officers stated that there were no delays at present but there had been some issues previously following the departure of

the relevant officer with responsibility for Direct Payments. There had been specific problems with the recruitment of personal assistants but this had also been addressed.

Members were informed that the Council was monitoring those homes that had been placed in escalating concerns by CSSIW particularly where there had been safeguarding referrals. Members asked for a further report to be presented to the Committee in relation to the homes.

Members asked for assurance that individuals were not being bullied to take Direct Payments. The Director stated categorically that this was not happening.

Following scrutiny the report was noted.

5. **DIRECTORATE SUPPORT SERVICE REPORT CARD**

Members considered the Directorate Support Office Service Report Card.

Members asked whether the appeal caseload had had an effect on sickness absence within the unit. Officers stated that this was not the case.

Members requested that a report be brought back to the Committee in relation to the Welfare Rights Unit as it was accepted that the work of this unit was invaluable and should be congratulated.

Following scrutiny the report was noted.

6. **WESTERN BAY AREA PLANNING BOARD REGIONAL COMMISSIONING AND SUPPORT TEAM SERVICE REPORT CARD 2016/2017**

Members considered the Western Bay Area Planning Board Regional Commissioning and Support Team Service report card.

Members asked whether there was a possibility that pressures on the service will increase due to increased media coverage. Officers stated that it was not possible to confirm this either way but there will be continual problems faced by individuals.

Members asked whether an individual needs to have a fixed address to access services to help and support them. Officers confirmed that individuals do not need have a fixed address.

Following scrutiny the report was noted.

7. **PRE-SCRUTINY**

The Committee scrutinised the following matters:

Cabinet Board Proposals

7.1 Homecare Service – CSSIW Inspection Report

Members considered a report that was the outcome of the CSSIW inspection of the in house Homecare service undertaken in 2016.

Members welcomed the report and the positive assessment made by CSSIW. They asked whether CSSIW undertake similar inspections with private sector providers. Officers confirmed that the inspections are the same.

Following scrutiny the report was noted.

7.2 Pre-Paid Cards to Support Direct Payments

Members considered a report that sought to change the provider of the Pre-Paid Cards.

Members asked who would be liable for the cost of the cards. Officers confirmed that this would be passed on to the users. Members asked for their concerns to be noted that they hoped this did not cost too much and lessen the funding available as Direct Payments. Officers stated that they would provide the actual cost per card outside of the meeting.

Members asked whether there are any limitations on what can be purchased on the card and if not why aren't the payments paid directly into a bank account. Officers stated that like other pre-paid credit or debit type cards there are no limitations on what can be purchased. It was further confirmed that whilst many individuals have bank accounts there are some who are unable to open a bank account and thus the pre-paid card is a necessity for them.

Members raised concern that the cards could be mis-used by individuals and officers confirmed that like anything there was this possibility although spending is monitored to ensure that the right types of services are purchased.

Officers stated that Members should be mindful that pre-paid cards were already in place and being used by individuals and the recommendation was to identify an alternative provider and if Members suggested removing the cards totally then this would disadvantage a number of individuals.

Following Scrutiny the Committee was supportive of the proposals to be considered by Cabinet Board.

8. **ACCESS TO MEETINGS TO RESOLVE TO EXCLUDE THE PUBLIC FOR THE FOLLOWING ITEM(S) PURSUANT TO SECTION 100A(4) AND (5) OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972 AND THE RELEVANT EXEMPT PARAGRAPHS OF PART 4 OF SCHEDULE 12A TO THE ABOVE ACT.**

9. **PRE-SCRUTINY**

The Committee scrutinised the following private matters.

Cabinet Board Proposals

10.1 **Supporting People Local Commissioning Plan 2017/2020**

Members considered the Local Commissioning Plan for Supporting People for the period 2017/2020.

Members were concerned that the intention was to reduce from 10 organisations that the Council contracts with to one and would this mean the Council would go for the cheapest option. Officers stated that it is envisaged that it could be a consortia of organisations or one larger organisation but regardless of this the Council would not automatically go for the cheapest option.

Members asked for clarity on the Quality Impact Assessment as it was not easy to understand which protected characteristics the proposals would affect and in addition the assessment stated that the service does not currently collect this data. Officers stated that it was an admin error for the lack of clarity but confirmed that there would be no detriment to service users.

Members requested that further training be arranged for Officers in relation to the Equality Impact Assessments.

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

10.2 Consultant Procurement

Members considered the report that sought to extend the contract of a consultant who was undertaking a role as an Interim Principal Officer.

Members were advised that it had become increasingly difficult to attract the correct calibre of individual to posts such as Principal Officers.

Members asked would this decision leave the Council open to challenge. Officers confirmed that potentially it could but the risk of service failure for not taking the decision far outweighs the risk of challenge.

Officers stated that there would be a further report brought back to the Committee to highlight the staffing changes and restructuring that had taken place given the significant amount of change that had been undertaken over the past 15 or so months.

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

CHAIRPERSON