

Social Services, Housing and Community Safety Scrutiny Committee
(Multi-Location Meeting - Council Chamber, Port Talbot & Microsoft Teams)

Members Present:

21 March 2024

Chairperson: Councillor C.Galsworthy

Vice Chairperson: Councillor H.C.Clarke

Councillors: H.Davies, S.E.Freeguard, J.Jones, S.Rahaman, P.D.Richards and D.Whitelock

Officers In Attendance R Davies, J.Hodges, C.Howard, A.Jarrett, A.Thomas, K.Warren, Wellington, A.Bradshaw, L. Morris, S.Waite, C.Jones, Ms.N.Aleksanyan, D.Bartley, D.Harding, Low, S.McCluskie, N.Jones, E.O'Brien, H.Short, V.Smith, M.Weaver, R.Griffiths, D.Thomas, M.Edwards, S.Jones and P.Chivers

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

1. **Chairman's Announcements**

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting.

It was confirmed that the committee would be scrutinising items 7, 8, 9, 10, 15 and 18 from the Cabinet Board Agenda.

2. **Declarations of Interests**

There were no declarations of interest received.

3. **Minutes of the Previous Meeting**

The minutes of the meeting held on 25th January 2024 were approved as a true and accurate record.

4. **Information Sharing in Respect of the Transition Process Between Children and Adult Services**

Officers provided an overview of the report contained within the agenda pack.

Members asked officers if there were any gaps in provision to help young people with complex needs transition to adult services.

The Head of Children Services stated the importance of having an experienced workforce across Children's and Adults Services to support vulnerable young people and manage risk. The panel will help to support the whole directorate in identifying and supporting young people through the transition period and recognising where support can be decreased. Officers advised members that several different work streams have been established, staff meet to establish if plans are appropriate and to identify available resources and gaps. It was noted that young people may be in residential care for a variety of complex reasons, some with a need for high packages of care.

Members questioned whether any support packages were available for families who have cared for young people in supported living.

Officers advised members that it is important that early conversations were undertaken with families to help plan for transition at a younger age. The Transition Panel is open to all transition information and will be used strategically and operationally. Officers will report back to Scrutiny in six months' time on how the panel has embedded in practice.

Members considered the report as circulated within the agenda pack.

Following scrutiny, the report was noted.

5. **Pre-decision Scrutiny**

Quarterly Performance Report Quarter 3

Members commented that the new Performance Report layout was difficult to navigate.

The Director of Social Services, Health and Housing thanked members for the feedback which could be used to review the way the data is presented. The current report contains corporate

presentations and trend analysis. The Director confirmed it would be helpful to work with committee members to identify what information would be relevant to the committee going forward.

The Chair acknowledged that Performance Data Training sessions had been undertaken for all members but suggested a further session be arranged to re-visit data pertinent to the committee to aid members understanding.

Members asked for further clarification regarding why some data was not suitable for comparison.

The Head of Housing and Communities referred to the Key Performance Indicators (KPI's) on pages 39-47 of the report and advised members that items not suitable for comparison had not been reported on in previous years. The data related to a number of new KPI's used to monitor new activity and intended impacts.

The Director commented that work had been undertaken previously with members to identify how meaningful performance information could be presented. This work can be re-visited and it would be useful to have member involvement to steer what information would be helpful to the committee.

Members referred to page 42 of the report contained within the agenda pack and asked for further information on the Channel Panel.

The Head of Housing and Communities confirmed the Channel Panel was a multi-agency group set up to look at risks associated with people who may be drawn into terrorist activity. The KPI doesn't provide a clear indication of the current situation. In the previous year, the vulnerability of seven people was reduced following referral to the panel, however, during this year, there was only one referral. There is a need to review the KPI going forward to provide a more accurate depiction.

Officers confirmed the Channel Panel sits within the Community Safety Team; the Community Cohesion Officer provides coordination to the panel which is chaired by the Principal Officer for Safeguarding. Referrals can be made to the Channel Panel if low level concerns are raised about an individual's behaviour and interests. The county borough is considered a low risk area and referral numbers are low but it is important to identify and address concerns. Ongoing work is needed on a corporate level to remind

staff and panel partners, about the referral pathway and the type of help and support that is available.

Members referred to page 45 of the report contained within the agenda pack and requested that an item was added to the Forward Work Programme to outline how households are prevented from presenting as homeless, to enable members to support residents.

The addition to the Forward Work Programme was welcomed by the Head of Housing and Communities who noted that Neath Port Talbot comes just under the national figure of 59%. The KPI reports on people who are owed a statutory homeless prevention duty. Recent changes in legislation require longer notice periods from landlords; staff are working with people earlier, before they are owed the statutory duty. Work is ongoing to establish how the data can be captured to give a clearer reflection of the work that is being undertaken.

Following scrutiny, members noted the report.

Neath Port Talbot Social Services Strategic Action Plan for Neurodivergence (Autism and other conditions) 2024-2027

The Chair thanked officers for the report which was straightforward to read and understand. It was noted that although Social Services work in partnership with Health and Education, the report relates to the Social Service provision across Children and Adult Services.

Officers thanked the Chair for their support and gave a brief overview of the report and proposed consultation process as detailed within the Cabinet board agenda pack.

The Chair commented that forms can be a barrier to neurodivergent individuals but the consultation form was open to capture individual's views.

Officers confirmed that time was available before the consultation commenced, to review the form to ensure it was user friendly for children and young people, and adults with cognitive difficulties to participate.

Members asked officers to provide further clarification of the remit of Education and Social Services.

Officers confirmed that Social Services worked in partnership with Health and Education. The aim of the strategic plan is purposely wide, and will include children, young people and adults who are subject to a care managed plan, open on a care and support basis. Work is undertaken with partners to support young people of school age, to meet their needs whilst identifying gaps. Some cases come before the Complex Needs Panel to ensure plans to support young people are appropriate to their specific needs. Officers noted that there are significant waiting lists within health for young people waiting for diagnosis and longer waiting lists in adult services, than there had been in previous years. The Additional Learning Needs (ALN) Act change has had implications for education. As part of the consultation, there will be discussions with wider partners and it is hoped that there will be continued multi agency work to achieve outcomes.

Members referred to data presented on page 99 of the report and enquired if there are plans to report on lower level needs going forward.

Officers confirmed that some young people are being supported through statutory services in community teams and by Team around the Family. Work is ongoing in regards to early intervention and prevention. The Children with Disability Team includes two portage workers who work with young people pre-diagnosis in conjunction with partners.

Members praised officers for their excellent work in this area and stated more needs to be done to support parent, carers and families by educating on neurodiverse conditions and the effects on individuals.

Officers thanked members for their comments and agreed the importance of awareness raising and training, particularly amongst council staff to enable support and signposting. Links have already been made with the fostering community and carers will be considered as part of the consultation events with links to the Principal Officer Leads for Carers. Principal Officers are aware of the plan and consideration is given to how families can be supported taking into account individual needs.

Members agreed that awareness was of extreme importance not only for families but for all agencies; small adjustments can be made to benefit neurodivergent individuals.

Officers advised members that the training developed through Autism Wales (now Neurodivergence Wales) has moved on from raising awareness to focus on understanding. There is a link contained in the report to the training modules. A third module is being added in relation to assessment which may address situations around planning and preparation for meetings with health professionals. The training modules are available in the public realm with links to Health/Education/Family/Social Services and Communities. Other training elements are available and are more targeted for specific conditions.

Following scrutiny, the recommendation was supported to Cabinet Board.

The Corporate Parenting Charter

Officers gave an overview of the report contained within the Cabinet Board agenda pack.

Following scrutiny, the recommendation was supported to Cabinet Board.

Policy on Financial Contributions for Temporary Accommodation

Officers gave an overview of the report contained within the Cabinet Board agenda pack.

Following scrutiny, the recommendation was supported to Cabinet Board.

6. Committee Action Log

The committee action log was noted.

7. Forward Work Programme 2023/24

The Chair requested a meeting with officers to discuss the Forward Work Programme in more detail to consider areas which to date may have been overlooked.

The forward work programme was noted.

8. **Urgent Items**

There were no urgent items.

9. **Access to Meetings**

Resolved: 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.

10. **Pre-decision Scrutiny of Private Item/s**

Spot purchase contract for a sole occupancy care and support provision.

Following scrutiny, members noted the report.

Commissioning arrangements for developing NPT Mobile Response Service

Following scrutiny, the recommendation was supported to Cabinet Board.

**Cllr. C. Galsworthy
CHAIRPERSON**