

SOCIAL CARE, HEALTH AND HOUSING SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

(Committee Rooms 1/2 - Port Talbot Civic Centre)

Members Present:

8 January 2015

Chairman: Councillor Mrs.S.M.Penry

Vice Chairman: Councillor Mrs.A.Wingrave

Councillors: H.M.Bebell, Mrs P.Bebell, A.Taylor and R.Thomas

Officers In Attendance G.Griffiths, Mrs. C Marchant, Mrs C.Jones,
Mrs A Saunders, L Griffiths-Hughes, Mrs H O'Brian
and Mr A Potts

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

Observers A Rowling (Care and Social Services Inspectorate
Wales)
A Williams (Care and Social Services Inspectorate
Wales)

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1. **TO RECEIVE THE MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS SOCIAL CARE,
HEALTH AND HOUSING SCRUTINY COMMITTEE HELD ON
28TH NOVEMBER 2014.**

The Committee noted the minutes.

2. **TO RECEIVE THE SCRUTINY FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME
2014/15.**

The Committee considered the work programme and the Chair stated that if any Member(s) wished to place an item on the work programme for consideration they should contact the relevant Scrutiny Officer.

3. **TO SELECT APPROPRIATE ITEMS FROM THE CABINET BOARD AGENDA FOR PRE-SCRUTINY (CABINET BOARD REPORTS ENCLOSED FOR SCRUTINY MEMBERS).**

3.1 Community Meals Service

Members considered a further report in relation to the Community Meals Service.

Members noted that within the Equality Impact Assessment some negative impacts had been highlighted and concern was raised that the most vulnerable would be left without meals. Officers confirmed that this would not be the case and the Council would still deliver the service unlike other Councils who had removed it totally.

Members further queried the issue of a potential price rise and how this would affect those who may not be able to afford the new prices. Members were advised that officers would work with the individuals to ensure that all options are explored including looking at how some other Authorities deal with this issue.

Members asked whether service users had to purchase a main course and a sweet or whether they could just have a main course to keep their costs down. Members were advised that this would be investigated but that the cost of the food is not the main reason behind the high cost and the purpose of this report was to look at those high cost factors.

A further point of clarification was sought in relation to the delivery of the meals. Members were concerned that the delivery person just delivered the food or whether there was a level of interaction with the recipient. Members were advised that the delivery person did interact but Members should also note that the number of meals delivered had reduced due to more individuals visiting day centres and luncheon clubs for example. This in itself presented the service with an opportunity for income generation if the meals could be served to those establishments.

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

3.2 NPT Physical Disability and Sensory Impairments Commissioning Strategy 2015/2018.

Members considered a report that was presented prior to seeking approval to undertake a period of consultation in relation to the new strategy.

Members asked whether the draft strategy was written by the Council without any input from any other interested parties. Members were advised that a number of relevant people and organisations had been contacted for an input to ensure that the draft strategy was as robust as possible prior to consideration.

Following scrutiny Members approved the recommendation to be considered by the Cabinet Board with the understanding that a further report is presented to the Committee once the consultation period has closed.

3.3 The Neath Port Talbot Carers Partnership – Draft Joint Carers Commissioning Strategy (2015-2018)

Members received the report on the draft Joint Carers Strategy that sought approval to submit the document for public consultation.

Members were advised that at the current time there more carers within the County Borough than when previous strategies were in place.

Concern was raised that with a higher number of carers how would the Council support this and was there sufficient funding available. Members were advised that there is no additional funding available but some of the things that can be implemented will be cost neutral including ensuring carers are assisted to recognise themselves as carers and receive any relevant information. It was further queried how the relevant information could be provided to carers over and above what the Council normally does. It was confirmed that there is an opportunity to introduce an e-learning package enabling staff to recognise people with caring responsibilities.

Members stated that there were particular concerns in identifying young carers and assurance was sought that the Council was doing as much possible to identify and support young carers. It was confirmed that work is being undertaken with schools to identify young carers and subsequently with groups like Cross Roads to support those identified.

Members were pleased to hear that support was available to ensure that Carers do not become overburdened themselves and subsequently require care themselves.

Following scrutiny Members were supportive of the proposals to be considered by the Cabinet Board and requested that once the strategy has been adopted an all member seminar is arranged to advise all Members of the new arrangements.

3.4 Local Housing Strategy

Members received a report on the Local Housing Strategy that sought approval to submit the strategy for public consultation.

Members asked did the strategy only cover public sector rented properties but it was confirmed that this strategy will cover all properties including those offered by private sector landlords.

Members enquired whether the strategy will deal with empty properties. It was confirmed that the strategy will have the power to deal with empty properties and this should lead to an increase in the number of properties available to rent.

It was stated that further information in relation to Housing would be forthcoming in relation to the Housing Act 2014 (a report to be presented to the meeting to be held in February) and the National registration and licensing of landlords.

Following scrutiny the Committee was supportive of the proposals to be considered by the Cabinet board but also requested:

- a) A report be presented to the Committee once the consultation period had ended and,
- b) Consideration is given to organising an all member seminar on Housing issues to include information around the Housing Act 2014
- c) The Housing Strategy Executive Summary is circulated to Members.

3.5 Housing Allocation Policy

Members received a report on the draft joint allocation policy that had been amended following recent case law and consideration of the responses received during the consultation period.

It was reaffirmed to Members that whilst it is NPT Homes that administer the scheme the Council still has responsibility. Members requested that further reports be presented in the future to ensure that the policy is being adhered to by all interested parties.

Members stated that they were under the impression that in London Boroughs for example there were more criteria in place before allocating a property. Members were advised that this was the case but this is because of English Specific legislation in relation to the Communities Act.

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

4. **ANY URGENT ITEMS (WHETHER PUBLIC OR EXEMPT) AT THE DISCRETION OF THE CHAIRMAN PURSUANT TO SECTION 100B (4) (B) OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972**

The Chair informed the Committee that due to a mix up in communication the Care and Social Services Inspectorate Wales (CSSIW) were now in attendance to present their annual performance evaluation. This report had been pushed forward following the rearranged date of the previous meeting which meant the representatives from CSSIW had been unable to attend.

Members were advised that the report built on the annual performance framework and was an independent review of that information. It was also written in a way that was easy to understand. Members were informed that there had been significant progress in the transformation of adult social services.

Members asked whether they should pay particular attention to specific service areas to ensure continuous improvement. It was stated that there were no specific areas highlighted but Members should remain aware that whenever the Council makes a decision they should remember that citizens are at the end of any decisions and Members should put them in the citizens place for added assurance,

Members were further advised that they should continue to ask the right questions.

Following scrutiny the report was noted.

5. **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.**

6. **TO SELECT APPROPRIATE PRIVATE ITEMS FROM THE CABINET BOARD AGENDA FOR PRE-SCRUTINY (CABINET BOARD REPORTS ENCLOSED FOR SCRUTINY MEMBERS).**

6.1 Update Report in respect of Supporting People Programme Grant Reductions

Members were advised from the outset that the Equality Impact Assessment contained within the circulated report was to be withdrawn and a further report would be presented to the meeting in April which will include a more in-depth Equality Impact Assessment.

Members asked whether the cut in the grant was a major issue and it was confirmed that there was a need to review the service to ensure that individuals are not “over supported” as this can lead to dependency and inefficiency.

Following scrutiny Members noted the work that was underway in relation to the efficiency savings attributed to the 5.4% cut to the Supporting People Programme Grant by Welsh Government for 2015/2016 and requested further updates as the work continued and endorsed the recommendation that the review of tenure specific generic floating support in 2015/2016 be undertaken and further information including a full Equality Impact Assessment be presented to a future meeting.

CHAIRMAN