

SOCIAL CARE, HEALTH AND HOUSING SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

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

Members Present:

14th May 2015

Chairman: Councillor Mrs.S.M.Penry

Vice Chairman: Councillor Mrs.A.Wingrave

Councillors: H.M.Bebell, Mrs P.Bebell, J.S.Evans, R.James,
Mrs.D.Jones, J.Miller, A.Taylor, R.G.Jones,
J.Warman, A.R.Lockyer, D.Whitelock,
Mrs.S.Paddison and A.L.Thomas

Officers In Attendance Mrs.L.Whittaker, Mrs.C.Marchant, Mrs.A.Thomas,
M.Jones, S. Adie, M. Thomas, Mrs.A.Williams and
Ms.C.Gadd

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

1. **MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS SOCIAL CARE, HEALTH AND
HOUSING SCRUTINY COMMITTEE HELD ON 2ND APRIL 2015**

The Committee agreed and noted the minutes.

2. **PRE-SCRUTINY**

The Committee scrutinised the following matters:

Cabinet Board Proposals

2.1 **NPT Homes Progress Report – to April 2015**

The Committee received the report on an overview of progress made by NPT Homes in respect of the promises made to tenants in the Council's offer document, as detailed within the circulated report.

Members were informed that the New Shared Allocation Policy had started to be implemented and the main change was from a points based system to a banding system. They were also updated on the level of local investment generated by NPT Homes that for every £1 spent by the organisation it generated another £1.99 spent in the local economy.

Members raised that they had received complaints from some residents regarding damp in some NPT Homes properties, particularly in flats. NPT Homes were aware of these issues and it was anticipated that around 4,000 properties had damp issues. It was noted that these had not been identified in the stock transfer. The main reasons for the damp was highlighted as cavity wall insulation failings. There was a cost to extracting it from the properties of around £2,500 and there was a rolling programme in place for completing this work. Once this work had been undertaken the property needs to be left to dry out. Members queried how long it took for properties to dry out and they were informed that it was dependent on several factors such as the external temperature.

Members requested that in future reports the colour charts would be in a different format to distinguish between the information as the reports were produced in black and white. Officers confirmed that this would be taken on board for future reports.

Members asked if there were large waiting lists for NPT Homes properties and whether the bedroom tax added to this. Members were informed that there had been an increase in the numbers on the waiting list recently. It was also highlighted that it was just the Council's and NPT Homes waiting list and they were not joined with any other providers. Therefore, it was not known if people were on more than one list and if they had been adequately housed they could be taken off the list. Work was being undertaken to try and develop a common list between providers to solve such issues.

Members queried whether the task and finish group for sheltered housing had completed its work. It was confirmed that the group had been visiting the sheltered housing schemes to find out what was important to residents and their work had finished today. It was noted that two independent people were part of the group. Members asked if the voluntary sector had been involved and it was highlighted that they would be if specific services were identified, such as befriending.

Members asked how quickly empty properties were turned around. Officers informed them that it depended on the condition of the

property and incentives were given to residents to leave the properties in a clean and tidy state. If they were in a bad condition then they would be upgraded before being let out again. It was noted that there were some long term void properties that required extensive modernisation to bring them up to standard.

Members were informed that there would continue to be regular meetings with the Chief Executive of Neath Port Talbot Homes and the Head of Business Strategy and Public Protection.

Following scrutiny, it was agreed that the report be noted.

2.2 Social Services Complaints and Representations Annual Report 2014-15

The Committee received the Social Services Complaints and Representations Annual Report 2014-15, as detailed within the circulated report.

The report covered the period 1st April 2014 to 31st March 2015 and related to Children and Young Peoples and Adult Social Care Services. In August 2014 a new two stage process replaced the previous three stage process, the new process puts more emphasis on customer services and lessons learned. It was noted that the level of complaints progressing past Stage 1 had decreased and the new IT system had improved the quality of performance information.

Members asked for more information on collaborative working with Swansea and Bridgend. It was explained that initial discussions had been undertaken regarding a reciprocal arrangements with counterparts to provide independent advisors, which could result in savings for the three Local Authorities. Once firmer arrangements had been developed they would be brought back to the Committee.

Members requested further information on the breakdown of complaints being dealt with by other departments, how many were outstanding and examples of lessons learned. Members also asked how many complaints had been made by children and young people and in addition how many of those had used the advocacy service. Officers informed Members that it was useful for them to know what level of detail Members would like and that this would be included in the quarterly reports. It was noted that a decision was to be made on whether quarterly reports would be split and the relevant information taken to Children, Young People and Education and Social Care,

Health and Housing Scrutiny Committees and Cabinet Boards. Discussions regarding this would be included in the forward work programme for both Committees. It was noted that part of the lessons learned would be implemented by the Participation and Engagement Officer for Children's Services.

It was asked if there had been discussions with Welsh Government regarding the quality judgement framework that formed part of the Social Services and Well-being Act 2014. It was highlighted that there were regional workshops being held on this and Local Authorities would be attended these initially.

Following scrutiny, it was agreed that the report be noted.

2.3 Food Hygiene Training

The Committee received a report to inform them of the work that the Environmental Health Food Safety Team does to educate and train food business operators in Neath Port Talbot to produce safe food, as detailed within the circulated report.

Members were informed that the Service had successfully bid for two grants from the Food Standards Agency (FSA), which enabled an extensive range of workshops to be held and coaching to educate targeted sectors of food businesses within Neath Port Talbot on safe food management systems. It was highlighted that some areas had been more difficult to address and coaching was specifically targeted to capture these areas. For example, Chinese food businesses, where language had been a barrier and the training and coaching were delivered in the required language. Butcher shops were also targeted. Members were pleased with the response and noted that the turn out had been very good.

Members asked if it could be made compulsory for all food businesses to attend such workshops. Officers highlighted that all food businesses had to have food safety procedures in place and a level of training, however, it was not possible to make them attend such workshops. It was also noted that Neath Port Talbot had been proactive as a lot of Local Authorities had not put in bids to the FSA. The Council was looking to run further courses and coaching if they were successful with funding in the future. It was noted that supermarket butchers did not attend the training as they arrange their own in-house training.

Officers informed Members that food establishments who failed to display hygiene ratings could be prosecuted and fixed penalty notices had been served in Neath Port Talbot. It was noted that some establishments had not yet been rated and therefore may not be able to display a rating. Also some ratings may not be accurate as the business may have done work following the initial rating to improve and they had not been reassessed. It was suggested that officers brought an update report back to the Committee on the full picture once the work had been completed.

Members asked if food stalls at fetes and community events needed to have had a food hygiene score and it was confirmed that they should. It was also highlighted that new businesses starting up in the area could access the New Business Team for advice.

Following scrutiny, it was agreed that the report be noted.

2.4 Social Services Grant Programme

The Committee received the report to advise Members of the Programme Development Document for the Social Housing Grant (SHG) Programme in Neath Port Talbot, as detailed within the circulated report.

Members were invited to visit the developments that have been started and the Committee indicated that they would like the opportunity to do so.

It was clarified that the Local Authority supports more schemes than it has funding for as some schemes would fail and to ensure there would be other schemes taking place.

Following scrutiny, it was agreed that the report be noted.

2.5 Transition Protocol

The Committee received the report on the approval of the implementation of the Transition Protocol which had been agreed between Adult and Children's Services, as detailed within the circulated report.

It was highlighted that Members had received this report at the previous meeting but they had not been willing to support the

recommendation as the Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) had not been available. Officers informed the Committee that the EIA was attached for information and the eligibility criteria was now included in the documentation, as requested at the previous meeting. It was noted that a consultation on new criteria was underway and would be reported back to the Committee. Members were pleased to see that the report had come back with the EIA information.

Members queried if there was a degree of flexibility with the eligibility criteria ratings if people's circumstances change before an annual review took place. Officers informed them that the standard was a minimum of annual review and the review process had been assessed so it was person centred to ensure it met the needs of the individual.

Members highlighted that the contact details for Age Concern Neath Port Talbot were incorrect and Officers would amend them.

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

2.6 Joint Carers Commissioning Strategy 2015-18

The Committee received the report on the Joint Commissioning Strategy 2015-18, to inform them of the outcome of the public consultation and consider the approval of the new Strategy, as detailed in the circulated report.

Members were informed that the aim of the Strategy was to address the information and support needs of adults, young adult and young carers who were resident in Neath Port Talbot. The Service wanted to improve the quality of life of carers, promote inclusion and encourage a life away from care roles.

Members were disappointed that there had only been three consultation responses considering the number of people who recognise themselves as carers in the area. Officers informed them that the consultation was undertaken through the normal channels and promoted widely. It was highlighted that two of the responses were from organisations that represent carers. The responses received were mainly around more specialised services and age appropriate support. The consultation responses did not require the Strategy to be changed and respondents agreed with the overall aims and framework. An

Equality Impact Assessment had been undertaken and included for consideration by Members.

Members recognised the importance of support following bereavement and the impact this could have on carers.

Members asked if Education Services were identifying young carers and examples were given where pupils' attendance had been an issue and it was due to them being carers. It was highlighted that it was important that these young people were receiving the support they needed. Officers informed them that young carers should be identified by Children and Young People's Services as children in need. It was noted that there were different approaches across the schools and a consistent policy would be beneficial. Members highlighted that there were some issues with the transition of support offered to young carers when they became adults. It was felt that this needed to be addressed. Members were also concerned about young carers being held back on their life choices and the data on young carers should be examined separately to identify their needs. Members highlighted that it was not clear whether children and young people were involved in the development of the Strategy due to staff changes. It was felt that their voice should be heard in the Strategy, especially as the young carers' forum was no longer in existence. It was suggested that a separate strategy should be developed to address the needs of young carers.

It was highlighted that more carer assessments were being undertaken and there was an increase in the number of services provided. It was noted that some carers required short term services and other required more long term support. Members queried if during the assessment process was there an opportunity for carers to feedback on the process and how they were assessed. Officers informed them that there was not the capacity to go back to all those assessed for feedback but there was a quality assurance framework in place and a cross section was asked for feedback. It was noted that the new Social Services and Well-being Act 2014 put greater emphasis on feedback to the Service and performance information would demonstrate this. It was highlighted that it was important for the Service to go out and speak to carers and understand their needs.

Members asked if the Strategy left out people who were not identified by Social Services as carers. They were informed that this was not the case and in addition the new Act widened the definition of a carer. It was recognised that it was more difficult to identify carers not known to Social Services but there were other routes such as outreach

community facilities. It was emphasised that the voice of the carer was vital in such strategies and the appropriate mechanisms need to be in place to capture their views.

Following scrutiny, the Committee were supportive of the proposal to be considered by Cabinet Board. It was also agreed that the Cabinet Board be asked to consider the following recommendation that Officers create a separate strategy for young carers, to include engagement of children and young people in its development, and when completed, to be agreed at the Children, Young People and Education Cabinet Board.

2.7 Physical Disability Commissioning Strategy 2015-2018

The Committee received the report on the outcome of the recent public consultation on the Physical Disability Service Commission Strategy 2015-2018 and to consider the approval of the new Strategy, as detailed within the circulated report.

Members were informed that the underlying theme of the Strategy was to emphasise person-centred support. The draft Strategy had been consulted on for 90 days and 24 responses had been received. The general themes that came through the consultation were communication and age appropriate services. Officers recognised that the website needed improving. If the Strategy was approved by Cabinet Board then a detailed action plan would be produced to implement the Strategy.

Members were pleased to see the level of consultation responses and it was highlighted that there had been a lot of consultation for a range of services demonstrating the amount of changes taking place. It was noted that the Services being run out of Croserw Resource Centre were impressive and the Committee requested a meeting to be held there and a site visit. It was suggested that this took place after the further adult services had been moved to the Centre.

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

2.8 GRWP Gwalia Re-Alignment of Residential Care

The Committee noted that they wanted to scrutinise this item following the 30 day consultation period.

3. URGENT ITEM

Because of the need to deal now with the matter contained in Minute No. 3(i) below, the Chairman agreed this could be raised at today's meeting as an urgent item pursuant to Section 100B (4) (b) of the Local Government Act 1972.

Reason for Urgency:

Due to time element

(i) Rhodes House Flats Proposals

The Committee received the report to seek approval for Council owned flats which are adjoined and part of Rhodes House Site development to be temporarily transferred to a Residential Social Landlord to accommodate people with mental health as part of the Gelligron closure plans, as detailed within the circulated report.

Officers made two verbal amendments to the urgent, tabled report. Firstly, the approval for the closure of Gelligron Mental Health Rehabilitation Unit was given in February 2015 and not October 2014. Secondly, the lease rental will be at 'market value', rather than 'peppercorn'.

Members were informed that the people that would be moved into the flats were currently in receipt of housing benefits, making them eligible for the Welsh Government Supporting People Grant (SPG), which funds their current housing support needs. However, if they transfer to the flats at Rhodes House the scheme would need to be a supported living model to continue accessing these funding opportunities. Therefore a Residential Social Landlord (RSL) was required to act as a temporary fixed term managing landlord.

Members queried what the duration of the lease would be and they were informed that it would be five years. Members asked why the change from a 'peppercorn' lease to a market value lease. Officers explained that this change had to be made for it to be financially viable for a RSL. It was noted that one RSL had already expressed an interest.

Members asked if there was any advantage to doing it the other way round and changing the support package. Officers informed them that the Community Independence Service was funded by SPG and it would be more expensive to use an alternative support service.

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

4. **ACCESS TO MEETINGS**

RESOLVED: that pursuant to Section 100A (4) and (5) of the Local Government Act 1972, the public be excluded for the following items of business which involved the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Paragraphs 12 and 14 of Part 4 or Schedule 12A to the above Act.

5. **PRE-SCRUTINY**

The Committee scrutinised the following matters:

Cabinet Board Proposals

5.1 Report of the Ombudsman

The Committee received the report regarding an Ombudsman investigation of a complaint against ABMU Health Board and the Council, as detailed within the circulated report.

The complaint was upheld by the Ombudsman and there were several recommendations for the Council. Members were informed that these recommendations and an action plan had been formulated to respond to these recommendations of which most had been completed.

Members highlighted that it was important that complaints were listened to and improvements made as a result of them to ensure there were robust processes in place.

Following scrutiny, it was agreed that the report be noted.

5.2 Transforming Adult Social Care (TASC) – Way Forward

The Committee received the report on the way forward for the Improving Outcomes, Improving Lives change programme and to seek approval to appoint Peopletoo via NEPRO to provide assistance to the Council to undertake some elements of the work, as detailed within the circulated report.

Members were provided with a summary report of progress and informed of the seven key priorities going forward. It was highlighted that there had been a significant restructure in Community Care and Commissioning, which has increased the workload of Principal Officers. Additional support was required for the change agenda and a set of skills that were not available in house. It was clarified that Peopletoo would be able to provide support relating to practice improvements for a better service and that they would not be delivering direct services.

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

It was noted that it was the Chairman's last meeting and she was thanked for all her work.

CHAIRMAN