

SOCIAL CARE, HEALTH AND HOUSING SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

(Committee Rooms A/B - Neath Civic Centre)

Members Present:

11th June 2015

Chairman: Councillor Mrs D Jones

Councillors: J.Miller, L.M.Purcell, A.Taylor, R.Thomas,
D.Whitelock and H.N.James

Officers In Attendance Mrs.C.Marchant, Mrs.A.Thomas, N.Evans, S. Adie,
S.Garland, M.Jones, Mrs C.Jones, Mrs.J.Anderson,
L. Barry and B. Browning

Cabinet Invitees: Councillors J.Rogers and E.V.Latham

1. **TO RECEIVE THE MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS SOCIAL CARE,
HEALTH AND HOUSING SCRUTINY COMMITTEE HELD ON
14TH MAY 2015**

Members noted the minutes.

2. **PRE-SCRUTINY**

i. **Community Care and Commissioning Business Plan 2015/2016**

Members received the business plan for the area of Community Care and Commissioning.

Members noted that within the report was mention of future monitoring arrangements and asked that the individual performance score cards be presented to the scrutiny committee during the course of the next civic year. Officers agreed to this request.

Members asked for clarity in relation to the risk management scores and were advised that the risk assessments provide a balance between any proposed savings and how this would affect the provision of support.

It was noted that there would be future budgetary pressures coming forward and Members asked how previous pressures had been managed. It was confirmed that in the past the pressures had been managed through the use of underspends in other areas of other directorates. It was further highlighted that this will not be possible in the future.

Members noted that in relation to the Community Resource Team the budget had increased significantly and an explanation was required. Officers confirmed that this had been because the team has expanded but the investment in prevention will free up resources to counter this.

It was confirmed that a report on Section 33 agreement in relation to finance will be presented to the Committee at a future meeting.

Members asked were there any issues in relation to Grwp Gwalia. It was confirmed that there is a contract that will ensure the delivery of benefits over a 25 years period. Members were reminded that within the first five years of the contract the Council has to commission 95% of beds but after five years the percentage can be as low as 50%.

Members raised concern in relation to the point that an external consultant will be engaged to undertake some work within the Directorate. Members asked how long would the consultant be employed and at what cost. Members were advised that there was a need to engage with an external consultant due to a lack of capacity and capability. The cost of the consultant had been included within a report that had been considered at the previous meeting of the Committee.

Further concern was raised by Members in relation to the ICT Framework and it was highlighted that this had been raised year on year for many years. It was confirmed that this was still a problem but it is hoped that this can be addressed in the future but at the moment there is a lack of capacity to undertake this work.

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

ii. Area Planning Board for Substance Misuse – Legal Agreement of the Executive Group

This item was withdrawn as it was placed on the agenda in error and does not come under the remit of this Committee.

iii. Update to the Charging and Financial Assessment Policy for Non Residential Forms of Care 2015/2016

Members considered a report that sought permission to implement changes to the Charging and Financial Assessment Policy for Non-Residential Forms of Care.

Officers stated that there had been a need to amend the charges as there were currently some inequalities across the County Borough. The changes were being proposed to allow for charges to be made in accordance to the care plan. It was further highlighted that the previous system was very bureaucratic and that as a Council we do not currently have the resources to do what we have always done.

Members raised concerns in relation to the Equalities Impact Assessment as it stated that data was to be collected on protected groups and Members asked whether the impact assessment was actually sound. Members were advised that the protected characteristics will be collected as part of the care plan assessment.

Further concern was raised in relation of individuals who pay in advance for care and then subsequently find themselves in hospital for example. It was confirmed that any credits are done on a three monthly basis but if an individual is in hospital then the first two weeks have to be paid.

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

iv. Western Bay Regional Quality Framework

Members received a report that highlighted the development of a Regional Quality Framework for the care home sector.

Officers reminded Members that there had been a number of discussions around Residential care recently including a report by the Older Persons Commissioner. Members were also advised that Bridgend County Borough Council has a different approach and recognise when good care is provided.

Members stated that they understood that the areas of work within Western Bay are vast and would like further information to be presented to a future meeting on the work streams. Members were advised that the Western Bay had no decision making powers but was a useful forum for attracting grants.

A question was raised as to what happened before the idea of a regional framework was suggested. It was confirmed that Councils undertook contract monitoring to ensure that care standards were maintained.

It was stated by Members that there is a need to improve the IT systems of relevant partners within the group which will improve communication and break down barriers.

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

v. **Business Strategy, Public Protection and Housing Services Business Plan 2015/2016**

Members were advised that some key points of the Business Plan was the need to outline what the new Housing Act was to ensure all parties understand their responsibilities. Members were also advised that there is a need to reinvigorate partnerships in relation to social housing.

Members noted that there is currently a lack of suitable housing and this is in general due to care leavers and this potentially could rise. Members welcomed the proactive approach.

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

i. **Environmental Health and Trading Standards – Food and Feed Law Enforcement Service Delivery Plan 2015/2016**

Members noted that the service was very much a reactive service and responds when incidents happen or something went wrong. Members were advised that the Service is both proactive and reactive. Members asked was the service prepared for the unknown. It was confirmed that this was a difficult question to answer but the service had taken steps and invested in the services which will see a number of additional qualified Environmental Health Officers shortly.

Members were informed that that demand for some services would be greater in different areas of the Council but it was also highlighted that further cuts will impact on any future capability as the team is small.

Members highlighted concerns in relation to rogue traders and it was confirmed that Trading Standards have taken a hard line in this area particularly in relation to identifying and stopping individuals who target

the elderly and the vulnerable with many scams. This has resulted in a number of cautions and in some cases prosecutions.

Officers stated that there is some cross over with Housing Officers and there is possibly an opportunity to share the work load.

Members raised concern in relation to legal highs and appreciated that there is legislation in development to address the issue but asked is there anything the Council can do in the interim. It was confirmed that a report has been developed internally and this will be presented to the next meeting.

Another issue is that legal highs change rapidly with different products developed but the planned new government legislation should address this. Members were notified that the Council can obtain temporary closure notices but they are only applicable for a short period of time which does not always allow the Council to address the concerns.

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

3. **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**

i. **Beacons View Proposals**

Members considered the urgent joint report of the Head of Community Care and Commissioning and the Head of Property and Regeneration which sought to grant a lease of 13 Beacons View, Cimla, Neath to First Choice Housing Association Limited.

Members were advised that the report was urgent so that emergency accommodation could be provided for people with Learning Disabilities.

Members asked whether this was a stop gap for individuals but it was confirmed that it would not be. Members were also advised that the new tenant would be required to address the £120,000 capital investment that was required.

Members asked what were the risks of not following the procurement process and appointing First Choice Housing Association Limited. Members were advised that they could be challenged but the evidence that a facility was required at the soonest opportunity was the reason and is in the best interested of potential service users.

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

CHAIRMAN