

## SOCIAL CARE, HEALTH AND HOUSING SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

(Committee Rooms A/B - Neath Civic Centre)

**Members Present:**

**17 November 2016**

**Chairperson:** Councillor Mrs.D.Jones

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

**Officers In Attendance** A.Jarrett, Mrs.A.Thomas, N.Evans, G. Evans,  
Ms.S.Jenkins and Mrs C.Jones

**Cabinet Invitees:** Councillors P.A.Rees

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1. **TO RECEIVE THE MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS SOCIAL CARE, HEALTH AND HOUSING SCRUTINY COMMITTEE HELD ON 20 OCTOBER 2016**

The Committee noted the Minutes.

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

The Committee noted the work programme.

3. **CORPORATE IMPROVEMENT OBJECTIVE - PROSPERITY FOR ALL - HIGHLIGHT REPORT - QUARTER TWO 2016-2017**

Members considered the Quarter 2 highlight report in relation to the Corporate Improvement Objective – Prosperity for All.

Officers highlighted issues around homelessness and that the Council has a statutory obligation to take people in who present themselves as homeless. The concern is that there have been a number of incidents where individuals have presented themselves and have shown through different incidents that they have mental

health issues. Officers continued that it was unfortunate that the service does not have the expertise to deal with these individuals from a health perspective.

Members were advised that following an earlier review the units at Beaufort House had reduced from 11 to 7. This enabled the service to be mindful of anyone with mental health issues and they could be signposted to an alternative service.

Members asked whether there was an increased pressure on the service. Officers confirmed that there had been little or no increase in that there are still just over 2000 individuals presenting themselves as homeless every year. Members were advised that while the service continues to deliver with diminishing resources it does constantly look at other areas of the directorate to see where they can assist and to increase resilience.

Following scrutiny the report was noted.

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

Members considered a report on the Corporate Improvement Objective – Improving Outcomes, Improving Lives that highlighted the progress made in the first six months of the year.

Officers advised that the Department was not pressurising individuals to receive Direct Payments where it was not appropriate for them to do so.

Officers took Members through the risks linked with this Corporate Improvement Objective and stated that the biggest risk was in relation to the loss of senior staff and the potential failure of service delivery. Officers stated that in effect the whole senior management team had left the authority in a short space of time this coupled with a number of staff taking early or voluntary redundancy had resulted in pressures but the situation was managed tightly.

The Directorate has taken the view that instead of having consultants sitting outside highlighting what should be done they are now engaged as Principal Officers on specific projects. Members were advised that there had been a failure to recruit to the post that covered mental health and complex learning disabilities and there

had only been one applicant but they lacked line management experience.

Officers advised that a new Principal Officer had been appointed but they were responsible for a number of areas and this would not be sustainable for the future. It was stated that in the short term Principal Officers from Children's Services would be used to manage Safeguarding in Adult Services.

Officers continued that the staffing issues are a real risk to the Directorate but officers were doing everything they could to manage the situation.

Members requested a report be brought back to a future meeting that would highlight the staffing issues and the workforce in general along the same lines that the Children, Young People and Education have received.

Members asked what duration was remaining on the contracts of the consultants and officers advised that one would end at the end of December and the other at the end of March. Officers further advised that one of the consultants had now assumed responsibility for the area around Direct Payments.

Members raised concern in relation to the areas that were identified with a Green RAG status but there had been a dip in performance. Officers advised that because the dips in performance were less than 5% it would be recorded as a green.

Clarity was sought on how £115k had been reclaimed in respect to over supported Direct Payment Packages. Officers noted that they would come back to Committee with a full answer outside of the meeting.

Members asked for a progress report on the community care organisation. Officers agreed to bring back a progress report to the Committee at a later date but indications are that it is working well and only one complaint has been received and this was dealt with on a one to one basis.

With regards Direct Payments Members asked what the process was if someone was allocated Direct Payments but disagreed with the amount. Officers stated that if this was the case they can ask for their assessment to be reviewed by a special panel.

Members continued by asking was the Directorate on target in relation to administering Direct Payments. It was confirmed that it may not be possible to achieve the initial target as it had been a challenging one. Officers stated that it was important to ensure that those individuals who need Direct Payments do get them.

Members asked whether there were any reasons why the Council could not recruit new staff. It was suggested that there were no real hard and fast reasons but the fact that Swansea has recently recruited 3 Principal Officers and Bridgend 2 Principal Officers then this could have had an impact. It was also noted that the Welsh Local Government Association (WLGA) has also noted that there are recruitment problems across Wales.

Following Scrutiny the report was noted.

## 5. **PRE SCRUTINY**

The Committee scrutinised the following matters:

### Cabinet Board Proposals

#### 5.1 Quarter Two Performance Monitoring

Members considered the performance monitoring report for the second quarter of 2016/2017.

Members raised their concerns in relation to the rate of delayed transfers of care and the decreasing performance. Officers agreed that this was not ideal but they could confirm that the figure was down to 3 in October and is monitored continually.

Officers advised that within the report there were a number of new measures that were included that had no data but the data will come through either in the next quarter or at year end. Members were advised that the in house IT system was good at collating the information however, concern was raised that there is an all Wales system proposed for the collation of data.

Members asked is the Council being pushed down the pan Wales route or could we market our system to other Councils and raise some income. Officers stated that there would be limited if any

opportunities to market our system as all Councils operate in different ways.

A question was raised specifically in relation to the assessment team on Delayed Transfer of Care. It was suggested that when they work weekends they have to come into the office to write up their reports. Officers stated that they had no knowledge of this but would investigate.

6. **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.**

7. **PRE SCRUTINY**

The Committee considered the following private matters:

Cabinet Board Proposals

7.1 Social Housing Grant Programme & Affordable Housing

Members considered a progress report on the Social Housing Grant Programme within Neath Port Talbot.

Members asked whether the legislation in relation to private landlords was now in place. Officers confirmed that Rentsmart Wales is due to be implemented at the end of the month although there is a lobby to push this date on.

Following scrutiny the report was noted.

**CHAIRPERSON**