

Social Services, Housing and Community Safety Scrutiny Committee
(Microsoft Teams / Hybrid Council Chamber)

Members Present:

26 January 2023

Chairperson: Councillor C.Galsworthy

Vice Chairperson: Councillor H.C.Clarke

Councillors: O.S.Davies, J.Jones, A.R.Lockyer,
P.D.Richards, M.Spooner, S.Rahaman and
A.R.Aubrey

Officers In Attendance A.Jarrett, A.Thomas, K.Warren,
C.Howard,L. Jones, E.Wellington, S.Waite,
C.Jones, C.Morris, H.Jones, N.Blackmore,
C.Owens, S Bradshaw, E. O'Brien, I.Finnemore,
M.Hayes, K.Richards, M.Weaver, A.Thomas
and N.Jones

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

1. **Chair's Announcements**

In relation to the Care Inspectorate Wales Inspection of Trem Y Mor Respite Unit report, Members wanted to congratulate Officers for an excellent report.

Also, the Social Services Complaints and Representations Annual Report 2021-22, Members wanted to congratulate officers for a brilliant report and said how it was nice to see that there more compliments than complaints.

2. **Declarations of Interest**

The following Member made a declaration of interest at the start of the meeting:

Councillor Charlotte Galsworthy Re: Items 7 – Audit Wales Report
on Direct Payments for Adult

Social Care as she is a Personal Assistant (PA) for her mother.

Cllr Sian Harris

Re: Items 13 – The Procurement of a Social Care Case Management Platform – Her son is a PCSO.

Cllr Jeff Jones

Re: Cllr Jones' wife works for the Wellbeing Team

Cllr A.Lockyer

Re: Items 7 – Audit Wales Report on Direct Payments for Adult Social Care – His daughter is a PA.

3. **Consultation on 2023/24 Budget Proposals**

Officers updated members in relation to the Budget.

Members asked how much percentage of the reserve fund was expected to be allocated to Social Services.

Officers explained that none of the funds were specifically for the Social Services directorate, it would be used to underwrite the whole council budget for next year.

4. **Asylum and Refugees Resettlement Jan 2023**

Officers updated members in relation to Asylum and Refugees Resettlement.

Members asked who was funding the British Red Cross. Officers explained the British Red Cross were commissioned to provide very specific orientation support to Afghan families and that was funded by a tariff from the Home Office.

Members referred to the company Clear Springs and it referred to three properties for family accommodation, members asked officers if the property was in addition to the three properties already in place. Officers explained that the three Afghan families had arrived and were a refugee resettlements program, which was entirely different to the asylum dispersal route. Asylum seekers and refugees had a different legal definition. Clear Springs had been contracted by the Home Office to source initial accommodation for Asylum Seekers.

Officers had no details on what the nationalities could be and wouldn't know until the property was procured.

Members asked in relation to the host family visa scheme, what would happen if the relationship between the Ukrainian family and the host family doesn't go very well after a few weeks or a couple of months, would the local authority intervene. Officers explained under the Ukrainian settlements program, the people arrive in with their visas either through the homes for Ukraine or the family visa scheme had all the rights to housing, education and benefits so, if the relationship broke down they could present to the housing options service who would have to provide advice or temporary accommodation.

Officers mentioned the report briefly explains about the unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children and issues they had with the dispersal mechanism from the Home Office. While Officers had worked well with Welsh Government, the relationship wasn't as strong with the Home Office where officers had to write to the Home Office that there were safeguarding issues and the way they were discharging their responsibilities. Officers suggested that the committee may want a further report in relation to the Home Office. Members were happy with this suggestion.

Members asked in relation to Clear Springs, what input they had with regards to monitoring the quality of accommodation that the company were allocating. Officers explained under the Asylum Dispersal Route, Clear Springs had a process whereby they consult the local authority on a prospective property that they hope to procure, they would send the details to officers and then they consult with colleagues across the local authority, which would include Education, Safeguarding, Housing and Environmental Health. Officers also consult with South Wales Police, the Health Board, Mid and West Wales Fire and Rescue Service to find out their views also. The form would be required to be returned within five days and within that form, officers could say whether they were supportive or not supportive of the property being used.

The Home Office and Clear Springs could challenge that and had already pushed back against one property that was raised concerns about on behalf of South Wales Police.

Members asked for an update in relation to what the position was around the housing enforcement and maybe write to the Minister for more clarity. Officers explained they give assurances that the properties would be in good condition because the company has had

criticism in the past for the quality of their accommodation, officers agreed to bring an update back to the Committee.

5. **Anti-Social Behaviour and Homelessness**

Officers delivered a presentation to the committee in relation to Anti-Social Behaviour and Homelessness.

Members thanked Officers for an excellent presentation and thanked them for all their hard work.

Members asked would Welsh Government be offering more resources to help the area. Officers explained they have had a number of grants, in relation to the housing support grant there hadn't been an uplift in that grant but was at a standstill position of approximately 6.5 million to provide the support to people that needed additional support to prevent homelessness or to support them back into accommodation. Officers explained they had been given various grants for next year also but the amount of grants doesn't cover the cost of supporting people.

6. **Pre-Decision Scrutiny**

Members agreed to scrutinise items 7, 12 and 13 from the Cabinet Board agenda.

Audit Wales Report On Direct Payments For Adult Social Care

Members were presented with a report relating to the summary of the content of the Audit Wales on Direct Payments for Adults Social Care.

Members asked in relation recommendation three, it stated the advocacy services representatives to be invited to direct payment recipient form and meetings, members asked does it mean paid for advocacy or third sector advocates. Officers explained they had legal surgeries for direct payments where social workers were being updated and trained as they went along. Officers mentioned they want advocates more at the front door, they want the initial part of the assessment so that they were satisfied that people were being offered direct payments. The report was referring to a non-paid advocate for people to have somebody as part of their network that sits with social work in terms of them making sure the right people were with the individual during that assessment process. Officers mentioned that advocacy can include third sector or it can include the

paid advocate or can include anyone that wishes to advocate on behalf of that person who could be the direct recipient.

Members queried the difference in payments between Neath Port Talbot and Swansea as Swansea is paid more. Officers explained they can't recruit domiciliary care workers or home care workers in the Council for the money they were paying which is more than the £10.50 an hour. Officers added that they had a rate of pay for Personal Assistants but then other areas would set their rates for agency or respite, NPT wouldn't do that but they made sure that people were able to put to Commission the service that they needed. Members asked for a further report to publicise all the positive work officers were undertaking.

Members noted the report.

7. **Forward Work Programme 2022/23**

Members asked for Items to be put on the Forward Work Programme for the next couple of months:

- Joint Working with Home Office
- Report on Personal Assistants
- Update on accommodation (Asylum and Refugees)

8. **Urgent Items**

There were none.

9. **Access to Meetings**

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

Manager's Report On Hillside Secure Children's Home

Members were presented with a report in relation to the Managers Report on Hillside Secure Children's Home

Members noted the report.

The Procurement Of a Social Care Case Management Platform

Members were presented with a report in relation to the Procurement of a Social Care Case Management Platform.

Following scrutiny, members were supportive of the recommendations to be considered by the Cabinet Board

CHAIRPERSON