

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

Members Present:

20 April 2023

Chairperson: Councillor C.Galsworthy

Vice Chairperson: Councillor H.C.Clarke

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

Officers In Attendance R Davies, A.Jarrett, A.Thomas, K.Warren,
Wellington, S.Waite and C.Jones, M.Shaw,
V.Smith, A.J.Thomas, D.Tiddy, M.Weaver,
H.Short, C.Howard, L.Potterton, E.Wellington,
A.Evans, S.Coffey and A.Thomas

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

1. **Chair's Announcements**

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting.

The Chair confirmed that the committee would be scrutinising items 6, 7, 10, 11, 12, 13 and 14.

2. **Declarations of Interest**

There were no declarations of interest received.

3. **Minutes of Previous Meeting**

The minutes of the meeting held on 9th March 2023 were approved as a true and accurate record.

4. **Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children**

The Head of Children's Services outlined the content of the report. Members were advised that representations have been made to the Home Office with regards to how unaccompanied asylum seeking children come into the authority.

Currently the young people that are supported are age 14 – 19 and are all male and from different cultural backgrounds. A consultation took place with the youngsters when they arrived to determine if the welcome packs were informative and what the youngsters would be keen to engage with moving forward. The youngsters are keen to learn about Welsh culture and they have undertaken a series of activities to support their learning. The authority are working with Swansea.com who specifically work with the wider refugee situation, including Ukrainian families.

Currently the authority are facing struggles with regards to accommodation for the 18+ placements. Projections for future intake have been extremely difficult to determine with the Home Office. The Home Office have advised that the authority may need to accept up to a further 14/15 young people. The team have been working closely with commissioning to determine how they project the authorities future needs and ideally put set a 3-5 year working plan in place, however the data available from the Home Office is making this difficult.

Members queried if any contact had been made with the Health Board in relation to providing support for mental health issues that may arise. Officers advised that there is partnership working. There is a route in via the GP and also an in-house therapeutic team who can assist with items as they arise.

Officers stressed the vulnerability of the children and the trauma that they may have experienced in their own country and on their journey to the UK. Concerns of officers relate to the National Transfer Scheme and safeguarding arrangements that are put in place for the children once in the UK.

It was noted that the Home Office has an escalation process and will issue a non-compliance letter for any authority who does not place a referral within 20 days of receipt. Members queried what a non-compliance letter would mean to the Council. Officers advised that it would predominantly be a meeting with the Home Office to explain what difficulties the authority were facing.

Officers outlined that all young people accessing the services are priority and have different needs, which require different skill sets. The authority consider the best way to support the youngsters that come into the service.

This item was noted for information.

5. **Pre-Decision Scrutiny**

Healthy Relationships for Stronger Communities Strategy

The first strategy was produced in 2017 following the introduction of the Violence Against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence Act (Wales) 2015. This strategy was revised and reviewed for the period 2020-2023. The strategy covering 2023-2026, now requires consultation. Officers advised that COVID-19 had slowed some of the items down, however they have been fed into the current draft strategy so they can continue to be taken forward.

The main area of change to the draft strategy falls under Chapter 7, which outlines the objectives and actions that the leadership group will be prioritising to take forward. Following agreement of the strategy annual progress reports will be produced.

Members queried if the partner organisations would be able to attend a future meeting so that members can better understand their remit and role within the strategy.

Officers advised that whilst Welsh Government were keen that the work within the strategy is all carried out regionally, partners were keen to ensure that local work also remained a priority recognising that every community is individual.

With regards to health relationship lessons that take place in schools, members queried if parents had been receptive to this generally. Officers confirmed that the lessons had been in schools a number of years and to date there had been no opposition to this. However, with the recent changes to the relationship and sexuality curriculum a lot of work is being done to ensure that parents have the correct information with regards to what the changes to the curriculum entail.

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

West Glamorgan Partnership Area Plan 2023-2027

Members considered the report as outlined within the circulated agenda.

Officers outlined the key points within the document. The report outlines the strategy, however the action plan will be brought back before a future meeting.

The Director advised that he would be able to assist with inviting the multi-agency group to a future meeting to speak about the regional work that is taking place.

Members expressed their concern that it is sometimes difficult to see the translation of the strategy document into physical actions within the community. It would be useful to invite external partners to a future meeting to discuss this.

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

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

To note for information.

7. **Urgent Items**

There were no urgent items.

8. **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.

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

Continuation Of Orientation Support To Families Settled Under The Afghan Relocation And Assistance (ARAP) Scheme

Members considered the report as circulated within the agenda pack.

Following scrutiny, the report was noted for information.

Contractual Arrangements for a Third Sector and Non-Regulatory Services funded by Social Services, Health and Housing

Members considered the report as circulated within the agenda pack.

Following scrutiny, the report was noted for information.

Contractual Arrangements for a Range of Children and Young People Services funded by Social Services, Health and Housing

Members considered the report as circulated within the agenda pack.

Following scrutiny, the report was noted for information.

Hillside Manager's Report

Members considered the report as circulated within the agenda pack.

Following scrutiny, the report was noted for information.

Eco 4 Flex Scheme

Members considered the report as circulated within the agenda pack.

Following scrutiny, the recommendation was supported to Cabinet Board.

CHAIRPERSON

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