



## **RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNCIL CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

Minutes of the meeting of the Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee meeting held on Wednesday, 11 March 2020 at 5.00 pm at the Council Chamber, The Pavilions, Cambrian Park. Clydach Vale, Tonypany, CF40 2XX.

### **County Borough Councillors - Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee Members in attendance:-**

Councillor W Lewis (Chair)

Councillor S Powell    Councillor M Griffiths  
Councillor G Jones    Councillor G Stacey  
Councillor J Edwards    Councillor R Turner

### **Co-Opted Members in attendance:-**

Mr J Fish, Voting Elected Parent / Governor Representative  
Mr D Price, Representing UNISON  
Mr K Wilhite, Voting Elected Parent / Governor Representative

### **Officers in attendance:-**

Mr P Nicholls, Service Director, Legal Services  
Ms A Batley, Director of Children's Services  
Ms Z Lancelott, Head of Community Wellbeing & Resilience  
Ms T Prosser, Head of Service

### **County Borough Councillors in attendance:-**

Councillor S Evans

#### **81 Declaration of Interest**

In accordance with the Council's Code of Conduct, there were no declarations made pertaining to the agenda.

#### **82 Apologies for Absence**

Apologies for absence were received from County Borough Councillors S Rees-Owen, J Brencher, S Evans, H Fychan, M Powell, A Calvert

#### **83 Minutes**

It was **RESOLVED** to approve the minutes of the 12<sup>th</sup> February 2020 as an accurate reflection of the meeting.

#### **84 Consultation Links**

The Chair referenced the consultation links, which are available through the RCT

Scrutiny website. Members were reminded that information is provided in respect of the relevant consultations for consideration by the committee which are circulated on a monthly basis. It was highlighted that if Members wanted any further information to contact the Scrutiny Officers via the e- mail address provided.

## **85 Community Wellbeing and Resilience Service and the Delivery of Early Year Services in RCT.**

The Head of Community and Wellbeing and Resilience provided Members of the Committee with an overview of the recent changes to the Council's Community Wellbeing and Resilience Service along with the progress made to date in transforming the delivery of Early Years services in RCT.

Members were informed that over the last three years RCT has been involved in a number of regional initiatives with Welsh Government that have been overseen by Cwm Taf Public Service Board.

The Public Service Board agreed to work with Welsh Government to undertake a joint collaborative approach to redesigning Early Years arrangements across RCT and Merthyr in 2017. Officers continued to explain that in 2018 the PSB unanimously agreed the proposal to align the work of the Early Years Co-construction Project with the Children's First initiative and the funding flexibilities pathfinder under the regional vision of **Providing the right support, to the right person at the right time, in the right place.**

The Head of Community and Wellbeing and resilience explained that Cabinet approved in July 2019 the internal reorganisation of Early Years and Family Support services. Members were also presented with the new structure of the service under the following headings;

- Children & Young People Service;
- Resilient Families Service;
- Early Intervention and Prevention Commissioning Team ;and
- Service Planning and Transformation Team.

With regards to the early years services the Officer explained the background in relation to the delivery of a transformed early year's system in Rhondda Cynon Taf. Members acknowledged that the Flying Start programme in RCT comprises of four core elements and how they had traditionally been delivered.

Members found it pleasing that collaborative working with Welsh Government, Merthyr Tydfil CBC, Cwm Taf Morgannwg UHB and RCT has made a change to the way we deliver the Flying Start programme which now extends the reach of specialist Flying Start services to any family in RCT who needs it.

The Officer continued to inform Members on how the changes to the service have embedded under the following four core elements;

- Parenting;
- Early Language and Communication;
- Health Visiting; and
- Childcare

In concluding her report the Officer highlighted that to support the move to a needs based model of delivery it is necessary to ensure we are able to be

proactive in identifying the potential needs of families at the earliest opportunity. The Officer ensued and explained that following a request from Welsh Government for additional information the formal request for Ministerial approval was submitted in December 2019.

The Chair thanked the officers for the report and agreed to take questions and observations from Members.

A Member commented that the report was very informative but found it difficult to understand the entry system for the service, the Member asked if this could be explained such as where the referrals come from. The officer explained that there is a one door service.

The Member continued to ask how did the service link to schools, again the Officer explained that all referrals including self-referrals would be assessed through on entry point and would be allocated to the service area.

Another Member wanted clarity with regards to grant funding and asked if there was any assurance that the funding would be in place going forward and want clarity that the current model structure is sustainable. Officer explained that the Early Years' Service is met by existing grants and commitment is in place at present. With regards to the Resilience Family Service it has settled and the team has expanded which has been met from both core and grant funding, the officer ensued and highlighted that there are a lot more partner involved which is an we can focus on the resource that we have put in going forward.

Further questions were put forward to officers in respect of the updating report and Members **RESOLVED** to:

- Acknowledge the information contained in the report;
- Receive an update in respect of the Resilience Family Service in respect of what has been achieved since it implementation;
- Member receive the previous documentation that had been presented to the Committee for clarity.

## **86 Progress Update : Implementation of the Accommodation and Support for Young People 16+ years of age Leaving Care 2019-2022**

The Head of Service thanked Members for the opportunity to present the progress of the implementation of the Accommodation and Support Strategy for young people 16+ years of age leaving care 2019-2022.

The Officers reminded Members that the strategy was presented to them at the meeting in January 2019 and the progress report before them was to update Members on the achievements made in taking forward the key priorities outlined in the strategy.

The Head of Service provided Members with the background behind the strategy and outlined the way RCT would support young people 16+ years of age leaving care to achieve their best possible outcomes. The Officer ensued and explained the Key objectives and the actions against them. The Key Objective are as follows:

- To Ensure that children who cannot live with their parents live in suitable accommodation ;
- To develop a clear accommodation pathway for care leavers in RCT;
- To develop a continuum of accommodation and support to meet the

- needs of care leavers in RCT;
- To reduce the number of care leavers who are placed in B&B accommodation; and
- Develop a comprehensive support package for care leavers: Including production of a handbook, development of independent living skills, tenancy readiness.

Members were informed of the key actions that had been identified to be taken forward along with the progress made:

- Stage 1 – Helping young people to gain skills in preparation for independence and building resilience;
- Stage 2 – Planning accommodation and support options;
- Stage 3 – Reducing housing crisis for when young people experience difficulties in maintaining their accommodation and support needed to get them back on track;
- Stage- 4 – Ensuring young people are ready to move on to longer term accommodation and their own tenancy.

The Head of Service concluded her report by explaining over the last 12 months work has been undertaken to take forward the implementation of the strategy and we will continue to work hard to strive to achieve all the objectives going forward and will seek the view of the young people to ensure that their needs are being met.

The Chair thanked the Officer for the report and opened up the meeting for questions and observation from Members of the Committee.

A Member wanted clarification in respect of the 10 to 15 year cohort and asked as with regards to the sufficiency assessment what type of accommodation would be provided. Officers explained that they are working with housing and the young person to plan the process gradually and assess the best way forward.

It was asked if accommodation and support options were only given to children within the local authority care system. It was also asked how adoption leavers would be able to access the provision. Officer ensued and explained that as an authority we have a duty of care to vulnerable children across the board and we will enable them to navigate through the system, with regards to adopted children we have a duty of care as a priority through the Adoption Act.

A Member commented that the report was a pleasing read and felt it was reassuring to know that the vulnerable children within the County Borough were being looked after.

A Member wanted clarity on whether there were any children lost in the system with regards to housing. Officers explained that the benefit of working with housing partners the young person will get their needs met at the beginning through a front door approach.

A Member requested clarity on how many young people were in bed and breakfast accommodation. Officers explained that at present there were 2 young people between the age of 18 years and 21 years at this was at the young person's request as it was a place they felt comfortable.

Members put forward further questions to the Officers and **RESOLVED** :

- Acknowledge the process made against the plan;
- Continue to monitor the progress and the actions taken going forward.

**87 Chair's Review and Close**

The Chair made an announcement before recapping on the evenings meeting and took the opportunity to wish the Director of Children's Service Ms Ann Batley a very happy retirement and on behalf of the Committee the Chair thanked the Director of Children's Services for all her hard work and dedication not only to the Scrutiny Committee but to the care and attention she has given to our vulnerable children and families of Rhondda Cynon Taf over many years. The Committee wished her well and echoed the Chair by saying she will be greatly missed.

The Chair continued by thanking Member for their input into the Meeting along with the Officer who had presented very informative reports.

**This meeting closed at 7.35 pm**

**CLLR W LEWIS  
CHAIR.**