

RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

HEALTH & WELLBEING SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

MINUTES of the meeting of the Health & Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee held at the County Borough Council Offices, The Pavilions, Cambrian Park, Clydach Vale, on Wednesday, 14th October 2015 at 5.00 pm.

Present:

County Borough Councillor R W Smith – in the Chair

County Borough Councillors:

(Mrs) A Calvert	W J David	C Davies
(Mrs) M E Davies	S M Evans	A S Fox
(Mrs) S Rees	G Stacey	L G Walker
D H Williams		

Officers:

Mr G Isingrini – Group Director, Community & Children’s Services
Mr N Elliott, Service Director, Adult Services
Mr C B Jones – Service Director, Legal & Democratic Services
Mr P Griffiths – Service Director, Performance and Improvement
Mrs A Edwards – Scrutiny Support Officer

In attendance:

County Borough Councillor C Willis – Scrutiny Performance Co-ordinator

18. APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from County Borough Councillors J Davies, I Pearce, (Mrs) M Tegg and D W Weeks.

19. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest in relation to the agenda.

20. MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting of the Health & Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee held on 2nd September 2015 were approved as a correct record.

REPORTS OF THE GROUP DIRECTOR, COMMUNITY & CHILDREN'S SERVICES

21. CWM TAF CARERS INFORMATION & STRATEGY ANNUAL REPORT FOR 2014/15

The Committee was provided with the Annual Report for 2014/15 on the Cwm Taf Carers Information and Consultation Strategy 'Informed Carers' for information in support of its planned work for 2015/16 to drive improvement in relation to the Council's performance in respect of Carers' Assessments and support for carers in general.

The Group Director, Community & Children's Services commented that it was a positive report which highlighted the collaborative work undertaken to date by Merthyr Tydfil and Rhondda Cynon Taf Councils and Cwm Taf UHB to improve support, information and recognition of Carers. However, he expressed concern that the repeal of the Carers Measure and the loss of the associated funding as of 31st March 2016 was a risk to continuing the good work in identifying and supporting carers in the future.

The report stated that 15 of the 17 Rhondda Cynon Taf Comprehensive schools have a Carers' Champion and Members asked that they be provided with the details of the two schools that did not.

A Member pointed out to the Group Director that at the last meeting of the Finance & Performance Scrutiny Committee held on 7th October, the first quarter's performance information had been considered. She explained that the performance measure in relation to the percentage of Carers offered an assessment was again below target and she asked why this continued to be an issue.

The Group Director explained that it was his belief that social workers were making carers aware of their right to have an assessment but that there is an issue with regard to the recording processes. He felt that there was no reason why a target of 100% could not be achieved and he would endeavour to provide this evidence to the Committee.

A Member referred to the recent loss of staff from the Home Care service and asked whether the service could cope if more people came forward for assistance. He also referred to the reduced number of day centres now operating and questioned whether this would put carers under more stress.

The Group Director explained that it was a difficult balance between not wanting to create dependency and not wanting to put people at risk and it needed to be managed carefully.

The Chairman pointed out that included on the proposed work programme was the issue of Delayed Transfers of Care and as part of this work the Committee would be considering a number of elements including support in the wider community as well as family, Council and Health provision.

RESOLVED: to acknowledge receipt of the report.

22. SOCIAL SERVICES ANNUAL REPRESENTATIONS AND COMPLAINTS REPORTS 2014/15

The Committee was presented with the Social Services Annual Representations and Complaints report for 2014/15 which provided information on the background of the Social Services statutory complaints procedure, information on lessons learnt from complaints and performance data for Adults and Children's Social Services together with achievements for 2014/15 and future developments.

Following consideration of the report Members questioned the Group Director, Community and Children's Services.

A Member questioned why there was a delay in responding to complaints in some instances.

The Group Director reported that a delay often related to the need for more information to be gathered and explained that any delay would be agreed with the individuals concerned. He explained that the key issue was to deal with any complaint in a proper manner and sometimes that involved taking a little more time. He reported that the very small number of complaints that went onto stage 2 was very reassuring and testament to the work undertaken by the team.

A Member supported this view commenting that he had always found the Complaints department to be excellent.

A Member pointed to the rise in the number of complaints from Adults with learning disabilities.

The Group Director explained that it had been noticed that previously there had been very few complaints from this group of people and there had been a drive to ensure that they were made aware of their right to complain and to access advocacy thereby encouraging people to have a say on what is wrong so it can be improved.

A Member referred to the number of complaints under the heading 'staff issues' and asked if this could be expanded upon.

The Group Director explained that in the case of Children's Services it usually related to children taken into care. With regard to Adult Services it could be carers not being on time or a suggestion that an assessment was not done properly. He pointed out that in the vast majority of cases people were happy with the service they received.

Following consideration it was **RESOLVED** to accept the report.

REPORTS OF THE DIRECTOR OF LEGAL & DEMOCRATIC SERVICES

23. DRAFT GOOD PRACTICE GUIDANCE FOR EQUALITY & HUMAN RIGHTS IMPACT ASSESSMENTS AND SCRUTINY ON CHANGES TO COMMUNITY SERVICES IN WALES

The Committee was presented with a report which set out details of new Guidance which is being produced by the Older People's Commissioner on Equality and Human Rights Assessments and Scrutiny in relation to changes to community services in Wales. The Scrutiny Support Officer explained that the guidance came in two parts, one relating to Equality and Human Rights Impact Assessments and the second part which related to Scrutiny. She explained that the Guidance highlighted scrutiny's role in ensuring that any changes to community services are thoroughly and rigorously thought through and that the impact on older people and others is fully explored. She reported that whilst the Council did undertake Equality Impact Assessments when considering service change proposals she suggested that Members may wish to have a better understanding of the process.

The Service Director, Legal & Democratic Services advised on the importance of Equality Impact Assessments in ensuring that any decision taken by the Council is based on consideration of all relevant information and would stand up to any legal challenge.

The Chair suggested that it would be helpful for the Committee to have a better understanding of Equality Impact Assessments and how they are undertaken in Rhondda Cynon Taf.

The Group Director, Community & Children's Services pointed out that the Older People's Commissioner would be looking across Wales to see who was engaging in good practice.

Following consideration of the report it was **RESOLVED**:

- (i) to acknowledge the role which the Scrutiny Committee is being asked to undertake in relation to service change;
- (ii) to receive a presentation to a future meeting of the Health & Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee from the Council's Human Resources, Equality and Diversity Team in respect of Equality Impact Assessments.

24. THE TEMPORARY CLOSURE OF MAESYFFYNNON RESIDENTIAL CARE HOME, ABERAMAN

The Committee was provided with the report which had been considered by the Cabinet on 6th October 2015 which related to the temporary closure of Maesyffynnon Care Home and the transfer of residents to alternative

appropriate placements while all options for the home are fully investigated, costed and appraised.

The Chairman informed the Committee that both he and the vice chair had attended the Cabinet meeting to make the point that they felt that scrutiny should oversee the process of the transfer of residents highlighting the need to mitigate the level of stress which will be experienced by the frail and elderly residents of the home, some of whom have dementia.

The Group Director, Community & Children's Services agreed that this would be a sensible approach especially in light of the previous agenda item. He proceeded to outline the issues as set out in the Cabinet report and both he and the Service Director, Adult Services responded to Members' questions.

Following discussion it was **RESOLVED** to form a small working group consisting of the Chair and Vice Chair of the Committee along with the local Members, to oversee the process of the transfer of residents from Maesyffynnon Care Home to alternative placements.

25. **PROPOSED SCRUTINY WORK PROGRAMME**

The Committee was presented with a proposed work programme for the Health & Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee for 2015/16. The Chairman informed Members that at the meeting of the Finance and Performance Scrutiny Committee held on 7th October 2015 it had been resolved to refer an area of underperformance to the Health & Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee, namely, homelessness and the average number of days homeless households spent in bed and breakfast accommodation.

The Service Director, Performance & Improvement suggested that the Health & Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee should receive an update once quarter 2 information becomes available.

Members considered the work programme and it was noted that there was an error in relation to the March 2016 date.

Following consideration of the proposals it was **RESOLVED**:

- (i) to agree the work programme for the Health & Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee for the 2015/16 Municipal Year as that set out at Appendix 1, subject to minor amendment;
- (ii) that the work programme be amended as necessary during the year to reflect the demands of the work.

R W Smith
Chairman

The meeting closed at 5.45 pm.

