

RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

MUNICIPAL YEAR 2016-17

**HEALTH & WELLBEING
SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

8th SEPTEMBER 2016

**REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF
LEGAL & DEMOCRATIC
SERVICES**

Agenda Item No.4

**Maesyffynnon Residential Care Home,
Aberaman.**

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1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

The purpose of this report is to make the Committee aware of the findings of the scrutiny working group formed to oversee the process of the transfer of residents from Maesyffynnon Care Home.

2. RECOMMENDATION

- 2.1 It is recommended that Members endorse the conclusions and recommendations of the Working Group as set out at paragraph 6.

3. BACKGROUND

- 3.1 On 6th October 2015, Cabinet considered the report of the Group Director, Community & Children's Services in relation to the significant building maintenance issues which had come to light at the Maesyffynnon Residential Care Home
- 3.2. The report pointed out that a major breakdown of the mechanical services at the home could happen at any time, and with winter approaching, action needed to be taken as a matter of urgency. The report provided options for managing the ongoing risks to residents and Cabinet agreed the proposal put forward, namely, the temporary closure of Maesyffynnon Care Home and transfer of residents to alternative appropriate placements while all options for the home were fully investigated, costed and appraised. At the time of this decision there were 19 permanent residents living at the Home.
- 3.3 Cabinet agreed to the request of the Chair and Vice Chair of the Health and Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee that their Committee should have a role in scrutinising the process adopted to transfer residents and as a result, at the meeting of the Health & Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee held on 14th October 2015, it was resolved to form a small working group consisting of the Chair

and Vice Chair of the Committee along with the local Members for Aberaman North, to oversee the process of the transfer of residents from Maesyffynnon Care Home to alternative placements.

4. TRANSFER OF RESIDENTS

- 4.1 The Working Group initially met on 4th November, 2015 and received feedback from officers in relation to the meetings which had taken place with residents and their families and the plans in place for the transfer of residents which had begun on 29th October. Those residents who did not have family members to support them through the move were provided with advocates.
- 4.2 The Working Group was informed that all residents had been re-assessed for their care needs and given the option to move to Tegfan or Troedyrhiw Residential Care Homes, or another home of their choice or alternatively transferred to a nursing care home if they had been assessed as having greater care needs. Whilst there had been a few initial concerns, families had been reassured and there had been no adverse feedback from families arising from the transfers. It had also been made clear to everyone that there would be no enforced move back to Maesyffynnon at a future date.
- 4.3 The Working Group was informed that the transferred residents would be reviewed after 4 weeks to ensure that their needs were being met.
- 4.4 The Local Members reported that they had kept in regular contact with the home and as far as the residents were concerned they had no concerns. However, they did have concerns for the morale of staff.
- 4.5 The Working Group was mindful of the impact on Maesyffynnon staff, the majority of whom had transferred to Tegfan. Members learnt that the biggest challenge for management had been in relation to the casual workforce but as is the case for casual staff there can be no guarantee of hours. However, staff had been offered additional hours at other establishments where possible.
- 4.6 The Working Group was also informed that there had been no negative feedback from the CSSIW in relation to the arrangements.

5. CURRENT POSITION

- 5.1 Following the transfer of residents from Maesyffynnon, officers began work on investigating and costing the possible options for the home which was built in the 1960's and is not designed to meet the current expectations for care home accommodation.
- 5.2 As a result of this work, a report was presented to Cabinet on 11th February 2016 which set out a number of options which have been developed by officers which in summary are:
- Responding to current maintenance/refurbishment issues;

- Responding to current maintenance/refurbishment issues with an additional programme of work to address all refurbishment/maintenance issues but would still not ensure full compliance with the current CSSIW standards or provide a viable care home facility for the future;
 - Fully refurbish or rebuild the Home so that it meets current new build CSSIW standards
 - Permanently close the Home and develop alternative Extra Care housing provision either by redeveloping the existing site or on an alternative site in the Cynon Valley area.
- 5.3 The Cabinet decided to initiate a six week consultation with regards to the preferred option as identified in the report, being Option 3a, namely to permanently close Maesyffynnon Residential Care Home and develop alternative extra care housing provision on the current site of the Home. This consultation period began on 11th April 2016.
- 5.4 On the 18th April 2016, the members of the Working Group, namely County Borough Councillors (Mrs) L De Vet, S Evans, (Mrs) S Rees and R W Smith met with the Group Director, Community & Children's Services, the Service Director, Adult Services and the Head of Service for Accommodation.
- 5.5 The Working Group was informed on the consultation process and learnt that as well as being available on the Council's website, there would be a mail drop to all residents in Aberaman North. In addition, it was planned to hold a 'drop-in' consultation event at Saron Chapel, Davies Street, Aberaman. All staff, residents and their known representatives had also been written to. The letters to representatives had explained that they could simply return the consultation documents with their views or if they preferred and officer would be happy to go through the process with them. The Service Director was also personally meeting with staff and the first of these meetings had been held on 14th April.
- 5.6 The Working Group was also assured that the Council would be consulting with all relevant agencies/groups such as the Older Persons Advisory Group, Age Connect, Alzheimer's Society and also the independent care providers. The relevant trade unions had also been invited to the staff meetings.
- 5.7 On a positive note, the Working Group learnt that one of the residents transferred from Maesyffynnon to Troedyrhiw had returned home following an eighteen month stay in residential care.
- 5.8 The Working Group was informed that the trade unions had asked if a visit could be arranged to an Extra Care facility so that they would be better informed in their dialogue with members. The Working Group was also informed that all carers and residents had been given the opportunity to visit an Extra Care facility in a neighbouring authority. The Service Director assured Members that everything that the service had said would happen had been carried out.

- 5.9 The Local Members pointed out that many of the staff members had been unaware of what an 'extra care' facility entails and this had made them uneasy. Once they appreciated what it meant they were more comfortable with the idea. There is also an assumption that people know how the Council and its Cabinet works and this is not always the case and caused some confusion in respect of the consultation process.
- 5.10 However, a number of staff had pointed out that the key issue for them was that the facility is based in Aberaman.
- 5.11 The Working Group learnt that users of extra care facilities do not necessarily have to transfer to a residential nursing home should their condition worsen. Extra care facilities can provide a diverse model of care and it would depend on the needs of the individual.
- 5.12 The Working Group asked whether staff would be given the option of returning to Maesyffynnon in whatever form this takes.
- 5.13 The Working Group learnt that staff feedback had made it clear that should there be an extra care facility they wanted the care provision to be run by Council staff. However, the Working Group was informed that whilst this could be an option these details would need to be decided after the consultation process had been completed.
- 5.14 The Working Group learnt that any transition of staff to extra care facilities would require up-skilling as 'extra care' is a more enabling model where the service has to fit the individual rather than the other way round. However, the Working Group was assured that the Council has a good track record in this respect and that staff would be fully supported should Cabinet go forward with the extra care option.

6. CONCLUSIONS

- 6.1 Having followed the transfer and settlement of residents into their alternative accommodation the Working Group has concluded that the transfer of residents has gone smoothly and all are settled well into their new homes. The Working Group is also pleased to note that residents have been complimentary with regard to how they have been treated by staff.
- 6.2 In taking forward learning from the experience the Working Group would like to recommend:
- That where possible there is early identification of potential significant building maintenance issues to provide early warning of the need to transfer residents;
 - That staff are made fully aware of the Council's decision making processes in relation to Cabinet decisions should a similar situation occur in the future;
 - In addition, the Working Group would support the Council's Strategy for older people which is moving away from a dependency culture toward an enabling culture where support and care is provided at home or

close to home. Within this is the option for extra care housing facilities and the working group would welcome this opportunity for Aberaman. However, if 'extra care' is the direction of travel for the future it is important that all residential care staff fully understand what this type of facility provides and it is therefore recommended that an information programme is developed to ensure that staff are aware of the introduction of the Council's first extra care housing scheme in Talbot Green, how this type of model operates and the potential benefits and opportunities of moving toward a more enabling and community based approach to care.

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