



County Hall  
Cardiff  
CF10 4UW  
Tel: (029) 2087 2000

Neuadd y Sir  
Caerdydd  
CF10 4UW  
Ffôn: (029) 2087 2000

## CORRESPONDENCE FOLLOWING THE COMMITTEE MEETING

**Committee** COMMUNITY & ADULT SERVICES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

**Date and Time of Meeting** WEDNESDAY, 5 JUNE 2019, 4.30 PM

Please find below correspondence send by the Committee Chair following the meeting, together with any responses received.

For any further details, please contact [scrutinyviewpoints@cardiff.gov.uk](mailto:scrutinyviewpoints@cardiff.gov.uk)

13 **Correspondence Following Committee Meeting** (Pages 3 - 10)

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My Ref: Scrutiny/Correspondence/Cllr Jenkins  
18 June 2019



Caerdydd y Sir  
Caerdydd,  
CF10 4UW  
Ffôn: (029) 2087 2088  
www.caerdydd.gov.uk  
County Hall  
Cardiff,  
CF10 4UW  
Tel: (029) 2087 2087  
www.cardiff.gov.uk

Councillor Lynda Thorne  
Cabinet Member Housing & Communities  
County Hall  
Cardiff  
CF10 4UW

Dear Lynda,

**COMMUNITY & ADULT SERVICES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE – 5 JUNE 2019 –  
HOW THE COUNCIL ENGAGES WITH HOUSING ASSOCIATIONS**

As Chair of the Community & Adult Services Scrutiny Committee, I wish to thank you and officers for attending Committee and providing Members with an opportunity to explore how the Council engages with Housing Associations. I would also like to take the opportunity to thank the representatives copied into this letter for their attendance and role in helping to facilitate a well-rounded discussion. Members agreed that I pass on the following comments and observations for your consideration.

Within the meeting it was pleasing to note that all Housing Associations conveyed their content on the professional, strategic relationship currently held with Cardiff Council. However it became apparent that certain areas did require improvement.

Members wish to emphasise housing vulnerable people is a key area of work which does require further attention. Members note that meetings are currently in place to address this area of work, however wish to highlight that it is vital that these meetings have the correct attendees in place who in turn provide the correct level of expertise; ensuring effective alignment between housing, social care and housing associations. Members therefore wish to recommend that the ongoing meetings with housing associations are managed more effectively, ensuring information within the meetings is relayed with greater clarity, with a sharp focus on agenda items and frequency.

During the meeting it wasn't made clear to us whether the Exclusion Panel is the only method of identifying risk, but it struck us as an important meeting that needs to be improved. Managing risk in relation to housing people is very important and is a multifaceted area. Potential risks to existing residents, potential risks to those who are being housed, and potential risks to the wider community should all be assessed very carefully. Risk management, particularly when providing housing to those who can present additional challenges, and who may need additional support, needs as much time, energy and focus as possible, and the Committee recommends that the exclusion panel is sufficiently improved, to ensure that it works effectively.

**GWEITHIO DROS GAERDYDD, GWEITHIO DROSOCH CHI**

Mae'r Cyngor yn croesawu gohebiaeth yn Gymraeg, Saesneg neu'n ddwyieithog. Byddwn yn cyfathrebu â chi yn ôl eich dewis, dim ond i chi roi gwybod i ni pa un sydd well gennych. Ni fydd gohebu yn Gymraeg yn arwain at oedi.

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It is hoped that the strong relationship held between the Council's housing department and housing associations could be further utilised to ensure that the relationship is mirrored amongst other council departments such as social services, waste and planning. Members wish to reiterate that strong, productive relationships, across all areas of the Council, are key toward delivering projects which aid the citizens of Cardiff. Furthermore, the importance of replicating this relationship could also generate a positive impact and mitigate risks in other areas of work such as anti-social behaviour. Members also welcomed the suggestion for housing associations to engage with bringing empty properties back into use and believe this is a potentially significant avenue which should be explored.

With regard to homelessness, Members would suggest that the Housing First pilot is also prioritised as an area for further collaboration with housing associations. Members are of course aware of the intensive resource this pilot requires and would therefore suggest a balanced approach is taken forward to ensure any possible collaboration is both effective and sustainable. Members concurred that one approach toward balancing out the intensive support required for such work, could be a collective approach toward brand build between the housing associations and governance structures through shared lobbying. With the hope that this approach could potentially result in increased funding. Members felt this could be a potentially vital tool given the current uncertainty surrounding the Supporting People Grant. Members hope this collaborative brand building is something we as a Council would support and offer guidance and momentum where possible.

Members noted the suggestion that the Council could also engage with housing associations on new projects such as community regeneration and employability skills in order to help drive through a real change for the residents of Cardiff.

In terms of developing new properties, Members wish to emphasise the importance of delivering different forms of market sale which could potentially aid viability whilst encouraging sustainable communities. In addition, Members would also appreciate if officers could liaise with colleagues in legal services to explore possible amendments to the wording for Section 106 in order to prevent barriers such as development delays. Members noted the restraints of the planning process and the wants for this to be expedited. However Members are aware that this is a system impacting both the Council and housing associations on equal measures. Regardless, Members do wish to reiterate that a strategic, enabling relationship between housing associations and the planning department may help alleviate some immediate problems and it is hoped that the connections already established with the housing department can be drawn upon when developing relationships elsewhere in the Council, fostering a streamlined approach.

Members recommend that a shared vision in terms of design standards is an area which could be explored with housing associations and would suggest that the Cardiff Design Standard is included within this work. Members also wish to reiterate the importance of earlier conversations in terms of place making and design requirements. Within the meeting, concerns were also raised surrounding the Welsh Government's Strategic Housing Review and the possible ramifications this could entail on building new homes for the future. Members wish to affirm that this work is closely monitored with a preventative approach.

Thank you once again to you and your officers for attending Committee and for your welcoming approach to this area receiving scrutiny attention.

Although our recommendations are detailed above, for the sake of completeness, we also include them below.

Our recommendations are:

- For senior Council officers, working alongside Housing Associations, to start, as soon as possible, devising and deploying a design standard. The "Shared Design Standard" should focus on elevating the design specifications of Housing Association housing and put in place an ambitious, class-leading standard that will move the sector forward and help create world-leading social housing developments. The relationships needed for such an undertaking already seem developed enough to take the steps needed to directly influence the design of schemes in the very near future. The Committee would also like to receive a briefing on progress in due course.
- For Council officers to make improvements to the Exclusion Panel taking onboard feedback received from Housing Associations, and for Council officers and Housing Associations to actively work together to further improve the management of risk.
- That the ongoing meetings with housing associations are managed more effectively, ensuring information within the meetings is relayed with greater clarity, with a sharp focus on agenda items and frequency.
- To work in collaboration with Housing Associations with regard to empty properties and the Housing First pilot.
- For officers to liaise with colleagues in legal services to explore possible amendments to the wording for Section 106.

We look forward to your response in light of our recommendations. Once again thank you for your co-operation in facilitating a frank and open discussion on the matter.

Yours,



**COUNCILLOR SHAUN JENKINS**

**Chairman - Community & Adult Services Scrutiny Committee**

Cc: Sarah McGill, Corporate Director

Jane Thomas, Assistant Director

David Jaques, Housing Development Manager

Cabinet Office

CCHA

Cadwyn

Hafod

Linc Cymru

Newydd

Taff Housing

United Welsh

Wales & West



Fy Nghyf / My Ref: CM41768

Dyddiad / Date: 3rd July 2019

Councillor Shaun Jenkins  
Cardiff Council  
County Hall  
Cardiff  
CF10 4UW

Annwyl/Dear Councillor Jenkins

**CASSC - 5th June 2019 - Council Engagement With Housing Associations**

Thank you for the opportunity to present to Committee and for your letter dated 18<sup>th</sup> June 2019. Your comments and recommendations on the topics discussed are greatly appreciated.

With regard to the Exclusion Panel and the management of risk, I can confirm that the Exclusion Panel decides whether an applicant with previous rent arrears or a history of anti-social behaviour should be admitted to the social housing waiting list. It is one way, but not the only way, that risk is understood and controlled. For example landlords who are offering properties to residents of hostels or supported housing will have access to risk assessments carried out by the applicant's support worker. Also the Social Inclusion Unit within Housing & Communities work closely with the police to assess the risk related to prison leavers and due to domestic abuse. I note that some concerns were raised about the operation of the Exclusion panel and therefore a review of how this panel operates will be carried out and discussed with the attendees.

There are many meetings that take place with the Housing Associations and most operate very effectively. It is anticipated that the new Health, Housing and Care Board and the subgroups that are taking forward the Older Persons Accommodation Strategy will ensure that this good practice in joint working will be further enhanced. It is accepted that a review of the overall meeting structure, reporting arrangements and attendees would be useful and this will be carried out in due course.

**ATEBWCH I / PLEASE REPLY TO :**

Swyddfa Cymorth Y Cabinet / Cabinet Support Office, Ystafell / Room 518, Neuadd y Sir / County Hall  
Glanfa'r Iwerydd / Atlantic Wharf, Caerdydd/Cardiff, CF10 4UW  
Ffon / Tel: (029) 2087

**GWEITHIO DROS GAERDYDD, GWEITHIO DROSOCH CHI**

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A meeting will be arranged with the Private Sector Housing team and the Housing Associations' managers to consider further joint working on bringing empty homes into use.


The Council works very closely with Housing Associations regarding the Housing First pilots that are currently in operation and will continue to do so. Work is also ongoing with private landlords and several Housing First clients are now living in the private rented sector. Your letter rightly refers to the intensive support that is needed for the Housing First model to be a success and the resources and commitment needed for this. The Welsh Government are currently considering a third bid for funding from Cardiff to operate a scheme for prison leavers and to hopefully break the cycle of homelessness and offending that many of our more vulnerable clients find themselves in. Over the coming months we will be working to establish a sustainable model for the future development of Housing First on a larger scale and officers will work with Housing Association representatives to carry out this work. When a way forward is agreed, appropriate discussions with the Welsh Government will take place. The Committee's recommendations regarding shared lobbying and collaborative brand building will be considered further in future meetings with the RSL chief executives.

We share the vision of the Committee regarding design standards and to that end I can confirm that officers will take steps to try and implement a Design Standard for social housing across Cardiff. Almost all of our Housing Association Partners share our vision of place-making and quality and I am confident that they will want to ensure that ambitious standards are achieved across all developments. We already have a say in the design of schemes through our Strategic Support process and we can expand this existing process quite easily to put in place robust criteria. Financial viability of schemes will need to be considered and we will need to ensure schemes can be delivered whilst achieving high standards.

Regarding your recommendation that officers explore possible amendments to Section 106 wording, we have asked Legal Officers to consider amendments and we await their response.

Once again, thank you for the opportunity to present to Committee, and for the useful feedback provided.

Yn gywir  
Yours sincerely



**Councillor / Y Cyngorydd Lynda Thorne**  
**Cabinet Member for Housing & Communities**  
**Aelod Cabinet dros Dai a Chymunedau**



My Ref: Scrutiny/Correspondence/Cllr Jenkins  
18 June 2019

Councillor Susan Elsmore  
Cabinet Member Social Care, Health & Well-being  
County Hall  
Cardiff  
CF10 4UW



Neuadd y Sir  
Caerdydd,  
CF10 4UW  
Ffôn: (029) 2087 2088  
www.caerdydd.gov.uk  
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Cardiff,  
CF10 4UW  
Tel: (029) 2087 2087  
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Dear Susan,

## **COMMUNITY & ADULT SERVICES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE – 5 JUNE 2019 – QUARTER 4 PERFORMANCE REPORT**

As Chair of the Community & Adult Services Scrutiny Committee, I wish to thank you and Louise for attending Committee to present the Quarter Four Performance Report, providing Members with the opportunity to analyse measures and provide feedback.

Members were pleased, overall, with the content of the Report and appreciated the work that has been done, and will no doubt continue to be done, across the directorate in its drive for continued improvement. However, Members of the Committee have requested that I feedback the following comments and observations to you.

Within the meeting, questions were raised in terms of the statistics displayed surrounding satisfaction levels and how involved an individual feels in terms of their care package. Members were advised that the data used within this report is broken down and analysed in order to address areas of concern and adopt new ways of working. As such, Members would request a briefing note which provides information of the analysis undertaken within these areas along with broken down information on Stage One complaints received by the directorate during Quarter Four.

With regard to staff retention, Members were advised that the only area of service where recruitment is of a concern is that of approved mental health practitioners. Members noted that the directorate is looking to train more of its staff with the approved qualification, however would like to raise concerns with respect to funding. Members would therefore appreciate if clarity can be provided on who will fund this training, for instance if it will be subsidised by the Council and at what cost it is expected to be.

Members were pleased to note that reablement services will now be provided to a higher level of individuals with varying needs due to the development of a new operating model. Members note that this will mean the system will require a high level of acuity and wish to reiterate that as a consequence of this wider distribution of

### **GWEITHIO DROS GAERDYDD, GWEITHIO DROSOCH CHI**

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resource, the risk of any detrimental repercussions for individuals is mitigated. Members also wish to highlight, that going forward, indicators within the Performance Report should more clearly reflect the different groups of individuals now receiving the service.

With regard to the 1.3 million underspend captured within the report, Members would appreciate further information on how this figure was achieved, with particular information on the grant funding which attributed this saving and how, or if viable, this saving will be distributed within the directorate.

Thank you again for your attendance at Committee. To confirm, I require a response on the following:

- A briefing note detailing the findings on why satisfaction levels have dropped. A breakdown on why individuals don't feel involved in their care package and information on stage 1 complaints received during Quarter 4.
- Clarity on the expected level of cost of staff training to become approved mental health practitioners and how it will be subsidised.
- A breakdown on how the 1.3 million underspend was achieved, if the grants which attributed to this saving are expected again and how the saving will be utilised within the directorate.

Yours sincerely,



**COUNCILLOR SHAUN JENKINS**

**Chairman - Community & Adult Services Scrutiny Committee**

Cc: Claire Marchant, Director Social Services.  
Louise Barry, Assistant Director, Adult Services.  
Cabinet Office.