

COMMUNITY & ADULT SERVICES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

14 MARCH 2018

Present: Councillor McGarry(Chairperson)
Councillors Ahmed, Asghar Ali, Carter, Jenkins and Kelloway

50 : APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Goddard.
Councillor Jenkins advised that he would be late arriving to the meeting.

51 : DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None.

52 : MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 12 February 2018 were agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chairperson.

53 : CARDIFF & VALE AREA PLAN FOR CARE AND SUPPORT 2018 - 23

The Chairperson welcomed Councillor Susan Elsmore, Cabinet Member for Social Care, Health & Well-Being; Sarah McGill Corporate Director for People and Communities; Amanda Phillips Assistant Director for Adult Services and Rachel Jones Assistant Director - Integrating Health & Social Care to the meeting.

The Chairperson advised that this item enabled Members to carry out pre-decision scrutiny of the Cardiff & Vale Area Plan for Care and Support 2018-23 draft Cabinet Report, prior to consideration at Cabinet tomorrow.

The Chairperson invited the Cabinet Member to make a statement in which she said that as Cabinet Member and Chair of Regional Partnership Board, she was happy to present the regional area plan and supporting action plan which would be used to deliver services. In governance terms, it was noted that the plan had already been approved by the Regional Partnership Board and now needed approval from both Cardiff and Vale of Glamorgan Councils.

Members were provided with a presentation after which the Chairperson invited questions and comments;

- Members noted that some points in the action plan had no actions against them but go straight to the partnership. Members were advised that these would be actions that are not the responsibility of the RPB but there are existing arrangements in place where there are actions plans that lie with partners that deliver them. These would be monitored by the RPB and the PSB and Members would be provided with an update at the end of the year. The Cabinet Member added that there was a need to avoid duplication and provide clarity and transparency; not everything was the responsibility of the RPB, some were with the PSB and statutory organisations that make up the Cardiff and Vale Health Board. The Corporate Director added that this has come about from having a starting point of 2 separate population needs

assessments which was not ideal. Officers added that it was a good start and there was a need to clearly illustrate the responsibilities of everyone, noting that delivery is important and key.

Members considered it would be good to have the body responsible listed against the action.

- Members asked how much service change would come about as a result of the strategy and how it fits in with the direction of travel within the department. Officers advised that there were lots of references to work already being done, it gives a clear direction of where the service is going, what's being done and by who.
- Members asked what effect this would have on staff and their objectives. Officers explained that they see it as a "golden thread" as it provides governance on what's done and a vision for the future. The Cabinet Member added that it shows the range of partners and the importance given to the carer's agenda.
- Members noted the reference to plans/strategies that were under development and that some of these were ones that the Committee had been waiting to see for a while, asking what progress was being made on these, particularly the Cardiff and Vale Community Cohesion Delivery Plan on Asylum Seekers and Refugees. The Cabinet Member advised that this was under the responsibility of the PSB and the Corporate Director advised that she would raise it there.
- Members noted that this plan was in response to legislative changes and asked how many people were involved in putting the plan together and what were the costs involved. Officers advised that this had been compiled in house, staff worked on it as part of their jobs, so were unable to provide the numbers of people or the breakdown of cost for the plan.
- Members asked if the development of the plan had felt like a burden for officers. Officers stated that it was the best way of not duplicating the work of others, to see all the relevant strategies that relate to the area in one place and it provided good engagement. Officers said they would continue to speak to the PSB on how they report but they don't see it as a burden, it took a lot of effort from a large number of people but this was needed to establish a shared view.
- Members referred to improving the integrated agenda how this would be done. Officers stating they were always looking at how to bring the integrated agenda together, such as best use of Hubs facilities across the city. The Cabinet Member stated that Members would see a greater emphasis of working together coming forward, such as day opportunities and very close working with Health.
- Members referred to the template used and were advised that it was a Social Care Wales template which reflects the Act and respective duties of statutory bodies and how these link up.

AGREED – That the Chairperson on behalf of the Committee writes to the Cabinet Member conveying the observations of the Committee when discussing the way forward.

54 : HRA BUSINESS PLAN 2018/19

The Chairperson welcomed Councillor Lynda Thorne, Cabinet Member for Housing and Communities; Sarah McGill, Corporate Director for People and Communities; Jane Thomas, Assistant Director, Housing and Communities; Colin Blackmore, Estates Improvement Manager; and Anil Hirani, Operational Manager, Capital & Treasury to the meeting.

The Chairperson advised that this item enabled Members to carry out pre-decision scrutiny of the HRA Business Plan draft Cabinet Report, prior to consideration at Cabinet tomorrow.

The Chairperson invited the Cabinet Member to make a statement in which she said that she was pleased to be able to bring this plan which outlined the plans to continually improve Council Houses and the estates where people live and also to develop 1000 new homes followed by a further 1000. The Cabinet Member added that she had recently met with an officer from the WLGA who had complimented the Plan stating that it was excellent and an easy read.

Members were provided with a presentation after which the Chairperson invited questions and comments;

- Members noted that the HRA was a complicated document and found some of the breakdown of the financial information complicated to understand. Members were concerned about the risk of borrowing and sought assurance from officers on this. Officers explained that previous investments had been borrowed and repaid; exiting from the Welsh Government system had provided opportunities for borrowing and investing. Currently there was a vision to do more so it was important to ensure that borrowing was prudent and sustainable; there is a 30 year business plan for this which needs to be affordable in the medium to long term. Officers added that there were lots of variables though such as voids, bad debts, inflation and these risks needed to be known and mitigated against. There is an Integrated Treasury Strategy whereby borrowing is at fixed interest rates which is 2.5% over 40 years, which was a prudent approach to borrowing.

Officers added that the financial information related to cumulative figures over 30 years and included the impact of compounding, these would be addressed in the short term and reviewed annually.

- Members referred to the Welsh Government Cap on borrowing of £316million, officers advised that this was a total limit, but officers were in discussion regarding how they can increase the cap to deliver more as currently it is inhibiting their ability to borrow more and was constraining.
- Members referred to the new build housing and asked what plans there were for the tower block rooftops. Officers advised that there would be scenery/slats that would hide the aerials etc. and improve the aesthetics of the

buildings. Members asked if there could be rooftop gardens and were advised this could be looked at for the new builds but this wasn't feasible for the current buildings as they are not designed for tenant access.

- Members asked for information on how often new kitchens and bathrooms needed to be fitted in Council properties and were advised that the WHQS recommends that kitchens should be replaced every 15 years and Bathrooms every 25 years unless they are good condition.
- Members asked how often rent reviews are carried out and were advised that they are renewed annually and are affordable at the Council element; the review doesn't necessarily mean there will be an increase above the Welsh Government statutory increase. Officers added it was important to think about future tenants and increase rents to enable more housing development.
- Members considered that Plans can sometimes seem like marketing material and not show real challenges or issues and asked if Plans are reviewed and reflected on what has not worked in the past. Officers assured Members that yes they do, they have learned from the past for example they don't build alleys or large council estates any more. There are now mixed communities with a mix of tenure.
- Members asked if officers measure the results of, for example anti-social behaviour (ASB) in new mixed developments and were advised that they hadn't delivered any new properties as yet but have monitored ASB through the neighbourhood regeneration schemes and it is reducing.
- Members referred to the maintenance work and asked about cladding of council homes, asking why it is not a priority for the Council to fund now that Welsh Government grants are very limited. Officers explained that Cardiff has been fortunate in recent years with Welsh Government when more money was available; Cardiff is pressing Welsh Government to do more. For Cardiff to fund this type of work from the HRA would cost over £10k per property, there needed to be a balance between the cost and the savings from energy. Many Council properties already scored quite well on energy efficiency and there are already wall and loft insulation programmes undertaken.
- Members asked why there were 400 homes not listed in the Cardiff Living. Officers advised that they had had to settle on the procurement process of Cardiff Living and settled on 40 sites, this can't be added to at this stage, but to change it later is acceptable.
- Members asked if there had been any achievements over the last few years that had not been met and are any targets rolled over. Officers explained that current contractors have performance indicators in the contract which should enable better performance and assured Members that the new builds are going well. The Cabinet Member added that it had been disappointing that Cardiff Living had not developed as quickly as they had hoped and intended but that was down to the procurement process and a lesson had been learned.

- Members asked if the Cabinet Member was 100% guaranteeing 1000 new homes by 2020. The Cabinet Member said yes, they would be built by then but she could not guarantee that the keys would be handed over by then but the commitment was there.
- Members referred to the installation of fire doors in council properties and the fact that this installation was half way through and asked why this was not a priority. Officers explained it was a priority, they procured a contractor then the contractor pulled out half way through. A new contractor had now been procured. Officers noted that the doors are currently compliant but not at the standard that the Council wants.
- Members asked where the shipping containers would be located and were advised that one site was at the end of Bute Street and one at Greenfarm hostel in Ely.
- Members asked if the new build would be easily adaptable for disabled access or at least a percentage of them. Officers advised they would be easily adaptable, there would also be large 1 bed units on ground floors so that flexibility would be there.
- Members noted that the mixed types of properties reflect the current need.
- Members asked if the new builds would have solar panels and were advised they would not, they would be energy efficient fabric first properties with insulation.
- Members noted the income for 2018-2020 coming from Right to Buy. Members thought this had stopped and sought clarification. Officers advised that the Council had applied successfully to cease the Right to Buy scheme, but under the rules once someone has submitted an application then it has to be considered. It was therefore assumed that further applications may come through the process.

AGREED – That the Chairperson on behalf of the Committee writes to the Cabinet Member conveying the observations of the Committee when discussing the way forward.

55 : DATE OF NEXT MEETING

Wednesday 18 April 2018 at 4.30pm in Committee Room 3, County Hall, Cardiff.

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