

COMMUNITY & ADULT SERVICES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

1 MAY 2019

Present: Councillor McGarry(Chairperson)
Councillors Ahmed, Jenkins, Lent and Molik

83 : APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Carter and Goddard

84 : DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor McGarry declared a personal interest in Item 6 as she is a member of a group who sponsors the resettlement of a refugee family.

Councillor Lent declared a personal interest in Items 5 as she has an adult son with learning disabilities. Councillor Lent also declared a personal interest in Item 6 as she is a member of a group who sponsors the resettlement of a refugee family.

85 : MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 3 April 2019 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairperson.

86 : JOINT COMMISSIONING STRATEGY FOR ADULTS WITH A LEARNING DISABILITY (CARDIFF COUNCIL'S INPUT)

The Chairperson welcomed Councillor Susan Elsmore (Cabinet Member for Social Care, Health & Well-being); Claire Marchant (Director, Social Services); Emma Mullinder (Operational Manager - Learning Disabilities) and Denise Moriarty (Strategic Lead Planning Officer) to the meeting.

The Chairperson advised Members that this item enabled them to carry out pre-decision scrutiny on Cardiff Council's input into the Joint Commissioning Strategy for Adults with a Learning Disability. This Item will be considered by Cabinet on the 16 May. Members were further advised that this item would be considered in three parts – firstly, officers and the Cabinet Member would provide Committee with a short presentation; then witnesses from Cardiff & Vale Parents Federation and Cardiff Peoples First would be called to provide the Committee with their thoughts on the strategy which would then be followed by a question and answer session with the Cabinet Member and officers.

The Chairperson invited the Cabinet Member to make a statement in which she said that she was delighted to be able to bring such a wonderful strategy to the Committee.

Members were provided with a presentation on the Joint Commissioning Strategy for Adults with a Learning Disability, after which the Chairperson invited witnesses from Cardiff & Vale Parents Federation and Cardiff Peoples First to make their statements.

Joe Blackley stated that it was very important that people with learning disabilities get more involved in the design of strategies and hopefully become the people appointed to make the strategies available to the public.

John Cushen said that the Parent Federation had been involved in the consultation to develop this strategy for many years; he was delighted to see so many of the priorities which reflect the issues often highlighted to the Parent Federation. He added that it was refreshing to see the local authorities working together with the Health Board and that join up could only be positive. He considered that the detail in the strategy was aspirational and while he agreed with it whole heartedly, the test would be that it is all delivered.

Joanna Jones explained that she worked in the project office for the Coming Together Project at Cardiff People First; the project goes out to the local community, getting people involved, breaking isolation and using community facilities.

The Chairperson invited questions from Members;

Members asked in relation to Cardiff People First, and the collated information to inform the strategy on improving services— what were the key findings from this work and were they happy these findings have been addressed. Joe Blackley explained that information had been collated from their members and it was clear that they want to be able to access services in their community and not have to travel across the City; this was what started the Come Together Project.

Members asked what the main areas for improvement for the health of well-being for adults with Learning Disabilities and also their families and does this match the priorities covered in the strategy or are there any discrepancies. John Cushen stated that it covers the priorities that they have highlighted in the past and addresses key issues that come up time and time again; it's timely and accessible and also provides information on transition which is very helpful.

Members asked how parents feel about the care planning process and if they considered that it meets their needs. John Cushen stated that they see mixed results; they tend to stress the importance of preparing prior to assessments, to work together to obtain outcomes and what matters rather than having to fight for things.

Members asked if parents were generally in agreement with their care plans. John Cushen said it was hard to speak on behalf of all parents and the Parents federation only tends to get contacted when there are issues such as being led down a path they are not entirely happy with. The Parents Federation try to ensure that parents know what is ok to ask for and what is available for them, and to prepare for a three year lead in to transition assessment. Members asked if the strategy would address this and John Cushen explained that it would certainly help with all the information out there and this must be pushed and stressed whenever possible.

Members asked how they envisaged the strategy being implemented and whether Key Performance Indicators should be included in the future. John Cushen said they would like to see things delivered, the strategy; offers something to measure against; there are key players involved with the joint working and it's a good starting point.

With regards to how it will be monitored in the future he added that would be the test of whether or not it is working.

Members asked of this Strategy feels like a new approach with more energy. John Cushen said it seems more joined up, although some aspirations are not new, some are much higher these days and more achievable; resources and finance will be a challenge and there was a need for a fair spread of support and not just support for those who shout the loudest.

The Chairperson invited the Cabinet Member and Officers to return to the table and invited questions and comments from Members;

Members considered that the strategy was very promising and asked what happens currently and what needs to improve. Officers explained that lots of work is currently undertaken, but there was a change towards a strength based practice which was a more encompassing principle through collaborative working, what matters to people and their carer and building up from there, finding out what's available in the local community, increasing independence and also how services are commissioned. The Cabinet Member added that they work with the Cardiff Parent Federation and Cardiff People First in designing the next steps and action plan.

Members asked about the timeline for the strategy and were advised that it would be implemented this year.

Members considered that the strategy was well presented and accessible, but noted that Section 9 on implementation was very concise and asked if there was scope to build this up and integrate some action plans into the strategy itself. The Director stated that the Strategy outlined the Key Principles and was a work in progress; implementation plans need to be clear in terms of the measurement; action plans need to be co-produced. The Director added that they are already working on priorities which need to be agreed through the collaboratively partnership.

Members accepted that the Strategy was high level, but considered that it didn't touch on any detail. The Cabinet Member stated that the Strategy describes the vision and the Action Plans give the detailed information, they will form part of the Strategy as it's developed over the year; the Strategy sets the direction.

Members made reference to the Task and Finish Inquiry Recommendations and asked of the wording had been changed as a result. Officers said they took all recommendations into account; they looked at all the priorities and only changed the wording 'where appropriate'. The Cabinet Member said it was a draft Cabinet report, and the wording had been agreed at Cabinet Briefing.

Members asked what 'appropriate' means and were advised that it was when the person had been assessed and the next steps are discussed; the wording now reads 'correct pathway they want to follow'.

Members agreed that choice was important but considered that the Strategy still read like the choices provided locally were better when some people may choose to go outside of Cardiff. The Director stated that this is where the strength based approach would be helpful, having conversations early enough regarding pathways and understanding options so there was a genuine choice for people.

Members asked how often the Strategy would be reviewed/monitored and were advised that the Learning Disability planning group meets quarterly and they will have a monitoring role; wider consultation would be set up annually to see progress.

Members noted the spend in Cardiff is higher per person than in the Vale and asked why this was. Officers explained that it was difficult to split down the budget, it was divided by the number of people but there were very different needs both authorities. Members asked how resources would be shared and were advised that there would be a deep analysis to provide sustainable services that were cost effective.

Members asked why the statistic for Respite care appeared low and it was explained that it reflected block contract respite care but there would also be elements of respite care in Day Services, Domiciliary Care/Residential Care etc.; the figure isn't broken down to these levels. Members wanted to see a breakdown of this to see how many people are accessing respite care.

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.

87 : VULNERABLE PERSONS RESETTLEMENT SCHEME

The Chairperson welcomed Councillor Susan Elsmore (Cabinet Member for Social Care, Health & Well-being); Tom Dodsworth Regional Resettlement Coordinator and Kate Hustler Operational Manager to the meeting.

Members were advised that this item enabled them to carry out pre-decision scrutiny of the Vulnerable Persons Resettlement Scheme. This Item would be considered by Cabinet on the 16 May.

The Chairperson invited the Cabinet Member to make a statement in which she said that she was delighted to bring this to committee; in 2015 there had been a speedy decision taken to join the resettlement scheme, this decision was taken with pride and it was a necessity. It was now necessary to come back and get arrangements approved as the current scheme was only approved until the end of the month and needed to be extended. Tribute was paid to Taff Housing as the supplier provider who had done an exemplar job. Tribute was also paid to colleagues and the regular leadership group work undertaken with the Vale.

Officers outlined the key points from the report after which the Chairperson invited questions and comments from Members.

Members asked in relation to the Private Rented Sector, how properties are identified and whether there are any risk assessments undertaken in the prospective communities. Officers explained that there were two different systems in Cardiff and the Vale. Cardiff goes out to the market and Cadwyn is the lead provider of accommodation. They have a lettings section and lease properties from landlords for 3 years, Cardiff use what used to be temporary accommodation properties and then back fill these. When identifying properties, Officers look at voids, look at community cohesion, work with the police etc. They want positive integration into communities. Certain areas are not targeted, more so that they look what is available in the communities. Properties are screened and they also look at school places etc.

Members asked if this scheme added pressure to an already beyond capacity system. The Cabinet Member did not agree and said that what they have found is that the care and work that goes into sourcing properties, coordinating schooling, care etc. has been exceptional. They work quarterly with partners and have a moral duty to welcome refugees. She added it was important to celebrate what we do notwithstanding the constraints there were reasonable small numbers and they should be welcomed. Officers added that the housing used for rehoming the refugee families has had no impact on what would be used for rough sleepers, homeless people or the current waiting list as it is all from the private rented sector and not housing association stock.

Members asked if there were any concerns about the PRS reducing and landlords selling properties. The Cabinet Member noted the various community sponsorship projects and that the communities are incredibly resilient. Officers added that a housing association had recently been offered properties through the letting scheme, these properties would otherwise have been sold but some landlords are happy to be involved in the scheme.

Members sought clarification on the funding and were advised that the families are funded for the first year and then for a further five years after settlement on staggered funding, so each contract is for six years.

Members asked if the Home Office funding was certain and officers advised that the funding has been committed to five years post settlement.

Members asked if there were any risks and if so how are they mitigated. Officers said they have learned a lot of lessons and through the regular leadership groups they are able to respond quickly to trends such as expectations of what can be provided.

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.

88 : EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC

RESOLVED: that the Reports and Appendices are confidential and are not for publication by virtue of paragraphs 14 and 21 of Schedule 12a of the Local Government Act 1972. The public were excluded from the meeting for consideration of this item in accordance with the same legislation.

89 : COUNCIL HOUSE BUILDING STRATEGY

The Chairperson welcomed Councillor Lynda Thorne, Cabinet Member for Housing & Communities and David Jaques Housing Development Manager to the meeting.

Members were advised that this item enabled them to carry out pre-decision scrutiny of the Council House Building Strategy. This Item would be considered by Cabinet on the 16 May. Members were further advised that Appendix E of this item is

confidential so consideration of the item would be split into open and closed sessions.

The Chairperson invited the Cabinet Member to make a statement in which she said that the report was based on the presentation to Committee last month.

Officers outlined the key points from the report after which the Chairperson invited questions and comments from Members on information in the public domain. Members were reminded that the public information was the Cabinet Report and Appendices; excluding Appendix E.

Members asked where the Cardiff Design Standard had been added in and were advised that more detail was contained in paragraphs 24 and 25. It was explained however that it was the 2015 standard and needs to be updated this could then come back to committee for an overview.

Members asked whether Cabinet would be minded to approve this, bearing in mind the financial risks such as uncertainty major repair allowance grant, rent cap and substantial borrowing from HRA. The Cabinet Member considered that Cabinet would approve it; she also added that she had met with the Minister and showed her the new Council homes, she is looking at the spend across housing as well as outcomes and value for money; she had mentioned the rent levels in Wales compared to England and that Cardiff had met the WHQS standards. The Cabinet Member felt confident that the Minister was happy and that there would be a good result in the end.

Members asked for more information on Planning and were advised that more information on the pipeline of delivery and the handover schedule would be added into Appendices to the Cabinet Report and could be circulated to Committee Members; they will show what is delivered and when. It was stressed that there was always a risk that planning can hold up the process and there were other risks too such as Brexit, Costs, and Rent Cap etc. The Cabinet Member considered that the biggest of these risks was the rent cap and not being able to deliver the project.

Members asked if the target of 2000 homes and the timeline was too ambitious. Officers stated that they would circulate the timeline to Members. The Cabinet Member stated that if the factory built units in Croft Street were effective this may bring the timeline forward.

Members asked if detached factory built units would be considered. The Cabinet Member said there were no objections and there could be a need if specialist adapted homes were required but in terms of what they want to achieve and that the quality is exceptional they don't think people would be concerned with the attached houses. Detached houses are costly and could be a financial liability; there would be larger attached 3 and 4 bedroom homes.

Members asked about the cost difference of factory built units and standard built homes. Officers explained that the cost was about the same, it was the time saving that was significant; factory built units taking 20 weeks rather than 20 months.

The Chairperson invited questions and comments from Members on confidential Appendix E of which there were none.

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.

90 : COMMITTEE BUSINESS

Members were advised that this report sets out a summary of the Committee's business since the last meeting, including an update on Correspondence; An updated Work Programme; Inquiries/Task & Finish Groups and CASSC Performance Panel.

Members were advised that there had been response received to the Chairs letter since the agenda pack was despatched. Members were further advised that all correspondence was published on the website.

Members discussed the forward work programme for the meeting scheduled for June. It was considered that the items; Housing Association Briefing; Annual Report and Quarter 4 Performance should be on the June Committee agenda.

Members were advised that there was an item on the Shared Regulatory Service going to Environmental Scrutiny next month; there were some areas in CASSC's remit so the Scrutiny Officer would circulate the papers and if there were any questions they could be sent to Councillor Patel who would ask them on CASSC's behalf.

Members were advised that there would be a Joint CASSC/CYP Social Services Annual Report at the end of June, Members would be updated on the date.

Members were advised that there needed to be a firm structure in place for Task and Finish and objectives set for each meeting. The next meeting would take place on 16 May 2019.

Members wished to thank Councillor McGarry for her 4 years work as Chair of CASSC.

RESOLVED: to note the report.

91 : URGENT ITEMS (IF ANY)
None received.

92 : DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The next meeting of the Community and Adult Services Scrutiny Committee is scheduled for Wednesday 5th June 2019 at 4.30pm in Committee Room 4, County Hall.

The meeting terminated at 6.50 pm