

COMMUNITY & ADULT SERVICES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

2 OCTOBER 2019

Present: Councillor Jenkins(Chairperson)
Councillors Ahmed, Gibson, Philippa Hill-John, Lent and McGarry

31 : APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Carter, Ebrahim and Goddard.

32 : DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None received.

33 : MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 11 September 2019 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairperson.

34 : OLDER PEOPLE: ACCESS TO INFORMATION, ADVICE AND SERVICES

Members were advised that this item was focusing on digital inclusion of older people. It would centre on how the Council is accommodating the need of the older person in accessing services and how the development of the Council's digital strategy is being aligned with the needs of an ageing community.

The Social Services and Well Being (Wales) Act, places a duty on local authorities to secure provision of information, advice and services through a range of different channels such as media, website, phone, face to face and for there to be an up to date directory of services.

In Cardiff there are four main strands to meet the requirements of the Act which are:

- A directory of services
- A first point of contact
- Improving the Council's Website
- Using the hubs to provide info and signpost.

As this item would be focusing on digital inclusion for older people, it would address the strands of the directory of service and the use of the hubs.

The Chairperson welcomed Cllr Susan Elsmore Cabinet Member for Social Care, Health and Wellbeing, Cllr Lynda Thorne, Cabinet Member for Housing & Communities; Claire Marchant, Director of Social Services, Jane Thomas, Assistant Director Housing & Communities, Helen Evans, Operational Manager Advice & Benefits, Phil Bear, Service Manager ICT, Sharon Miller, Regional Coordinator and; Jessica Player, Project Manager.

Members were advised that the Agenda Item would be presented in three parts – firstly, officers from Resources would provide Members with an overview of the Council’s Digital Strategy and how it is being aligned to the needs of older people, then officers from People & Communities and Social Services would take Members through the work of the Hubs and Dewis Cymru.

The Chairperson invited Cllr Elsmore to make a statement in which she said that as the Older Peoples Champion, she wished to remind Members of the good practice of not using the term ‘elderly’ as the correct reference now was Older People. She added that today was the United Nations Day of Older People and it was an opportunity to raise awareness of the challenges facing older people in today’s world. The number of individuals over 60 was projected to grow by 46% globally.

The Chairperson invited Cllr Thorne to make a statement in which she said that it was Council policy to allow people of all ages to make contact with the Council in all ways. She made reference to Bus Passes needing to be renewed by December via the Transport for Wales website and there had been lots of contact through the Hubs for assistance with this. Wardens in sheltered accommodation also provide help to older people with digital issues.

Members were provided with a presentation on the Digital Strategy followed by a presentation on Hubs and Dewis Cymru after which the Chairperson invited questions and comments from Members;

Members noted that older people were not referenced in the digital strategy. Officers advised that the strategy was for everyone, the entire target audience and it did not assume that older people were less likely to use or understand digital. Members noted the need to look at the population as a whole but noted the statistics presented showed that older people are more digitally excluded.

Members asked if demographics were considered when testing a strategy. The Cabinet Member stated that she had met with a charity recently, all men over 75 years of age and only a third of their community were not digitally connected.

Members were pleased to see the work done to date for older people and noted the value older people have in our communities. Members were also pleased to see the training and support available to older people. Members asked if there was a goal in mind when considering older people. The Cabinet Member stated that her own personal goal would be that the majority of older people were digitally connected. She also added that work had started with the Older Peoples Commissioner for an Age Friendly Cardiff.

Members noted the large number of older people in the ethnic communities who cannot read or write and asked what help was available to them. The Cabinet Member stated that an invitation had been sent out to BAME elected Members in late summer, work was starting now to ensure that BAME elders are supported.

Members asked how people with no access to a computer get to know that these services exist. Members were advised that it was always about trying to reach everyone, various methods were used such as libraries, GP’s, social workers, Hubs,

anyone who provides home visits. More could be done on the social prescribing front as it was essential to have the information available where people go most often.

Members asked about the critical audience when developing a digital strategy and were advised that there had been engagement with Cardiff Citizens Panel, whereby volunteers give feedback. A representative sample of 100 people had been used when designing the strategy.

Members referred to the Hubs and the radius around them not being equal, so accessing some hubs could prove difficult for some older people.

Members discussed digital by default and sought assurances that there would always be other routes available for people of all ages who do not use the internet. Officers stated that they look at percentages but there would always be a safety net, the position was not digital by default as yet, this position would change as percentages change. It was noted that not all services are relevant for digital by default.

Members noted the reference to the shift away from traditional contact methods such as a telephone call and were worried that in relation to social isolation, telephone calls may be the only conversation some older people have in days/weeks. Officers explained that unfortunately they need to do more for less, but acknowledged that it was a service by service discussion and it wouldn't be suitable for all services. Officers stressed that they wouldn't be complacent and would listen to feedback, but added that technology can also give people a platform out of social isolation.

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.

35 : COUNCIL HOUSE BUILD AND DESIGN STANDARDS UPDATE

This item was deferred to a later meeting.

36 : WORK PROGRAMME

The Principal Scrutiny officer outlined the items coming forward to Committee in November and December.

Members agreed the work programme for November and December.

37 : CORRESPONDENCE STATEMENT

Noted.

38 : URGENT ITEMS (IF ANY)

None received.

39 : DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The next meeting of the Community & Adult Services Scrutiny Committee is scheduled for 6 November at 4:30pm in Committee Room 4, County Hall, Cardiff.

The meeting terminated at 6.05 pm