

COMMUNITY & ADULT SERVICES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

8 JUNE 2016

Present: County Councillor McGarry(Chairperson)
County Councillors Ali Ahmed, Carter, Ralph Cook, Chris Davis,
Lomax, Magill and Sanders

1 : APPOINTMENT OF CHAIRPERSON

It was noted that at the Annual meeting of Council held on 26 May 2016, Councillor Mary McGarry was appointed as Chairperson of this Committee.

2: COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP

It was noted that at the Annual meeting of Council held on 26 May 2016, Councillors McGarry (Chairperson), Ali Ahmed, Joseph Carter, Ralph Cook, Chris Davis, Chris Lomax, Julia Magill and Eleanor Sanders were appointed as Members of this Committee. (1 vacancy remains).

3 : TERMS OF REFERENCE

RESOLVED: To agree the Terms of Reference of the Community and Adult Services Scrutiny Committee.

4 : APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

No apologies for absence were received.

5 : DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor Lomax declared a personal interest as he is a resident in Council owned sheltered accommodation.

6 : MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 11 May 2016 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairperson, subject to the following amendments:

Page 4, remove 'the Cabinet Members stated that they would be looking to the Welsh Government for their contribution to the Gap' and a few typographical errors.

7 : QUARTER 4 PERFORMANCE - PERFORMANCE MONITORING SCRUTINY OF QUARTER FOUR PERFORMANCE REPORT

The Chairperson welcomed Cllr Derbyshire Cabinet Member for Environment and Cllr Susan Elsmore Cabinet Member for Health, Housing and Wellbeing to the meeting; The Chairperson also welcomed Andrew Gregory Director City Operations and Dave Holland Head of Service Regulatory & Supporting Services who were in attendance to answer Members' questions on the scrutiny of PSR/004 performance; Sarah McGill, Director of Communities, Housing & Customer Services and Jane Thomas Assistant Director of Communities & Housing who were in attendance to answer Members' questions on the scrutiny of Communities & Housing performance; Tony Young Director Social Services and Amanda Phillips Assistant Director Adult Services who were in attendance to answer Members' questions on the scrutiny of Adult Social Services performance.

The Chairperson advised that this item provided Members with an opportunity to carry out performance monitoring scrutiny. At the previous meeting, Members asked that the Performance Panel triage the quarter 4 report, which they had done. As well as the usual scrutiny of Communities and Housing and Adults Social Services, they decided there was a need to focus attention on a specific query for City Operations regarding indicator PSR/004, more detail on this indicator was provided at point 9 of the report.

The Chairperson invited the Councillor Derbyshire to make a statement in which he noted that the Shared Regulatory Service was an interesting concept going forward; the use of the private sector for social housing and Cardiff running Rent Smart Wales on behalf of the Welsh Government would provide interesting discussion over the coming year.

Officers added that this specific PI was a direct responsibility of Regulatory Services in 2014/15 when it was a direct function of Cardiff Council; the Shared Regulatory Service has HMO licensing and Housing Enforcement responsibility, however, the responsibility for PSR/004 was not taken across and subsequently the performance declined as it fell between two stools; officers accepted responsibility for this and arrangements were now in place to put this right, with meetings with relevant officers arranged.

Officers added that this was a high profile and proactive service; they will continue to regulate empty properties, all literature concerning bringing houses back into use needed to include who has responsibility for what included in it, a protocol will be developed.

The Chairperson invited questions and comments from Members on PSR/004.

- Members asked if this situation was replicated in the other local authorities in the consortium or if it was unique to Cardiff. Officers explained that in the other two local authorities the function had easily been disaggregated back, so it had not occurred elsewhere.
- Members asked how many properties were being brought back into use at present, officers did not have the information to hand but agreed to provide it later.

- Members were grateful for the candour from officers in regard to this matter but noted that even if the previous years' performance was looked at, it was still below target; Members asked when targets are set for the coming year whether the target would be set at a lower level. Officers stated that this was a conversation that needed to be had with the relevant officers; to look at the market in the city and set targets that address the issues; targets need to be set carefully so they are manageable but have an impact on the problems.
- Members noted that this was an important indicator in relation to homelessness and housing need; it was noted that staff who had dealt with this had been allowed to leave so now resources needed to be found. Officers stated that savings have been made within the Shared Regulatory Service, but finding this resource would be the core component of the conversation to be had with relevant officers.
- Members noted the knock on effect on Environment and Enforcement issues; Councillor Derbyshire agreed and stated it was in the interests of the Council for him to work with Cabinet colleagues to resolve the issue.
- Members considered it would be good to know the timescales concluding discussions, it seemed to be an area where cost benefit analysis could be done, so it could be determined how much effort is put in compared to how much effect on homelessness is felt, and resources placed elsewhere if necessary; Members considered this was a debate that could be had with National Government about the relevance of performance indicators.

The Chairperson invited questions and comments from Members on Communities and Housing.

- Members asked why increased resources was not reducing the waiting lists for Disabled Facilities Grants. Officers explained that there had been an increase in demand and a slight decrease in capital, noting that in previous years the service had not underperformed and had in fact been the best performing service in Wales. Unfortunately, this had deteriorated when there was not enough capital to meet demand. Some capital had been gained in the last year but it would take time to turn the situation around; this coupled with lengthy adaptations and only having one contractor active for voids and DFG's had proved troublesome; however, officers stated that most adaptations had now been done apart from large extensions and that there would be a significant improvement in the figures quite soon.
- Members asked for realistic timescales in turning around poor performance regarding Voids. Officers noted that progress was not as good as they had wanted; the quick turnaround project had worked well with an end to end process with the Contractor to see how to cut time; also more work to be done in the notice period would have an effect on timings. Officers also noted the need to look at internal processes as currently not enough results were being seen; a fundamental review was needed to look at how to move forward; looking differently at long term/short term projects, allowing those that can be let faster to be let and accepting that some will take that much longer.

- Members asked when a review would be undertaken; Officers stated that they were currently consulting with Trade Unions and that information should become visible in the next week, with implementation in a few months' time. Officers were also investigating other areas to look at improving such as extending the quick turnaround project.
- Members discussed the RAG rating applied to performance indicators and sought clarification on whether at quarter 4 all should either be achieved (green) or not achieved (red) rather than amber. Officers agreed that this should be the case.
- Members noted that PSR/006 was not being used and asked what had replaced it. Officers explained that they used local indicators.
- With reference to emergency repairs, Members noted the figure of 4.46 days as the average time taken for the 4% that had not been repaired within target and sought clarification that most of those out of target did not take that long. Officers explained that they look at emergency repairs regularly; most jobs are made safe then followed up, jobs should be closed off the system but often are not and this skews the figures. Members considered that officers and contractors needed to be reminded of this.

The Chairperson invited the Cabinet Member for Health, Housing and Wellbeing to make a statement in which she drew Members' attention to a few PI's in particular; PPDR compliance as of 31 May 2016, was the second highest in the Council at 94.3%. Also there was significant progress being made in delayed transfers of care.

The Chairperson invited questions and comments from Members on Adult Social Services.

- Members discussed carers assessments and the target set against them; it was noted that targets had been set previously and were very stretched and officers understood the frustration of these not being achieved.
- Members discussed the overspend and sickness levels within the Directorate, noting that the increase in sickness conflicted with officers' previous comments on staff morale being very good at present. Officers explained about unachieved savings from previous years, unrealistic targets being set against poor business cases; a new Director was now in place and assurances had been given for more robust and more deliverable savings. Officers added that the unachieved savings were the overspend and that operationally the Directorate was underspent. Members were advised that the Directorate had not received the corporate write off they had hoped for, although a significant increase in the base budget was received.

Councillor Elsmore reiterated what she had witnessed with regard to staff morale, noting the challenges that staff face yet still there was a buzz in the teams and people were feeling positive and looking forward to working under the new Director.

In relation to sickness, Officers noted that sickness due to stress was in fact very low and that the age and demographic of the workforce was the factor for the sickness levels.

- Members noted the increase in PPDR compliance and the improvement in sickness absence figures and noted that there was still some way to go. Members asked that given the Organisation Development work that was going on and potential changes in different service delivery areas; what plans were in place and training provided for managers to ensure that staff are supported and sickness doesn't increase. Officers explained that the significant change will be supported by the organisational development that is going on; staff are being taken along with the changes so there is a measured timescale; staff will be communicated with all along; staff want the change and have been receptive to the change in leadership; there is a renewed enthusiasm amongst staff who are enjoying their work. With the ageing workforce succession planning is important, targeted work was being done with HR monitoring sickness trends and early intervention is taking place.

The Director Social Services added that there was more to do with training in relation to the Act, however, the structure is now more settled and there is better engagement with staff who meet together as a Directorate; across the whole Directorate there are 18 senior managers who are now working together and are very optimistic. The Assistant Director Adult Services added that staff morale has been further improved due to staff being physically in one location now.

- With reference to delayed transfer of care, Members noted the improvements that had been put in place and that numbers had come down significantly and asked what were the main things that were beginning to unlock. The Cabinet Member stated that the updated figures to the end of May had been submitted to the Welsh Government and she was pleased to advise Members that Cardiff had hit every one of its targets and had actually set a further target; the focus had been on partnership arrangements and getting relationships right. The Director added that there was a real recognition that it needs to be a whole system approach from before hospital admission to after discharge; social services need to understand the hospital side and vice versa; Health colleagues were now on board and new governance arrangements were in place from June. The Assistant Director stated that planning was already underway for winter pressures; work was underway with providers of home care and care home placements, for then to understand the issues in Dynamic Purchasing Systems, Matrix and Proactis; the declining relationship with providers over the past three years was beginning to repair; the systems were being used more appropriately resulting in more bids coming in; a whole systems approach was making changes and improving relationships.

The Cabinet Member added that they will be commissioning together with Health in the future, she was due to meet with the Chair of UK Homecare Association and the Vice Chair of Care Forum Wales in a few weeks' time and it was recognised that Cardiff now shows leadership and can provide exemplars.

- With regards to commissioning with Health, Members asked if officers were looking at examples of successful systems from Europe; officers stated they were looking at a number of models that work successfully and provided examples of Discharge to Assess and the Monmouth model. The Assistant Director stated that joint commissioning work was important as they want the providers to have confidence in Cardiff.

AGREED – That the Chairperson on behalf of the Committee writes to relevant Cabinet Members, Directors and officers thanking them for attending the Community and Adult Services Scrutiny Committee on 8 June 2016 and to convey the observations of the Committee when discussing the way forward.

8 : CABINET RESPONSE TO THE CASSC INFORMATION, ADVICE AND ASSISTANCE INQUIRY

The Chairperson welcomed Cllr Susan Elsmore Cabinet Member for Health, Housing and Wellbeing, Tony Young Director Social Services and Amanda Phillips Assistant Director Adult Services to the meeting.

The Chairperson invited the Cabinet Member to make a statement in which she reiterated her commitment to matters of Mental Health; she had been present when the Chief Executive had signed the Time to Change pledge on behalf of the Council and wanted to express her continued commitment to the issue.

The Director stated that in relation to the Cabinet response, there was no difference of intent; there was a fundamental issue of treating mental health and there was no difference in the value base; he recognised the work that had been done to date in good faith to make improvements; however, he considered that the recommendations didn't square with where officers were at the time.

The Chairperson invited questions and comments from Members:

- Members considered that the response did seem quite hostile but accepted the caveat given by the Director.
- Members were unclear as to whether Recommendation 6 was accepted or not. Officers agreed that this should be amended to read Not Accepted.
- Members considered that responses should be back in a timelier manner so that the evidence is still accurate and reports current trends. The Director explained that a faster response would have been better, however the Directorate was under huge pressures particularly in preparation for the Act and it was a difficult demand to manage.
- Members asked that given the wealth of information that was provided, whether anything of value was taken from it by officers. The Director explained that there were 2 things he had taken from the report: they needed to structure an approach that didn't rely on a Medical/GP approach; also the survey demonstrated that over 50% of people didn't understand how to access

services and this needed to be improved; he hoped that in a year's time this would be a better position. The Director did state that he found the tone of the report quite negative with the service being described as poor.

- With reference to Recommendation 5, Members noted the recommendation was not accepted stating that officers were already doing it. The Director stated that he looks to experts who say that they are compliant, whereas scrutiny is saying they are not. The Director accepted that it wasn't enough to just be compliant and that it was important to acknowledge weaknesses and address them. The Assistant Director of Adult Services added that she now has responsibility for Mental Health Services and there was work to be done; services are health driven, she would meet her counterpart at UHW to look at the Community Services Review that had been completed by the Health Board, and the recommendations of this report would be shared there.
- Members noted the time lag and difference in situation when the report was written and the response received and considered that the response could have taken into account the work that scrutiny had looked at. Officers considered this a fair comment and took this on board; stating that they did learn from it, but felt they couldn't accept the recommendations as written; however, a more constructive and appreciative response could have been written, and it was acknowledged that this would have been more helpful.
- Members asked when the Regional Committee group had been set up and the Director of Social Services advised that it was just after he was appointed in August/September and the guidance had come through following that.
- Members stated that the programme for scrutiny is planned, therefore officers would have known that the Task and Finish was planned, and that if something is about to happen that impacts such as change in governance arrangements then better communication is needed. The Cabinet Member agreed and considered that it was important to establish regular meetings with the Chairperson.

AGREED – That the Chairperson on behalf of the Committee writes to relevant Cabinet Members, Directors and officers thanking them for attending the Community and Adult Services Scrutiny Committee on 8 June 2016 and to convey the observations of the Committee when discussing the way forward.

9 : BRIEFING PAPER - HMO ADDITIONAL LICENSING SCHEME

Members noted that the Community & Adult Services Scrutiny Committee held a Call In on 7 October 2015 regarding the re-declaration of the additional licensing scheme in Cathays Ward. Following this meeting, Members amended their 2015/16 work programme to include an update on HMO additional licensing schemes in Cathays and Plasnewydd.

Appendix A to the report provided an update on progress so far and highlighted the challenges faced.

The principal scrutiny officer sought Committee members' comments on the update report to feed back.

Members wanted to thank officers for a comprehensive report. Members noted that the turnover of staff had slowed the progress of staff somewhat; Members also made observations on the Shared Regulatory Service and considered it was unclear how well the service was being policed. Members raised some questions in relation to the costs of the Landlord's registration course run via Rent Smart Wales and officers agreed to check some information with relevant officers.

10 : COMMITTEE BUSINESS REPORT

At the Committee meeting on 16 September 2015 Members discussed how they wished to deal with future reports concerning committee business, such as correspondence reports and work programme reports. Members decided to combine these within an overarching Committee Business report.

This report provided the Committee with the latest update on correspondence. The Committee received copies of correspondence sent and received in relation to matters previously scrutinised by this Committee. Members noted that the only outstanding responses were from the last meeting.

Members also noted that the Task and Finish report on the Night Time economy was going to Cabinet in June.

Members discussed work programming and the principal scrutiny officer advised Members of the procedure for identifying and prioritising a topic list for consideration, with the guiding principles being the Terms of Reference of the Committee.

In previous years Members, Partners and External Bodies had been emailed and asked if there was anything they wished to bring to Committee. Members discussed the number of meetings that were available to discuss topics and considered that with it being the year before an election and there only being 6 meetings, whether there would be enough time to properly deal with a wide range of issues and that there may be enough topics determined by Committee Members to fill the agendas; however, it was also considered that the Committee needed to be inclusive.

After further discussion it was determined that the principal scrutiny officer would email Committee Members, Cabinet Members and Directors for topic suggestions and then a ruthless prioritisation exercise would take place to determine the work programme. The principal scrutiny officer would also seek Members views on how the prioritisation would take place i.e. in the form of a vote or via scoring etc.

11 : DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The next meeting of the Community and Adult Services Scrutiny Committee is scheduled to be held on 6 July 2016, at 5.00pm in CR4, County Hall, Cardiff