

COMMUNITY & ADULT SERVICES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

18 SEPTEMBER 2023

Present: Councillor Taylor (Chairperson)
Councillors Ahmed, Ash-Edwards, Lent, Lewis, Littlechild and McGarry

9 : APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Cllrs. A. Ahmed and Boes.

10 : DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Cllr. Taylor declared a personal and non-prejudicial interest in item 4 as his sister-in-law was employed by the architect of the project, though she would not be working on the scheme itself.

11 : MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 19th July 2023 were agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chairperson.

12 : UPDATE ON THE PROCUREMENT OF A DEVELOPER PARTNER FOR THE CHANNEL VIEW REGENERATION PROJECT

Members were advised that this item sought to provide background information to enable their pre-decision scrutiny of the report to Cabinet regarding the procurement of a Developer Partner for the Channel View regeneration project, with insight into the procurement process and the outcome of the tender evaluation exercise including the preferred bidder and the next steps.

For this item, the Chairperson welcomed:

- Cllr. Lynda Thorne, Cabinet Member for Housing & Communities
- Sarah McGill, Cardiff Council's Corporate Director People & Communities
- Dave Jaques, Cardiff Council's Assistant Director, Development and Regeneration

The Cabinet Member was invited to make an opening statement, after which Officers provided a presentation. Members were then asked for their questions, comments and observations.

The Committee explored the implications of there only having been one bidder, noting a possible lack of options when it came to benchmarking, and heard that this was instead being done against costings of similar council projects to ensure value for money. Officers acknowledged that it was a concern that there had only been one bidder, and they were looking into why that had happened. It was a complex project requiring the development partner to deliver homes for sale in future phases, which came with a higher level of risk, while market conditions were also a factor. Officers

were confident that the development partner had the right experience of delivering this kind of complex public and private sector project.

Members noted the cost trajectory and overall price of the project and explored the period of review between each phase of the development where financial viability would be assessed, and queried whether the council could end up being 'locked in' to a sub-optimal arrangement. Officers advised that there would be mechanisms within the development agreement to address any concerns. Members noted the risk of having a single development partner were that partner to go bust, but also acknowledged that this risk existed in every project. Officers added that if the council had concerns about the viability of the next phase then re-tendering was a realistic option, although they would seek to engage with the development partner in a collaborative way.

The Committee sought assurances regarding the impact on residents and clarity on the level of support offered to council tenants and private tenants. Officers explained the complexities of these issues and how the consultations planned to address them. Whether or not compulsory purchase orders would be needed would not become clear until after the consultation had taken place.

Members sought clarity on the transition arrangements for residents, particularly in Tower Block 1. Officers explained that they had all been rehoused and there had been no complaints about the arrangements. Members advocated continuous engagement with residents and were pleased to hear that this formed a key part of the evaluation that would take place between each stage.

RESOLVED – That the public be excluded from the meeting at this point during consideration of this item as the Committee discussed exempt information of the description contained in paragraph 14 of Parts 4 and 5 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972. The public may be excluded from the meeting by resolution of the Committee pursuant to Section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972 during discussion of this item.

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.

13 : LOCAL AUTHORITY SOCIAL SERVICES ANNUAL REPORT 2022/23

Members were advised that this item sought to provide background information to facilitate their scrutiny of the draft Local Authority Social Services Annual Report 2022/23 prior to consideration by the Cabinet and Council.

For this item, the Chairperson welcomed:

- Cllr. Norma Mackie, Cabinet Member for Social Services (Adults)
- Sarah McGill, Cardiff Council's Corporate Director People & Communities
- Jane Thomas, Cardiff Council's Director for Adults, Housing &

Communities

- Deborah Driffield, Cardiff Council's Director of Children's Services
- Cllr. Lee Bridgeman, Chair of the Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee
- Cllr. Robert Hopkins, member of the Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee

The Cabinet Member was invited to make an opening statement, after which Members were asked for their questions, comments and observations.

The Committee sought assurance about how the service would meet its ongoing challenges in a tough financial context, and heard that successful cooperation and collaboration would be key. Members noted that the challenges faced could be made clearer in the report, although they acknowledged that officers were required to follow a prescribed format.

Members highlighted a number of issues around staffing, particularly their concern that social workers could become burnt out by the new model of working in children's services if it were to lead to increased caseloads. Officers explained that children's services and adult services faced different staffing issues, with a higher vacancy rate in the former due to the perception of it being more stressful (a perception which the service endeavoured to change), and an ageing workforce in the latter.

The Committee explored the reasons for delays in the assigning of social workers to adults with disabilities, and noted concerns from parents and individuals who felt they would benefit from a greater level of continuity. Members examined the effectiveness of the '*All Wales approach to the use of agency workers in children services*', which officers reported was progressing well.

Members discussed questions relating to modern day slavery and the reasons for increased exploitation, noting that this was partly caused by there being more effective mechanisms to report it nowadays, but was also linked to a rise in poverty and a lack of opportunities.

Members raised concerns about the sustainability of the use of volunteers as well as access to mental health services, and noted the issue of care leavers who were not in education or training as they transitioned to adulthood. This was a major area of ongoing work which officers would continue to feed back to both the Community and Adult Services Scrutiny Committee and the Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee.

The Committee thanked the officers for their continuing engagement with scrutiny and acknowledged the work that had gone into the report.

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.

14 : COMMUNITY & ADULT SERVICES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE WORK PROGRAMME 2023/24

Members were advised that this report provided the Committee with the output from the Work Programming Forum, which took place on the 10th July 2023. The list of items suggested at the forum had been populated into a calendar for the Committee's consideration and approval, including homeless provision and access to mental health provision. The officer also noted that a member had suggested getting an update on the Adult Services Work Strategy.

The Committee was happy to have that update and with the indicative timeline for the workplan for this year.

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.

15 : URGENT ITEMS (IF ANY)

There were none.

16 : DATE OF NEXT MEETING

16th October 2023 at 4:30pm.