

COMMUNITY & ADULT SERVICES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

11 DECEMBER 2023

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

25 : APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

None received.

26 : DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Cllr Littlechild declared a personal interest in Item 5 due to his role working for Albany Road Baptist Church and Cadwyn Housing Association being a partner on the Community Hall redevelopment project.

27 : MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 20 November 2023, were agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chairperson.

28 : REVIEW OF CARE HOME MARKET

For this item, the Chairperson welcomed Cllr Norma Mackie, Cabinet Member for Adult Services; Jane Thomas, Director, Adults Housing & Communities; Angel Bourge, Operational Manager, Strategy Performance & Resources and Maria Bell, Head of Policy for the National Commissioning Board.

Members were reminded that Appendix A, B & D of the report contain exempt information of the description contained in paragraph 16 of Part 4 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972, and any discussion related to these appendices would need to be held in closed session.

The Cabinet Member was invited to make an opening statement after which Members were provided with a presentation from Officers.

The Chairperson invited questions and comments from Members.

Members noted and acknowledged the rationale behind the one-year fee setting approach for 2024/25, considering the ongoing financial challenges facing the sector on a national level. Members noted the intention to return to a longer-term Fee Setting Strategy when the financial context allows.

Members welcomed the proposed fee uplifting mechanism for the Real Living Wage.

Discussing engagement With Providers, Members expressed concern about the poor response to the 2022 and 2023 Cost of Care Exercise, questioning the effectiveness of the consultation with providers. Members proposed a review of the Cost of Care Exercise, stating that taking part in the consultation should not be onerous for care providers.

Members encouraged discussions with Welsh Government on the potential mandate for care providers to engage over the longer term.

Members raised concerns about the decision not to provide annual uplifts to packages where the Council pays above the standard fee, affecting 254 placements, and questioned the fairness of this approach, particularly in comparison to annual uplifts for all learning disabilities care home placements.

Discussing Provider Investment, Members acknowledged the need for providers to undertake infrastructure investment, especially for specialist care.

The Committee recognised the previous unsuccessful attempts to secure funding from Welsh Government for capital schemes for private providers and encouraged continued efforts to seek funding for specialist care provision.

Members discussed the National Commissioning Board's work on tailoring fees to providers, favouring a flexible approach over a blanket fee setting approach. Members encouraged ongoing collaboration with the National Commissioning Board to explore and implement flexible fee-setting approaches.

Members noted that Officers were hopeful that the proposed Hybrid Model Framework in the Cabinet Report would address the lack of specialist care provision in the city.

Members were hopeful that the framework could help address issues related to the Council paying above standard rates and support the development of Section 16 providers.

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.

29 : HOUSING CRISIS IN CARDIFF

For this item, the Chairperson welcomed Cllr Lynda Thorne, Cabinet Member for Housing & Communities; Jane Thomas, Director, Adults Housing & Communities and Dave Jaques, Assistant Director Development & Regeneration.

Members were reminded that Appendices 1, 2, 3 & 7 contain exempt information of the description contained in paragraph 16 of Part 4 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972. Any discussion related to these appendices would need to be held in closed session.

The Cabinet Member was invited to make an opening statement after which Members were provided with a presentation from Officers.

The Chairperson invited questions and comments from Members.

Members welcomed the forthcoming consultation on policy proposals involving individuals on the housing waiting list and key stakeholders.

Members raised questions about the weight of the consultation and emphasised the importance of aligning proposals with consultation results, especially if there's significant disagreement.

The Committee explored the evidence required for applying intentionality, expressing concern about families, especially those with children, who may not be exempt.

Discussing offers of accommodation outside Cardiff, Members noted that these offers would be in the private rented sector.

Members discussed the importance of collaboration with other local authorities, especially regarding the homeless duty for individuals or families placed outside Cardiff.

Members requested clarification on the permanency aspect, specifically the minimum term of tenancy offered under the proposed arrangements.

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 16 of Part 4 and paragraph 21 of Part 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.

30 : REPLACEMENT LOCAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN

Members were advised that this agenda item was for Members to note the final RLDP Joint Inquiry report that would be taken to the PRAP Scrutiny Committee for agreement before it is presented to Cabinet formally in January 2024.

RESOLVED: To note the report.

31 : URGENT ITEMS (IF ANY)

None received.

32 : DATE OF NEXT MEETING

26 February 2024, 10.00am (Budget Scrutiny)

The meeting terminated at 6.10 pm.