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CORRESPONDENCE FOLLOWING THE COMMITTEE MEETING

Committee COMMUNITY & ADULT SERVICES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Date and Time of Meeting WEDNESDAY, 8 DECEMBER 2021, 4.30 PM

Please find below correspondence send by the Committee Chair following the meeting, together with any responses received.

For any further details, please contact scrutinyviewpoints@cardiff.gov.uk

10 **Correspondence Following Committee Meeting**(Pages 3 - 14)

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My Ref: Scrutiny/Correspondence/Cllr Jenkins
15th December 2021

Councillor Susan Elsmore
Cabinet Member Social Care, Health & Wellbeing
Sent via e-mail



Dear Cllr Elsmore,

COMMUNITY & ADULT SERVICES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE – 8 DEC 2021 – AGEING WELL STRATEGY –

As Chairman of the Community and Adult Services Scrutiny Committee, I wish to thank all who attended for providing Members with a comprehensive briefing and welcomed opportunity for policy development of the forthcoming Ageing Well Strategy.

Following our consideration, Members of the committee have requested I feedback the following comments and observations to you.

The importance, and need, to ensure a sufficient framework is in place to allow Cardiff residents to age well, and remain healthy, is both recognised and welcomed by Members. Leading on from this we sought to ensure that this strategy is not 'lost' and receives the relevant recognition and importance within the Council's strategic framework. As such, we sought assurance on how it is proposed the strategy will sit with the other plans and policies of the Council; most notably high-level strategic documents such as the Corporate Plan. It was interesting to note that over time, this strategy may replace some of the other strategies of the Council.

To ensure a clear, coherent framework and stimulate understanding of the strategy's importance, we **recommend** that a visual aid, such as the golden thread seen within the Directorate Delivery Plan, is incorporated within the final strategy (along with any other relevant, related strategies). This will help ensure clear understanding of its alignment to the Council's work, and any relevant work of our partners is achieved. In line with this we also suggest this visual aid provide insight into some of the Council strategies this strategy may replace, or other plans and policies of the Council with a similar ethos such as the Age Friendly City Action Plan.

We welcomed the messaging on the importance of strong alignment, and we emphasised the need for the strategy to sufficiently reflect and integrate the work of our partners, such as

the Regional Partnership Board's, Ageing Well Partnership. We note that many of the projects delivered within the proposed strategy are done in conjunction with the RPB. We also note your comments that the risk of miss-alignment is low, as conversations with the RPB are ongoing, along with you also chairing the RPB Ageing Well Partnership Board to further ensure a joined-up approach.

Leading on from this, we also stressed the importance of corporate working of the strategy to ensure it is closely aligned with other key council services and departments, such as leisure and transport facilities. We note the Council's ambition toward becoming an Age Friendly City is supported by an Age Friendly City Action Plan, and this plan recognises, and sets out how corporate working of this agenda will be actioned. Given our comments on the need to ensure clear alignment with the Council's existing policies, work of partners and the importance of corporate working, we **recommend** the importance of cross-directorate work, and how it will be achieved, is included in this strategy. Further, the strategy should clearly signpost readers to the Age Friendly City Plan which provides the detail of how corporate working will be actioned.

As a committee, we have previously been briefed on the 'Quality Assurance Framework' which will monitor the quality of care of services provided directly by the Council and those that are commissioned. It was pleasing to note that this framework is now in place, and we hope it can provide strong foundations to ensure good quality of care is received by all, along with the successful development and delivery of this strategy.

During the meeting, we noted that just 18% of the population aged 75+ use telecare and we explored if there was a significant gap in people who would benefit from telecare but do not take it up. It is felt amongst committee Members that greater use of such services could, along with providing safety and security for the older population, help relieve pressures both on the Council and its partners. It was pleasing to note that was recognised by yourself and officers and research is underway surrounding encouraging take up and possibly expanding the service to provide low-level care. In line with the possibility of expanding the service, we were also informed the service area is undertaking best practice research to see how this could potentially be achieved. Members wish to **request** that when the research is finalised and the findings are known, this is shared with committee.

During the discussions it was also pleasing to note the emphasis, that technology enabled care, and care provided through human contact, is not seen, or delivered, as an either or. But developed to compliment and strengthen the services and support offered to individuals. We note and welcome that in line with service users' feedback, this will be a clear message within the strategy.

Regarding the high level of workforce turnover within the wider care providers, we note that due to the significant, national challenges within the care sector market, there has unfortunately been no improvements. We note the intention, that with Welsh Government assistance, it is hoped this issue can be addressed by promoting and encouraging work within the care sector as a worthwhile, beneficial profession with good rewards. We wish to stress the importance that this messaging, to help stimulate and encourage social care work force take-up, is prominent within the strategy.

In line with the challenges facing the social care workforce, we also explored the importance of the Council offering support to the third sector, including community groups and volunteers. With the view this could help ensure the success of this strategy's aims and potentially alleviate pressures. It was pleasing to note in terms of volunteers, the Council has expanded its support through Age Connect and the Council Adviceline services. In terms of groups, support is offered, including financial support, and the Council is working with Cardiff Third Sector Council surrounding grant schemes. Members wish to reiterate the importance of working with volunteers and groups to help contribute to the success of this strategy.

Recommendations to be Monitoring following this Scrutiny

The Committee makes two formal recommendation which are set out below.

As part of the response to this letter I would be grateful if you could state whether the recommendations are accepted, partially accepted or not accepted and summarise the Cabinet's response. If the recommendations are accepted or partially accepted, I would also be grateful if you could identify the responsible officer and provide an action date. This will ensure that progress can be monitored as part of the approach agreed by Cabinet in December 2020.

Recommendation	Accepted, Partially Accepted or Not Accepted	Cabinet Response	Responsible Officer	Implementation Date
A visual aid, such as the golden thread seen within the Directorate Delivery Plan, is incorporated within the final strategy (along with any other relevant, related strategies). This will help ensure clear understanding of its alignment to the Council's				

<p>work, and any relevant work of our partners is achieved. In line with this we also suggest this visual aid provide insight into some of the Council strategies this strategy may replace, or other plans and policies of the Council with a similar ethos such as the Age Friendly City Action Plan.</p>				
<p>The importance of cross-directorate work, and how it will be achieved, is included in this strategy. Further, the strategy should clearly signpost readers to the Age Friendly City Plan which provides the detail of how corporate working will be actioned.</p>				

Our thanks once again for the early briefing on the Ageing Well Strategy.

Yours,



COUNCILLOR SHAUN JENKINS

Chairman - Community & Adult Services Scrutiny Committee

cc. Sarah McGill, Corporate Director People & Communities

Jane Thomas, Director, Adults, Housing & Communities

Members of the Community & Adult Services Scrutiny Committee

SWYDDFA CYMORTH Y CABINET CABINET SUPPORT OFFICE

Fy Nghyf / My Ref: CM46916

Eich Cyf / Your Ref: Scrutiny/Correspondence/Cllr Jenkins

Dyddiad / Date: 21 January 2022

Councillor Shaun Jenkins
Chairperson
Community & Adult Services Scrutiny Committee
Cardiff Council
County Hall
Cardiff
CF10 4UW

Annwyl / Dear Shaun,

Re: COMMUNITY & ADULT SERVICES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE – 8 DEC 2021 – AGEING WELL STRATEGY

Thank you for the opportunity to present our proposals for Cardiff's Ageing Well Strategy to Committee for consideration at the policy development stage. Please see my response below.

I note the Committee's concern to ensure that this strategy isn't "lost" within the Council's strategic framework. I note, too, the suggestion in term of the inclusion of a visual aid, however, as confirmed by officers at Committee this will be considered as part of the development of the Directorate Delivery Plan.

I accept the need for the strategy to be fully embedded within our strategic framework. An addition has been made to the 'next steps' section to explain how it will inform both the corporate plan and directorate delivery plan. And, the commitments set out in the strategy will be incorporated clearly within the next iteration of both, together with the milestones required to achieve these commitments.

I agree with your comments about the importance of corporate working particularly in the delivery of the Age Friendly City Action Plan. The Age Friendly City Action Plan is clearly referenced within, indeed, forms an important component of the Ageing Well Strategy. The progress of all departments and partners in delivering their action plan commitments will be monitored and reported as part of the Corporate Plan and Directorate Delivery Plan processes.

With regards to your request for a further update once the research on the best use of technology has been completed, officers will be happy to provide feedback on this issue once complete.

I note the Committee's concern about the challenges facing the social care workforce. I am pleased to advise that the Welsh Government have since announced that they will be granting considerable funding to address these issues. The importance of support to the care sector, and care workers in particular, is set out clearly in the strategy.

I also note Member's reiteration of the importance of working with volunteers and community groups. They, too, have an important role to play in the successful delivery of the strategy.

Recommendation	Accepted, Partially Accepted or Not Accepted	Cabinet Response	Responsible Officer	Implementation Date
<p>A visual aid, such as the golden thread seen within the Directorate Delivery Plan, is incorporated within the final strategy (along with any other relevant, related strategies). This will help ensure clear understanding of its alignment to the Council's work, and any relevant work of our partners is achieved. In line with this we also suggest this visual aid provide insight into some of the Council strategies this strategy may replace, or other plans and policies of the Council with a similar ethos such as the Age Friendly City Action Plan.</p>	<p>Partially Accepted</p>	<p>While a visual aid has not been included in the strategy, the importance of aligning this to the Council's work and that of our partners is very much accepted. The Ageing Well Strategy will inform the Corporate and Directorate Delivery Plans for 2022-2023 under the Wellbeing Objective "Cardiff is a great place to grow older". There is clear information within the strategy to show how it has been influenced by other relevant local and national strategies and how it links to the work of our partners. Work on a visual aid to show how the strategy informs the golden thread will be considered as part of the Directorate Delivery plan.</p>	<p>Jane Thomas</p>	<p>June 2022</p>
<p>The importance of cross directorate work, and how it will be achieved, is included in this strategy. Further, the strategy should clearly signpost readers to the Age Friendly City Plan which provides the detail of how corporate working will be actioned.</p>	<p>Accepted</p>	<p>The strategy document does fully reference and signpost the reader to the Age Friendly City Plan. The Age Friendly City aspiration is now a key part of the Ageing Well Strategy, and its delivery will be monitored alongside the other commitments in the strategy.</p>	<p>Jane Thomas</p>	<p>April 2022 and ongoing</p>

Yn gywir / Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Susan Elsmore". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'S'.

Councillor / Y Cynghorydd Susan Elsmore
Cabinet Member for Social Care, Health & Well-being
Aelod Cabinet dros Ofal Cymdeithasol, Iechyd a Lles

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My Ref: Scrutiny/Correspondence/Cllr Jenkins

15th December 2021

Councillor Lynda Thorne
Cabinet Member for Housing & Communities
Councillor Peter Wong,
Cabinet Assistant – Private Sector Housing
Sent via e-mail



Dear Cllr Thorne & Cllr Wong,

COMMUNITY & ADULT SERVICES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE – 8 DEC 2021 –PRIVATE SECTOR EMPTY HOMES POLICY 2021-2024-

As Chairman of the Community and Adult Services Scrutiny Committee, I wish to thank you and officers for attending committee, providing Members with an opportunity to consider the Private Sector Empty Homes Policy 2021-2024.

Following our consideration, Members of the committee have requested I feedback the following comments and observations to you. Please note, some of the points raised in this letter will be that of mine alone. Where this applies, it will be clearly stated.

Given the increased demand for housing services and being mindful to the number of individuals on the housing waiting list, the need to bring long-term empty properties in the private sector back into use is recognised by committee Members. The committee notes, that all owners of long-term, empty properties are engaged with, and this is initially done through working with the owner and offering support and assistance. With high-level enforcement measures and direct intervention only being used as a last resort when other measures have failed.

During the meeting I explored how cases are managed, and how long-term empty properties which have received no complaints from neighbours are prioritised. It was pleasing to note within the response, that properties which receive complaints, and cause a nuisance for communities, are the priority. Leading on from this, I suggested if the scoring matrix of the Empty Property Risk Assessment (Appendix 2 of the policy), could be reconsidered so that if a property is vacant, but no community issues are arising from it, the score could be 0, but if other issues apply then scoring should be introduced. To confirm, this suggestion was not agreed by committee Members, who held the view the length of time a property is vacant is a factor in addressing this issue, and owners should be engaged with to offer support and assistance. We note the policy advises that the definition of an empty property, in terms of

length of time the property is empty, is currently subject to review by the Welsh Government. It will be interesting to note the outcome of this review.

Although I note the start of the policy confirms the definition of an empty property excludes second or holiday homes (and others). I do hold concerns around the potential direction of travel for this body of work. Where individuals who may have a property that is empty (for a range of reasons) but are maintaining the property, being reprimanded. With Council resource inadvertently not targeting properties which need action the most. To confirm this is a concern that I expressed at the meeting, and other Members at the meeting did not share these concerns.

Although I recognise the need for empty properties to be addressed in a constructive way, the reasons for my views are, [a] if this body of work continues in the current direction then it may only be a matter of time before the Council drifts in to a territory of wielding too much control over people's private property, and [b] to ensure that properties which are a blight on communities, or where ASB issues occur are dealt with and prioritised sooner than those empty and maintained.

Although committee Members did not share my concerns detailed above, as a committee, we do wish to stress that, in line with the Welsh Government's, '*Empty Homes Good Practice Guidance*', when the Council is determining which properties to address, targeted action is applied through careful analysis. We note this is evidenced in the policy and was agreed by witnesses at the meeting.

During our consideration of the policy, the committee questioned if there was a way, we could do more as a Council such as offering private purchase of the property at an earlier stage, or 'quick fixes' to bring properties back into use sooner. Members were informed that encouraging take-up onto leasing schemes could help expedite matters and that when the updated processes detailed within this policy are fully established, they too should help speed up the process.

Leading on from this, we also explored the length of time and costings surrounding Compulsory Purchase Orders (CPOs). Although it is noted CPOs are not cost neutral, we explored if CPOs may prove more cost effective in comparison to other avenues such as building new houses. Members were advised due to the potential for additional and unexpected costs to occur in CPOs, it makes estimating the cost of CPOs difficult. However, in the discussion it was interesting to note that Welsh Government have made £15.2 million available to authorities to help fund this work. In line with this, Members wish to **request** more information on reclaiming CPO costings from Welsh Government such as, how this

funding may work in practice, if the funding is allocated on a case-by-case basis when we as a Council would know if costings can be fully reimbursed, how long the process to receive the reimbursement may take, and if reimbursement could potentially prolong the process.

As detailed in the policy, one annual mailshot goes out to empty property owners. Although we note this is only one of the team's interventions, Members would encourage this being increased to further advertise the incentives and support available. From the discussion had at the meeting, we note this will be considered by officers.

Given the breadth of services and responsibilities managed by SRS, we explored if this could impact on the work of addressing empty private properties. Members note that previously this was a concern amongst officers. However, since the introduction of the Council Tax premium, it has helped alleviate resource pressures, although some pressures do remain.

During the discussion it was clear the need for more resource in this area of work is required and committee Members would welcome more resource being allocated to help alleviate any remaining pressures. In addition, we also wish to **request** insight into how much money has been received from the Council Tax premium since it was introduced.

Finally, Members wish to thank you and officers for the offer of reporting back to the committee on the progress of the policy in two years' time. To confirm, we would welcome this update and I will task the committee's support officer to liaise with relevant officers accordingly.

To confirm, a response to this letter is requested along with the following information:

- More information on reclaiming CPO costings from Welsh Government such as how this funding may work in practice, if the funding is allocated on a case-by-case basis when we as a Council would know if costings can be fully reimbursed, how long the process to receive the reimbursement may take, and if reimbursement could potentially prolong the process.
- Insight into how much money has been received from the Council Tax premium since it was introduced.

Yours,



COUNCILLOR SHAUN JENKINS

Chairman - Community & Adult Services Scrutiny Committee

cc. Neil Hanratty, Director – Economic Development

Dave Holland, Head of Shared Regulatory Services
Steve Tudball, Team Manager, Housing Enforcement
Jo Watkins, Cabinet Business
Leaders of the Opposition
Tim Gordon, Head of Communications & External Relations
Members of the Community & Adult Services Scrutiny Committee