

COMMUNITY & ADULT SERVICES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

6 JULY 2016

Present: County Councillor McGarry(Chairperson)
County Councillors Magill and Sanders

12 : APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Ali Ahmed, Carter, Ralph Cook, Davis and Lomax.

13 : DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest received.

14 : MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 8 June 2016 were agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chairperson.

15 : CORPORATE SAFEGUARDING BOARD ANNUAL REPORT 2015/16

This item was an opportunity for Committee to consider the Corporate Safeguarding Board Annual Report 2015.16 prior to its consideration by the Corporate Parenting Advisory Committee later in July. The report had already been scrutinised by the Children & Young People Scrutiny Committee on 14 June 2016 and the letter from the Committee was attached to the cover report.

The Chairperson welcomed Councillor Graham Hinchey to the meeting as Chair of the Corporate Safeguarding Board, and Tony Young Director of Social Services.

Councillor Hinchey made a statement on the first year of the work of the Corporate Safeguarding Board which had mainly concentrated on developing a framework for its work going forward and would progress operational processes and development and training as part of its ongoing action plan to ensure effective delivery of the ambition of the Council; principles of safeguarding and support to those most vulnerable in society.

The Action Plan contained in Appendix B remained unchanged. It was noted also that a number of awareness and training initiatives would be sponsored by the board including sessions with Elected Members and these would be planned into the programme for 2016/17

The Chairperson invited comments and questions on the achievements made in the first year of the Board.

- Members recognised that this was the first report of the Corporate Safeguarding Board established in March 2015. It was appreciated that there was still significant

work to be done to ensure corporate safeguarding is effective and mainstreamed as a core priority.

- Members welcomed that internal support for the Board had improved, with most Directorates now represented on the Board and that any gaps would be filled shortly. Members believe it is essential to have the right representatives on the Board, providing a council wide representation and support to the Director of Social Services.
- Having looked at the information on the make-up of the Board provided in the updated report circulated at the meeting, Members had concerns that there was a lack of clarity of whether the representatives were of the right level to effect changes in behaviours and practices across their Directorates. Members recommend that this is reflected on and appropriate action taken to ensure the right people are on the Board.
- Members had concerns about the lack of pace evidenced in the report, but were assured that the pace would increase with the wider cross Directorate support for the Board.
- Members note that the Action Plan needs to be updated to include appropriate references to adult safeguarding.
- The Committee was keen to emphasise the need for public awareness of the work on safeguarding and how the public can raise safeguarding concerns; at the moment the Council's website does not clearly signpost the public to the Local Safeguarding Children's Board and Local Safeguarding Adults Board. Members recommend that this be quickly rectified, with hyperlinks to appropriate websites for these Boards.
- Members had a number of recommendations aimed at strengthening the Annual Report namely
 - including information to contextualise the report, including definitions and the scale and scope of the various types of safeguarding issues in Cardiff.
 - include more information in the governance section to better detail the links between Cardiff Council's various safeguarding mechanisms, including the Corporate Parenting Advisory Committee and the regional safeguarding boards – both in terms of responsible officers and in terms of operational practice, so that a reader with no prior knowledge of the governance structure can clearly understand the role of each body and the linkages and relationships between them.
 - provide details of how the Corporate Safeguarding Board will link with the National Safeguarding Board, which has a role in leading policy and practice developments as well as advising Welsh Government.
 - include more information on how the quarterly reports from Directorates will be used by the Board to monitor performance and take action as required.
 - amend the Action Plan to make it explicit that appropriate actions relate to adult safeguarding as well as children's safeguarding.
 - include an action in the Action Plan to prepare safeguarding training for the intake of new Members following the elections in May 2017.
- The Committee in general felt that the annual report did not provide the assurances required about the effectiveness of corporate safeguarding.
- Members felt it was essential that the pace of change was increased and that officers across the Council become more proactive in engaging with the issues of corporate safeguarding rather than limiting their work to reacting to the Wales Audit Office's improvement proposals.
- Members noted that the Director of Social Service' offer to explore the legal situation on Members being DBS checked. Members would be in favour of the use of DBS checks, if the law supports this, as their ward role can involve being alone with vulnerable adults.

- Members believe that safeguarding training should be mandatory for Members; the Cardiff Undertaking which they recently signed references Members' responsibilities regarding safeguarding and therefore training should, at the very least, be essential and were keen that this matter be raised with the new Monitoring Officer when in post in September 2016.
- The Member were keen to see the video prepared for use with staff to raise awareness of safeguarding issues.

RESOLVED – That

1. The Chair of the Corporate Safeguarding Board and the Director of Social Services be thanked for attending to present and discuss the Corporate Safeguarding Board Annual Report 2015/16;
2. A letter be sent by the Chairperson on behalf of the Committee to the Chair of the Corporate Safeguarding Board outlining the recommendations arising from the scrutiny of the Annual Report.

16 : CARDIFF HOUSING STRATEGY 2016-2021

The Committee was afforded the opportunity to undertake a pre-decision scrutiny of the Cardiff Housing Strategy 2016 -2021 prior to consideration at Cabinet in September.

The Chairperson welcomed Councillor Susan Elsmore, Cabinet Member, Health, Housing and Wellbeing, Sarah McGill, Director, Communities, Housing and Customer Services and Jane Thomas, Assistant Director, Communities and Housing. Councillor Elsmore was invited to make a statement where she provided an overview of the process adopted for the development of this significantly different strategy for tackling housing need and meeting the ambitions of the Council to provide accessible and improved housing to the citizens of Cardiff in particular those most vulnerable in society.

The Director Communities, Housing and Customer Services and Assistant Director gave a presentation. Identifying the four key aims of the Strategy; the links with the Corporate Plan and equality impact assessment.

The Chairperson invited questions on the Strategy and presentation and the following observations and comments were made.

- The Committee felt that the Strategy could more fully reference the Black and Minority Ethnic communities in Cardiff and what work would be undertaken to ensure that their specific housing needs are assessed and planned for.
- Members considered that reference should be made in the Equalities section to the Council's Strategic Equality Plan 2016-2020.
- Members asked that it be made clear that 4,220 affordable homes will be provided over the 5 years of the strategy, rather than the life of the LDP.
- Members wished that reference be made in the strategy to the fact that the design of housing and of estates is critical to ensuring high quality, sustainable affordable housing that residents wish to live in and that contribute to resilient communities.
- The Committee noted that the main risk to the Council, arising from the proposals in the Strategy, was a likely increase in void properties as under-

occupation initiatives begin to work, as these properties often require considerable work to bring them to a lettable standard. Members also note that the cost of these voids was small when compared with the cost of providing similar houses as new.

- The Committee commended the Cabinet Member and Officers on producing an evidence based, comprehensive, whole system approach Strategy. It was clear that significant thought had gone into the planning and development of the new vision, aims and actions contained in the document.
- Members were also pleased with the assurances given by the Director of Communities, Housing and Customer Services and the Assistant Director of Communities and Housing, on the delivery of the many actions in the strategy, within existing resources.
- The Committee was also heartened to learn that the strategy had been developed in partnership with Registered Social Landlords, Health and Social Care colleagues and private sector landlords, as appropriate. Members recognise that the strategy would require extensive partnership working to deliver the actions and believe that involving partners at the start of the process can only support and help this.

In conclusion the Committee indicated that it was currently finalising its work programme for the municipal year and there were some elements of work mentioned in the Housing Strategy that would be programmed for more in-depth scrutiny.

RESOLVED – That the Chairperson write to the Cabinet Member, Health, Housing and Wellbeing thanking her and the officers for attending and participating in the pre-decision scrutiny on the Cardiff Housing Strategy and setting out the recommendations and observations as detailed above.

17 : COMMUNITIES FIRST ANNUAL REPORT 2015/16

The Committee was pleased to receive the first annual report for the Communities First showcasing the work and achievements in 2015/16. The aim of the scrutiny was also to consider the way forward for Communities First in 2016/17.

The Chairperson welcomed Councillor Peter Bradbury, Cabinet Member, Community Development, Co-operatives & Social Enterprise, Sarah McGill Director, Communities, Housing and Customer Services, Jane Thomas Assistant Director, Communities and Housing and Louise Bassett, Partnerships Delivery Team Leader who had been invited to answer questions on the report.

Councillor Bradbury gave a statement where he praised the work of the Communities First team and their significant achievements and benefits this had brought to communities and neighbourhoods in some of the most deprived areas of the city.

The Chairperson invited questions to the Cabinet Member and Officers on the Annual report and a number of comments and observations were made.

- Members were very interested in the breadth of the work undertaken in Communities First areas in Cardiff and the results of these, as shown in the infographics and tables in the report. This work was making a significant difference to those who participate in the events and, in a lot of cases, to their families and neighbourhoods.

- Members commend all of those involved in delivering Communities First, an essential tool in tackling generational poverty.
- Members recognise that evidencing the sustainable effectiveness of Communities First requires a longer term view, for example by looking at levels of social mobility and a reduction in the levels and types of poverty experienced in these areas.
- The Committee welcomed the improvement in the links between clusters and schools within these areas, resulting in better parental involvement in education and more agencies providing services from school. This could assist in boosting pupils' attainment levels, which in turn would assist in increasing social mobility and reducing poverty.
- The Committee noted that the Welsh Government was working to draw together various anti-poverty programmes, to reduce the bureaucracy so as to continue to maximise results. Members welcomed this in principle, and would await the detail of this work with interest and the outcome of funding allocations to future anti-poverty initiatives through the Welsh Government in the forthcoming months.
- Members were pleased to hear that you are having regular conversations with relevant Welsh Government representatives to explain the lessons coming from Cardiff with regard to joining up anti-poverty work and clusters attracting non-governmental funding.
- Members also believed that there were lessons from Communities First clusters that could usefully be applied across the whole of the city; the discussion at Committee focused on time banking as an example of this but Members were sure that there are other initiatives and approaches that would be equally transferable.

RESOLVED – That the Chairperson write to the Cabinet Member, Community Development, Co-operatives & Social Enterprise thanking him and the officers for attending and presenting the Communities First Annual Report 2015/16 and setting out the recommendations and observations as detailed above.

18 : SOCIAL SERVICES AND WELL BEING (WALES) ACT 2014 - IMPLEMENTATION PROGRESS - PREVENTATIVE SERVICES

The Committee received a detailed briefing report, which has been prepared by Adult Social Services officers, which set out:

- The work of the regional Social Services Planning and Promoting Preventative Services task and finish group.
- The work of the Preventative Services Project, being delivered by Independent Living Services.
- A short summary of the Population Needs Assessment, required by the Act.

The Act requires that prevention underpins all aspects of the delivery of care and support, with greater emphasis required on earlier intervention, community preventative services, re-ablement and independent living.

The briefing report detailed the work undertaken to date to map the current position in relation to preventative services across Cardiff and the Vale of Glamorgan. The Planning Promoting Preventative Services task and finish group considered the findings of this work and provided their views and how best to take work forward.

The Chairperson invited comments from Members on the update.

- Members recognized that it was work in progress and that the aim was for a holistic approach to preventative services;

- Members noted the joining up of services under one service including Occupational Therapy; adaptations; day opportunities to be known as independent living services and that the longer-term strategy was still being defined;
- The Committee noted that the Population assessment aim was to identify services available and the gaps that needed to be addressed;
- Members were disappointed that the Information, Advice and Assurance Service (IAA) was not fully developed;
- Members stressed the need for a model of re-ablement and assessment;
- The Task and Finish Group appeared to be focused on tools and not outcomes and actions but Members welcomed that a list of examples of things to be prevented had been identified
- Members noted that there was still a lack of clarity on the definition of preventative services and considered that this was a matter for the Welsh Government to clarify.

RESOLVED – That

1. the briefing report be noted;
2. any further input from Members on the briefing report and progress be forwarded to the Principal Scrutiny Officer.

19 : COMMITTEE BUSINESS REPORT INCLUDING CORRESPONDENCE UPDATE.

The Committee received an updated since 8 June on correspondence sent and responses received from Cabinet Members.

RESOLVED – That the content of the correspondence schedule and the correspondence received was noted.

20 : DATE OF NEXT MEETING

RESOLVED – That

1. the Committee noted that a Joint Scrutiny Committee with the Children & Young Persons Scrutiny Committee is scheduled for 11 July 2016;
2. a special Community and Adult Services Scrutiny Committee has been provisionally scheduled on 12 July 2016 at 5.00pm in CR4, County Hall.