

HOUSING AND COMMUNITIES STATEMENT

AGENDA ITEM:

Rough Sleeping

As winter approaches, Council provision is put in place to keep homeless people out of the cold weather. The cold weather provision commenced during November, with 39 spaces currently operating. Another 15 spaces will be opened from mid-December and a minimum of 16 further contingency spaces are available.

I'm happy to confirm that we will shortly be launching 'Give DIFFerently', with Council, Police, For Cardiff and the Big Issue, alongside other partners, providing the public with an alternative way to support individuals other than giving directly to people who are street begging. The campaign will provide quick access to funds to bring about positive change (e.g. items for a new flat, clothing for interviews, bikes to attend work/training/education opportunities).

A multi-agency task group to address begging and anti-social behaviour is currently being set up with Police and partners and a diversionary pathway has also been drafted.

New Employability Service

The Council will expand its successful Into Work Service and bring in-house much of Cardiff's employability provision. This new and improved service will provide a city-wide, joined-up approach to help and support people into work or upskill people in their current jobs. Funding will be available for participants for training and to help them overcome any barriers they may have preventing them from returning to work (e.g. interview clothes or child care costs).

The service will include an Employability Gateway so people can get to the right help, first time, every time. The Gateway will include; face to face support in local job clubs, a telephone and e-mail service and a new website which will include a webchat facility. For those participants that face many barriers to work, mentors will provide in-depth one-to-one assistance, to make them more job-ready and find suitable, sustainable employment. An employer engagement officer will work alongside the Economic Development team to source new job opportunities and a dedicated self-employment advisor will be on hand to support those looking to work for themselves.

Powerhouse Hub

The Powerhouse in Llanedeyrn has undergone a major extension and refurbishment to bring together a wide range of community services under one roof. The new Hub hosts housing, benefit and advice services, libraries, Into Work advice and training, community learning, youth provision, community events and a community café. South Wales Police also have self-contained offices on the first floor.

I was very pleased to officially open the Hub on 6 November 2017 alongside Alun Michael, the Police and Crime Commissioner for South Wales. The opening event enabled residents, community organisations and partner agencies to see at first hand the range of services available in the city's newest community hub. The free event also featured live music, community stalls, performances by local schools St Teilo's High School, St Philip Evans and St Bernadette's Primary Schools, face painting, storytime, an animal corner, Science Made Simple Bubble Show, food stalls and a Christmas workshop.

The Powerhouse Hub forms part of the wider redevelopment of the Maelfa Centre in Llanedeyrn, which will also deliver a new shopping parade with 9 new retail units and a mix of social rented and private housing.

The Hub programme rollout continued with the opening of Llanishen Hub on Monday 27 November followed by the formal launch on Wednesday 29 November.

Repairs Contract

Following feedback from our residents, the contract for repairs to council homes has recently been recommissioned, to ensure the best possible service for our tenants. The recommissioning process focused on:

- Improving customer care, particularly in relation to elderly and vulnerable customers
- Increasing capacity and ensuring continuity of supply
- Improving performance management arrangements

The transition to the new arrangements has commenced and the new contracts will be in place by 1 January 2018. It is possible that there may be some disruption to services over the transition period; however, as most responsive repairs are now carried out in-house, inconvenience to tenants should be kept to a minimum.

Tenants Conference

On 13 November 2017, we held our third annual Tenants Conference. During the day, over 100 Council tenants visited City Hall for the Tenant Participation's annual conference with the theme of 'Tenants Together' for a day of interaction with different Council departments and workshops. In the workshops, we were shown gardening tips on how to preserve home harvest as well as having taster sessions on first aid, volunteering, budgeting and so much more. Tenants were also given opportunities in afternoon sessions to have a talk with waste

management as well as learn about the benefits of volunteering in their local Hubs.

During the day, the guests attended presentations from waste management on the benefits of recycling and were briefed by independent living services on how elderly tenants could feel more secure using council services digitally or in their own home. Council tenant Janice Carter also gave her own presentation on the benefits of being a mystery shopper and was able to tell delegates how she was able to directly test Hub staff's customer service skills and knowledge of council services to hopefully highlight potential improvements for the future. The day was finished by the presentation of awards for Cardiff Council's annual *Blooming Marvellous* competition. The winning gardens were submitted by groups of all age ranges and it was great to see their hard work rewarded for being such a credit to their communities.

Rent Smart Wales

Almost a year since the introduction of the enforcement provisions for Rent Smart Wales (RSW), it is encouraging to note that over 173,636 properties have registered, with 16,700 landlords and 2,640 agents now licensed. Although the majority of landlords and agents in Wales are now compliant with legislation, there are some who continue to operate illegally. RSW and its partners across the 22 Welsh Local Authorities are now taking action to make sure that those who need to comply do so, with fixed penalty notices of up to £250 being issued and prosecutions taken forward. To date we have had 8 successful prosecutions for RSW offences, and have issued 159 Fixed Penalty Notices.

Telecare Services Association Audit

This is an annual Telecare Services Association audit where the Telecare service is reviewed for performance in the installation of devices, monitoring of systems and alarms and response to call outs. The team carried out a lot of preparation and during the day, the auditor ran through the annual key performance indicators, reviewed the processes, went out to see an installation take place and listened to calls with an operator. I am pleased to say that the team successfully passed the audit and that the auditor had some brilliant comments that I would like to share:

- We have a dynamic operation in place with a warm atmosphere in the office
- We have good direction and strong management / leadership
- We are a listening and learning team and are keen to learn from others and improve
- Quality is embedded
- There is a strong sense of teamwork within the service

The auditor provided a quote and saying that 'Perfection doesn't always mean excellence.' She said that the team know their imperfections and you don't have to be perfect to be excellent. Thank you for your continued hard work!

Councillor Lynda Thorne
Cabinet Member for Housing & Communities
29 November 2017