

**s c r u t i n y**



# **A Report of: Community & Adult Services Scrutiny Committee**

**Annual Report 2019 – 2020**



**This document is available in Welsh / Mae'r ddogfen hon ar gael yn Gymraeg**

# COMMUNITY & ADULT SERVICES SCRUTINY

## COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP



[Councillor Ali Ahmed](#)



[Councillor Shaun Jenkins](#)  
(Chairman)



[Councillor Joe Carter](#)



[Councillor Andrea Gibson](#)



[Councillor Philippa Hill-John](#)



[Councillor Sue Lent](#)



[Councillor Ashley Lister<sup>1</sup>](#)



[Councillor Mary McGary](#)

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<sup>1</sup> Cllr Lister became a Committee Member in January 2020.

## TERMS OF REFERENCE OF THE COMMUNITY & ADULT SERVICES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

To scrutinise, measure and actively promote improvement in the Council's performance in the provision of services and compliance with Council policies, aims and objectives in the area of community and adult services, including:

- Public and Private Housing
- Disabled Facilities Grants
- Community Safety
- Neighbourhood Renewal and Communities First
- Advice & Benefit
- Consumer Protection
- Older Persons Strategy
- Adult Social Care
- Community Care Services
- Mental Health & Physical Impairment
- Commissioning Strategy
- Health Partnership

To assess the impact of partnerships with and resources and services provided by external organisations including the Welsh Government, joint local government services, Welsh Government-sponsored public bodies and quasi-departmental non-governmental bodies on the effectiveness of Council service delivery.

To report to an appropriate Cabinet or Council meeting on its findings and to make recommendations on measures which may enhance Council performance and service delivery in this area.

To be the Council's Crime and Disorder Committee as required by the Police and Justice Act 2006 and any re-enactment or modification thereof; and as full delegate of the Council to exercise all the powers and functions permitted under that Act.

## CHAIR'S FOREWORD

Throughout the year this Committee has aimed to contribute to service improvement through robust pre-decision scrutiny; vigorous performance monitoring; and by providing key 'critical friend' challenge.

One of the Council's key commitments this year has been to progress its priority of delivering 1,000 new Council homes by 2022. In a bid to support the strategic vision and continuous performance of the Council's Council House Build Strategy and Cardiff Design Standards, Members have monitored both strategies over the course of the year, seeking continued assurance that targets are on course to be met and properties are developed to the highest of standards. We look forward to continue monitoring its progress over the coming year.

In line with the Social Services directorate leadership team restructure; Committee Members have aspired to keep an attentive eye on any potential impact this may have on services within their remit through consistent monitoring of Quarterly Performance Reports. In addition, during the course of the year Members have also monitored both the operational approach and strategic vision of the service area's vision to stimulate a 'strength based approach' culture.

I would like to thank those Members who have sat on the Committee over the course of the past year for their hard work and dedication. I would also like to thank the witnesses who have appeared before us which has helped formulate our recommendations to the Cabinet; their expertise has been invaluable.

Looking forward to the future, this coming year will undoubtedly bring challenges. Challenges both for the Council as it navigates the recovery and restart of services following the pandemic of Covid-19, and as a Committee, as we adapt to the new ways of working in order to provide effective Scrutiny during this time. The pandemic has transformed the delivery model of many council services within the remit of this Committee, and with such transformation comes an even greater reliance on effective partnership working and a critical need to ensure health and social care services are joined up well. It is starkly apparent that demanding times lie ahead for the city of Cardiff and that Scrutiny must play a central and

effective role in driving improvement and ensuring the best for Cardiff's citizens; particularly those most vulnerable.

I am sure I can speak all on behalf of all Committee Members' to say that this Committee shares the Council's priority to ensure that the positive changes brought by this pandemic are locked into Council services, and that as a Committee, we will continue to play our part in ensuring and driving Council effectiveness.

I commend this 2019/20 Annual Report of the Community & Adult Services Scrutiny Committee.



**Councillor Shaun Jenkins,  
Chairman, Community & Adult Services Scrutiny Committee**

## OVERVIEW

The Community and Adult Services Scrutiny Committee plays an important role in assessing service performance and informing service and policy development across a range of Council services, including all aspects of housing, neighbourhood renewal and adult social care. The Committee is also the Council's Crime and Disorder Scrutiny Committee.

One of the main aims of this Committee is to address issues from a service user and citizen perspective and use this to inform observations and recommendations made to the Cabinet. During the course of the year, the Committee have invited contributions from carers, advocates, citizens, third sector representatives as well as hearing from Council Members, Cabinet Members, a range of officers along with feedback from service users.

Between June 2019 and March 2020, the Committee scrutinised the following topics:

- **Pre decision** - Where the Committee has evaluated and commented on policy proposals prior to Cabinet, giving Cabinet the opportunity to know Scrutiny Members' views prior to making their decision:
  - Older Peoples Care Home Fee Setting Strategy 2019-2023
  - Risk Based Verification Policy for Housing Benefit and Council Tax
  - Recommissioning of Care at Home
  - Implementation of Social Services Charging Policies, one for residential and nursing care, one for non-residential care
  - Corporate Plan 2020-23
  - Budgetary Proposals 2020/21
  - Alley Gating on Public Highways – Cardiff Council Policy & Strategy 2020
  - HRA Business Plan 2020/21

- **Policy Development/Review** - Where the Committee has contributed to policy development processes, for example by considering draft policy documents, and/or where the Committee has considered the implementation of policies, looking at whether this has happened in a timely manner and the impact of the policy, giving the Cabinet the opportunity to know Scrutiny Members' views about whether any changes are required:
  - Cardiff & Vale of Glamorgan Regional Safeguarding Boards Annual Report 2018/19
  - Older People: Access to Information, Advice & Services in line with the development of the Council's Digital Strategy.
- **Monitoring Progress** - Where the Committee has undertaken monitoring of the Council's progress in implementing actions previously agreed:
  - Cardiff & Vale of Glamorgan Area Plan for Care and Support Needs 2018 – 2023
  - Council House Build Strategy & Design Standards
- **Monitoring Performance** - Where the Committee has undertaken monitoring of the Council's performance:
  - Quarterly Performance Reports – Adult Social Services; and People and Communities
- **Briefings**
  - How the Council engages with Housing Associations
  - How the Directorates, reporting to this Committee, plan to address and mitigate the impact of Brexit
  - Voids Management
  - Impact of Renting Homes Wales Act 2016
  - Update on the status of council requirements under Regulation & Inspection of Social Care (Wales) Act 2016.

## The Statistics

During the municipal year 2019/20, the full Committee has held 9 public meetings and scrutinised 21 items covering a wide variety of topics in line with its Terms of Reference. This activity culminated in 19 letters to the Cabinet and Senior Management Team, sharing the Committee's comments, concerns and recommendations following their scrutiny. To date, the Committee has received 16 letters from the Cabinet in response.

The success of Scrutiny is dependent on the capacity, skills and development of those Members that sit on Scrutiny Committees. There has been some movement in Membership of the Committee throughout the year, though generally good attendance has been maintained. During 2019, the Annual Council meeting delivered changes in both the Committee's membership and leadership.

Part 6 of The Local Government (Wales) Measure 2011 requires politically proportional allocation of Scrutiny Chairs. The proportional allocation of Scrutiny Committee Chairs is calculated in accordance with the principles set out in section 70 of the Local Government (Wales) Measure 2011. Following a review of the political balance of Scrutiny Committee Chairs, the Committee welcomed a new Chairman, Cllr Shaun Jenkins having been a Committee Member since becoming a Councillor in May 2017.

The Committee has also welcomed three new Committee members, Cllr Andrea Gibson, Cllr Philippa Hill-John and Cllr Ashley Lister.

The Committee looks forward to continuing its objectives of transparent engagement, and to playing its part in contributing to the Council's webcasting performance indicator. Throughout the course of 2019/20 all of the Committee meetings have been successfully webcast and this will remain an objective of the Committee going forward.

Webcast viewing figures for this Committee during the 2019/20 municipal year are as follows:

Date	All Views	Live Views	Archive Views
05/06/2019	115	10	105
03/07/2019	86	4	82
11/09/2019	73	5	68



02/10/2019	78	6	72
06/11/2019	82	14	68
16/12/2019	36	1	35
08/01/2020	73	6	67
17/02/2020	36	10	26
04/03/2020	73	5	68
<b>Total</b>	<b>652</b>	<b>61</b>	<b>591</b>

### **Committee Member Development**

Scrutiny is a Member-led function whose success is closely linked to the capacity and development of the Members that sit on Scrutiny Committees. The Scrutiny Team work closely with colleagues across the Council to provide a continuous range of opportunities for Members to build or refresh their Scrutiny skills, and to extend their knowledge and insight into a range of issues relevant to their Scrutiny role.

During the year Scrutiny services have organised a number of training events and booklets to provide new Scrutiny members with an overview and understanding of scrutiny's role, activity and process.

In addition, the Members attend pre-Committee meetings to discuss, analyse and understand the issues being considered, and where necessary ask for further clarification of the information provided.

## POLICY DEVELOPMENT AND PRE-DECISION SCRUTINY

During the year, Members have undertaken a significant amount of pre-decision scrutiny and policy development work in respect of social care, communities and housing. Details of some of the Committee's work are provided below. A full list of the topics covered by the Committee is provided on pages 5-6 of this report.

When considering pre-decision items, Members are advised to:

- i) Look at the information provided in the report to Cabinet to see if this is sufficient to enable the Cabinet to make an informed decision;
- ii) Check the financial implications section of the Cabinet report to be aware of the advice given;
- iii) Check the legal implications section of the Cabinet report to be aware of the advice given;
- iv) Check the recommendations to Cabinet to see if these are appropriate.

### Housing Revenue Account Business Plan 2020/21

On 4 March 2020, the Committee considered the 2020/21 Housing Revenue Account Business Plan prior to consideration by the Cabinet at its meeting on 19 March 2020.

The report covered:

- Maintenance of the Wales Housing Quality Standard (WHQS)
- New Build Housing Programme, including the Cardiff Living Partnership
- Delivering Energy Efficiency
- Remodelling and Refurbishment of existing homes
- Estate Regeneration
- Neighbourhood Regeneration and Area Improvements
- Community Living, including managing anti-social behaviour.
- Support for Tenants, including participation, consultation and supporting the vulnerable
- Community Hubs
- Impact of Welfare Reform
- Homelessness & Housing Need

During the meeting it was confirmed to Members that there are challenges and issues in meeting certain aspects of the Welsh Housing Quality standards, however officers are striving to continuously recognise and address such challenges. Members of the Committee reiterated to the witnesses the importance in striving to continue the aspiration to go 'above and beyond' such benchmarks in order to deliver high quality homes for Cardiff residents.

The Committee were concerned to hear that repairs (including the cost of repairing void properties) costs the Council on average £18m per annum. As such, Members have requested further information on how repair requests for those properties which are lived in are monitored, if requests are scaled and sight of how they are logged. In addition Members also requested further information on how tenants' complaints are managed and organised.

With regard to the Council's Anti-Social Behaviour team, Members sought clarity on the team's role, which includes providing support to the victims, working with the perpetrators and acting against the perpetrator. Members were unsure how such roles, which could be perceived as conflicting, were managed given the complexities and sensitives within this field and are awaiting further information in this respect.

Members were pleased to receive confirmation that there has been a significant development in the in-house team in addressing void properties along with development of a Dynamic Purchasing Arrangement within the procurement process. Additionally Members were also pleased to note the level of engagement with tenants documented within the plan and recommended that within such work, consideration be given to running a focus group and/or survey which focuses on tenant well-being.

## **Alley Gating on Public Highways Cardiff Council Policy & Strategy 2020**

On 4 March 2020, the Committee considered, 'Alley Gating on Public Highways – Cardiff Council Policy & Strategy 2020' prior to its consideration by the Cabinet at its meeting on the 19 March 2020.

In 2008, Cardiff Council implemented an Alley Gating policy, since then, over 180 lanes have been gated, benefitting approximately 7,500 properties and helping to limit opportunities for crime, anti-social behaviour and environmental issues such as fly tipping. In 2014, the tools available for Local Authorities to consider alley gating changed, following the introduction of new legislation. Gating Orders (previously under the Highways Act) were replaced with the introduction of Public Spaces Protection Orders (PSPOs) under the Anti-Social Behaviour, Crime & Policing Act and unlike Gating Orders, PSPOs are time-limited for a maximum of 3 years and so must be reviewed before they expire to determine if they should be extended, revoked or varied. It was these changes in legislation which brought forward the need for Cardiff Council to update its policy on Alley Gating.

During the Committee meeting concerns were raised over the anticipated timescale of delivery, which as detailed in the Cabinet Report can take, on average, 9 months to complete due to the consultation and prescribed legal processes. Members felt assured that their concerns regarding the length of time was shared by the Executive and at the measures in place to try and alleviate constraints and accelerate the process where possible.

It was confirmed to Members that it costs on average £3,000 for fabrication and installation of a gate set. Subsequently Members have request a totality figure for a gate set which includes the holistic cost of reviewing PSPOs, installation of gates, consultation exercise, legal fees, maintenance costs, issuing of keys and resource costs (such as officer time). In addition Members also queried what other measures are considered for addressing community safety issues and were informed that other measures such as cameras are considered however they too present challenges in terms of cost and effectiveness of response. Following the discussions, Members requested comparative costs of alternative measures in a totality figure along with information on levels of enforcement and maintenance of lanes which have been gated.

In terms of the draft policy presented to Committee, Members recommend that the information captured in the policy surrounding the Council revoking a PSPO in extreme cases of persistent vandalism to the gates be amended to better reflect the steps which would be taken prior to such action. Additionally, following the questions raised at Committee regarding the monitoring of keys issued for gates and the absence of its

reference within the draft policy, Members also recommended the policy be amended to include an overview of the existing procedure in place for monitoring keys.

Due to the legislative changes which now require a three yearly review process of all PSPO's and the potential resource and financial implications of this requirement, Members also recommended consideration be given to liaising with partners such as the Police and South Wales Fire Authority to identify if they could possibly contribute to the costs in order to alleviate such pressures.

## **Risk Based Verification Policy for Housing Benefit & Council Tax Reduction**

On 6 November 2019 Committee considered the Risk Based Verification Policy for Housing Benefit and Council Tax Reduction prior to its consideration by Cabinet at its meeting on 21 November 2019.

The proposal considered by Committee was to introduce 'risk based verification' for all housing benefit and council tax reduction claims in line with guidance set out by the Department for Works and Pensions. It is to note that Risk Based Verification is a method of applying different levels of verification checks to claims according to the predicted risk associated with those claims. The approach allows less evidence to be accepted for those cases deemed to be at lower risk of fraud and error while increasing the verification activity focused on claims more prone to fraud and error.

The Committee received legal advice that due to the sensitivity of the information contained in the Report, Appendices and draft Policy, the item should be taken in closed session and not available for public inspection in order to prevent crime as set out in Schedule 12A, paragraphs 14, 18 and 21 of the Local Government Act 1972. However, Members were unsure if the legal advice outweighed public interest and so a Public Interest test was undertaken. Although it was felt by Members that the Public Interest test in exempting the information had not been met, in order to receive the information from witnesses, the Committee agreed to take the item in closed session.

Following their consideration of the proposal Members concurred there is a significant public interest in the Council procuring software to profile claimants and determine risk. As such, being mindful to GDPR and our duty as governing body, Members recommended all claimants be made aware of this profiling through the use of explicit notices both online and on the paper based application forms along with the providing claimants with information on the ability to opt out.

Members also requested officers seek further legal advice for clarity on what information can be put in the public domain both within the cabinet report and the policy itself and were advised that after seeking further legal advice and in line with the guidance issued by the Department for Work and Pensions, the Appendices to the Report and Policy itself is exempt from publication, the Cabinet Report can be published.

### **Older Peoples Care Home Fee Setting Strategy 2019/20 – 2022/23, Recommissioning of Care at Home – a Two Year Plan for Cardiff Care and Social Services Charging Policies**

During this municipal year, the Committee analysed a range of proposals surrounding the city's provisions of care for Adults. During its November meeting, Members were presented with the Draft Older Peoples Care Home Fee Setting Strategy 2019/20-2022/23 prior to its consideration by Cabinet. This strategy was the first element of the overall proposal to modify the provision for Care and presented an evidence based approach to the adoption of a standard fee. During the meeting Members questions the schedule of the approach and if the timeline of setting a standard fee prior to confirming a procurement process posed any risks. Members were informed that the setting of a standard fee in the first instance is common practice across the country and officers were confident that the level of engagement with providers during this process has helped mitigate any potential risks. During their analysis Members were pleased to note the alertness to the projected increase of Cardiff's population and the work required in addressing this projection by growing and developing the market and look forward to seeing how such work progresses over the coming months.

During its January Committee meeting, Members were provided with a further two proposals; The Recommissioning of Care at Home – A Two Year Plan and Social Services Charging Policies prior to Cabinets consideration on 23 January 2020. The Recommissioning of Care proposal put forward a new vision and approach for the provision of domiciliary care in Cardiff with the commissioning of a new locality based, outcome focused, care model. Following consideration of the report Members again raised concerns over the proposed timeline due to the heavy reliance on interdependences working in partnership. Members also raised concerns that a 'Cost of Care' exercise had not yet been completed making it difficult to analyse the full impact and effectiveness of the proposal. Members were informed that the reasoning behind the timeline was due to contracts ending and were further advised that some preliminary financial modelling has been conducted by the service area's accountants prior to the proposal and that all changes will be implemented on a staggered basis in order to mitigate risks. Members were further advised that a Cost of Care Exercise is to be conducted between January – May 2020 and requested a briefing following its completion along with further information on how quality of care will be measured under the quality framework.

The Charging Policies put before Members set out the responsibilities of Cardiff Council concerning charging for costs incurred when providing care and support in a residential, nursing or non-residential settings. It also defines what costs are chargeable and those non-chargeable and a breakdown of how an individual's income and capital is calculated within the financial assessment. Members were pleased to welcome such comprehensive plans in the service areas bid to ensure members of the public fully understand the policies and process which could be relatable during a particularly sensitive time.

Although Members were advised that the impact of these policies will be continuously reviewed, as these are new policies, and in order to ensure any complaints or possible process errors, particularly with regard to the financial assessment are rectified early and efficiently, Members recommended that the policy be reviewed twelve months from its initial implementation.

## MONITORING PROGRESS

During 2019/20, the Committee requested updates on two key issues in order to be informed of Council progress and to provide their observations and recommendations.

### How the Council Engages with Housing Associations

When considering the Committee's work programme, Members agreed they would wish to undertake a piece of work around the Council's engagement and working relationship with Housing Associations with a particular focus on;

- How the Council works with HA's around the letting of properties / waiting list
- How the Council works with HA's on the development of new properties

Representatives from seven different Housing Associations were invited to Committee to share their knowledge, views and perspectives of the relationship, along with possible areas for development.

Overall, Members concluded that there is a clear, professional and strategic relationship between the Council's Housing department and Housing Associations however certain areas did require improvement. Issues raised and recommendations made by Members following the meeting included:

- Although there is evidence of ongoing meetings in addressing vulnerable individuals between the Council, Housing Associations and other third party representatives more work is required. Following a discussion with the witness it became apparent that such meetings require a sharper focus on the agenda and frequency and that all information disseminated is done so with clarity.
- Following the feedback received from Housing Associations during the meeting, Members recommended consideration be given to reviewing the current Exclusion Panel in order for Council and Housing Association officers to continue actively working together to further the management of risk in housing vulnerable individuals.



- Although Members were pleased to note the strong relationship between the Housing Associations and the Council's housing department, it was clear that such relationships were not replicated with other Council departments. It was felt by Members that further positive relationships with areas such as social services, waste and planning which could generate a positive impact and mitigate risks in other areas of work such as anti-social behaviour should be encouraged and facilitated.
- Members also recommended the Council work in collaboration with housing associations with regard to bringing empty properties back into use, the Housing First pilot and upcoming projects such as community regeneration and employability skills.
- Members also suggested a more collective approach toward brand building between the housing associations and governance structures be sought through shared lobbying with the hope it could result in increased funding for specific projects.
- In terms of developing new properties, Members were advised by the housing associations of the avoidable barriers resulting in development delays as a result of the wording in Section 106. Members requested officers within the legal service explore the possibility of amending the wording in section 106 in order to alleviate some pressure faced by housing associations.
- Members felt that a shared vision in terms of design standards is an area which could further be explored with housing associations in order to put in place ambitious, class-leading standards and recommended this be taken forward.

The Committee recommendations and comments received a positive response from Cabinet and Senior Officers and it was confirmed that there will be a review of the Exclusion Panel and in order to enhance joint working a review of meeting structures and reporting arrangements between the partners will be carried out. It was further confirmed that the Committees recommendations on greater collaboration with the housing

associations and shared lobbying will be discussed at a future meeting with RSL Chief Executives.

Officers further confirmed that steps towards ensuring a shared design standards for social housing across Cardiff will be taken and Members will be updated on development in due course. It was also confirmed that officers were currently awaiting response from legal officers on the wording of S106.

## Older People: Access to Information, Advice & Services

As detailed in the Council's Corporate Plan (2019-22), the number of people living in Cardiff aged between 65 and 84 is expected to rise 40% in the next twenty years<sup>2</sup>. As such, with the Council's development of a digital agenda and digital service Members were mindful that the inclusion of the elderly and their needs must be at the forefront of service developments.

At the October 2019 meeting of this Scrutiny Committee, Members received a briefing from officers within Housing & Communities, Adult Social Services, Resources and Dewis Cymru. The Cabinet Members for Social Care, Health & Wellbeing and Cabinet Member for Housing & Communities were also in attendance. In particular Members wished to receive an update on how the Council is accommodating the need of the older person in accessing services, focusing on:

- How the development of the Council's digital strategy is being aligned with the needs of an ageing community.
- An overview of how the hubs are specifically accommodating the need of older people accessing information, advice and services

Following their analysis it was felt by Committee Member that there is still significant work required in order to ensure the older populations needs and requirements are adequately addressed when developing the Council's digital agenda.

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<sup>2</sup> Cardiff Council's Corporate Plan is available at: <https://www.cardiff.gov.uk/ENG/Your-Council/Strategies-plans-and-policies/Corporate-Plan/Documents/Corporate%20Plan%202019-22%20FINAL%20ENG.pdf>

During the meeting Members were advised that although one of the principles of the digital strategy is 'digital first', Cardiff will not be taking forward a digital by default approach as not all of the Council services lend themselves to being digital by default. Although Members agree with this statement they raised concerns that these comments are contrary to what is stated within the strategy which specifies that the strategy will move the Council to 'digital by default' and that alternative routes will become the exception and not the norm. Members were concerned by such perspective and highlighted that such focus could lead to a possible detrimental impact on social isolation, directly impacting the wellbeing objective 'Cardiff is a Great Place to Grow Older'.

When questioning how the older population fed into the development of the strategy, Members were pleased to hear that consultation and mandatory testing takes place with Cardiff Citizens Panel and Digital Accessibility Centre which focuses on a range of different stakeholder groups. However Members were apprehensive that given the digital drive, greater consultation may be required particularly with the older and more vulnerable population. As such, Members recommended that when developing and implementing the strategy stronger consultation specific to the older generation, including those most vulnerable is required and should be conducted through listening groups and user testing.

Members were pleased to receive an overview of the impressive work currently being undertaken in the Hubs along with the available, in-depth resources such as Dewis. However concerns were raised regarding the current channels of communication with the elderly and most vulnerable, such as ensuring the housebound are aware of the services and assistance which exist. Members believe there to be scope for a specific strategy to be developed and would recommend utilising radio, newspapers and TVs, more traditional forms of media, as a way of ensuring better connection with the most vulnerable, particularly those who may be housebound.

## Council House Build Strategy & Design Standards Update

Following the Committee's Work Programing Forum for 2019-20, Members requested to receive updates on the Council's Council House Build Strategy and Cardiff Design Standards. In particular, Members wished for the update to include:

- Current status of property developments;
- The scheduling of planning submissions
- A focused update on design standards – to include an update on possible work with shared design standards with Housing Associates (*as mentioned at CASSC's June 2019 Committee*) and detailed progress of the required update on Design Standards (*as mentioned at CASSC's May 2019 Committee*)
- Update on placemaking – with particular focus on what is informing placemaking.

Overall, Members were pleased to note the appetite displayed at Committee to push boundaries in terms of design and placemaking along with the levels of engagement with the public through consultation. Throughout the course of the year, Members reiterated the importance in continuing to drive standards and generate property developments which generate inspiration across the country; leading the way in architecture design and providing Cardiff residents with both high quality housing and living standards.

Members were also encouraged by the developments of the zero energy standards which is currently being taken forward at the Rumney High site and look forward to visiting the development in due course.

Throughout the course of the year Members have continued to monitor and seek assurance that the Council House build target of 1,000 new council properties by 2022 will be met. When questioning the risk, deliverability, and achievability of meeting such targets Members were pleased to receive continued confidence that targets will be met. When probing why completed figures were generally relatively low, Members were advised that was due to the length of the planning process, however once the planning stage is complete officers were confident figures will cumulative on a much greater scale. It is also to note that during its March Committee, Members were advised that when developing properties, officers are mindful to unforeseen issues or challenges which cannot necessarily be foreseen or managed could potentially impact targets.

## COMMUNITY SAFETY AND CRIME & DISORDER SCRUTINY

During 2019-20, Members undertook the following work to discharge their responsibilities in scrutinising the work or action taken by the responsible authorities in connection with crime and disorder functions as required by the Police and Justice Act 2006.

### Fear of Crime and its Effect on Cardiff Communities

When reviewing ASK Cardiff 2018 results, Members were concerned to note that although the findings provide the overview that crime rates are dropping in Cardiff; more than two in five respondents (42.1%) believed crime and anti-social behaviour had increased in their local area over the past 12 months and half (50.6%) of respondents from the most deprived areas believed crime to have increased in their area in the past 12 months. Members concurred that such results could possibly indicate a worrying trend in Cardiff communities' perception of crime and wished to investigate further.

During its January 2020 meeting, Members invited Chairs of the both the Community Safety Leadership Group and Community Safety Delivery Board (Community Safety Partnership / CSP) and representatives from FOR Cardiff in order to deliberate and discuss the effectiveness of the Community Safety Partnership in addressing this issue.

It was strongly felt by Committee Members that although statistics may indicate that Cardiff as a whole is a safe city, if the public's perception does not correlate with such statistics, it does in fact question the statistics validity. Members felt that it is vital the public's perception and fear of crime be adequately recognised and resourced and Members felt concerned about a possible disconnect between the professionals perception of Cardiff's safety and that of the public.

In an attempt to ensure partners are focused on key issues for Cardiff citizens, Members discussed the current approaches towards addressing the challenge of drug dealing on both a lower and county lines level. During the meeting Members questioned the strategies' and measures currently in place to respond to such workings. Committee Members emphasised that it is essential that the effect drug dealing is having on

communities, across Cardiff, must be more greatly recognised by professional bodies by applying an increased focus and pressure on all types of drug dealers and look forward to monitoring such work in the coming years.

Following a lengthy discussion which addressed various strands of crime and how this in turn impacts public perception Members recommended the following:

- In order to address the disparity between the perception of the public and professionals, improved communication channels between the CSP and public is required. Following the meeting Members wished to stress that along with the importance of cascading information outward of the CSP, it is equally important that the CSP receives information inwardly and recommend that a clear link for citizens and victims of crime to feed their perspective and comments into the board is considered as soon as possible. Members believe that such a channel of communication would help build public confidence and the distribution of good news and positive messages into the public arena along with addressing the underreporting of crime.
- To further address public perception, the CSP and bodies within it should take greater responsibility in generating more positive media of their successful workings. It was felt by Members that greater coverage will not only aid the public's perception of crime but help build the public's confidence and engagement.
- With regards to the 101 service, the issue of dealing with demand was highlighted to Members who recommended benchmarking against other services, who have similar capacity and demand issues in order to understand and compare how such challenges are managed whilst ensuring the public receive consistently good customer service in order to again aid the public's perception of crime. Further to this, Members also suggested call handling statistics and other measures of public experience be vigorously monitored in order to ensure performance is continuously checked.

## CORPORATE PLAN & BUDGET

The Council's Constitution allows for scrutiny committees to consider the draft Cabinet budget proposals prior to their consideration by the Cabinet and Full Council. The Committee considered the Council's draft Corporate Plan and draft budgetary proposals for 2020 -21, including the detailed savings proposals and Capital Programme at its meeting in February 2020.

The Committee identified a number of issues across the Corporate Plan, Corporate Budget and Directorate Budget reports. These concerns were included in a letter, sent to the Policy Review and Performance Scrutiny Committee for it to take into consideration when it reviewed the overall Corporate Plan, Consultation and Budget proposals on 19 February 2020 and to the Cabinet for consideration at its meeting on 20 February 2020.

The Committee's letter was considered by Cabinet and Council during their deliberations on the proposals.

## MONITORING PERFORMANCE

The Committee has a clearly defined role in the Council's improvement and governance arrangements, and its work programme includes a high level of the monitoring and review of Directorate performance, resource management, target setting and improvement management.

### Quarterly Performance Reports – Adult Social Services

During 2019/20 the Committee noted general performance improvement across many indicators in Adult Social Services and recognised the service areas drive and enthusiasm for continuous improvement.

In line with the Social Services directorate leadership team restructure; Committee Members have aspired to keep an attentive eye on any potential impact this may have on services through consistent monitoring of Quarterly Performance Reports. In addition, during the course of the year Members have also monitored both the operational approach and strategic vision of the service area's vision to stimulate a 'strength based approach' culture.

During the course of the year, Members expressed their concerns over recruitment for approved mental health practitioners, general capacity issues and its possible correlation with sickness rates which marginally rose throughout the year. Such continuous monitoring has provided Members with significant oversight and understanding of the service areas overall performance allowing Members to make recommendations on targets and share informed observations.

### Quarterly Performance Reports – People & Communities

Following regular monitoring of the People & Communities performance reports which fall within this Committee's remit, Members raised the following concerns:

- The 2019/20 Quarter 1 performance report detailed that the number of Council houses properties currently delivered stood at 109 (against a target of 400 for 2019/20). Members are mindful to the degree of variables within a development process however recommended that an Amber RAG status (as opposed to Green) for this commitment would have been more prudent;



- Generic concerns were also raised regarding the overall levels of targets with the feeling amongst Members that some targets may not be ambitious enough. Members recommended targets be rigorously developed in order to set focus on sufficiently challenging targets which underpin a culture for continuous development.
- Members also sought further information on the status of commissioning services for male victims of domestic abuse, the development of satellite pods and how social isolation for single people is addressed.

During the course of the year Members received a briefing note providing an update on the Committee's previous deep dive into Council House Void Management. Following their deep dive, the Committee made 16 recommendations all of which were accepted and Members wished to receive an update on how such recommendations were being implemented. In addition to this update, Members of the Committee also undertook a visit to three void properties all of which were at different stages of development. This visit provided Members with further insight and knowledge on the complexities of managing void properties.

With regard to the format of the report, Members requested consideration be given to better incorporating narrative on the known challenges along with providing trends and analysis from previous years in order to stimulate a clearer perspective of how performance is developing.

Following consideration of both Adult Social Services and People and Communities Performance Reports, the Committee has regularly written to the Cabinet Member seeking clarification, requesting information and recommending improvements.

## TASK & FINISH INQUIRIES

### **‘Closer to Home’ Project: Out of County Placements for Adults with a Learning Disability**

During the course of the year a number of Committee Members, along with Cllr Bablin Molik and Cllr Susan Goddard (who previously sat on the Committee) have undertaken an in-depth analysis on the decision-making process for supported living arrangements for adults with a learning disability; focusing on the current pathways in place for transitioning identified individuals back into county. During a formal meeting of the Committee, it was agreed that the Inquiry was to be chaired by Councillor Mary McGarry.

The inquiry comprised of 10 meetings which included 3 all-day visits to both local and out of county providers, attendance at a national conference, verbal briefings and presentations with the Cabinet Member, senior officers and external consultants.

During the course of the inquiry, extensive desk based research was undertaken and written evidence was also received from both local and out of county providers during the inquiry’s Call for Evidence. The Call for Evidence sought to obtain information on the whole transition process including initial assessment, review of placement, and the providers’ involvement in any transition and the monitoring arrangements in place from any individuals who may have transitioned.

Inquiry Members also commissioned independent research into this area, tasking Scrutiny’s Research Officer to address, through consultation with parents and advocates, the current pathway in place for transitioning identified individuals in order to identify possible areas for improvement.

The report and recommendations are currently in draft form and are awaiting an appropriate, and safe time to be presented to the Cabinet Member and senior officers for their initial feedback following the global pandemic of Covid-19.

## **Cabinet Responses to Previous Inquires**

During the course of the year Committee Members received two cabinet response from previous inquires conducted by this Committee:

### Community & Adult Services and Children & Young People Scrutiny Committees joint Task & Finish Inquiry on 'Preventing Young People's Involvement in Drug Dealing'

- Conducted during 2018 and presented to Cabinet in January 2019, this inquiry made 19 recommendations to Cabinet, 12 were accepted, 6 accepted in principle and 1 was not accepted.
- Members received the Cabinet response and action plan on implementing the recommendations at its November Committee.
- Following the update, Members of the Committee requested a progress report during the next municipal year.

### Temporary and Supported Accommodation: The Single Person's Gateway

- Following an in-depth meeting conducted in early 2019, Members made 9 recommendations to Cabinet, 7 were agreed and 2 were accepted in principle.
- Members received the official Cabinet response and action plan during its March Committee.
- Following the update, Members have requested a progress report during the next municipal year.

## WORK PROGRAMME FOR 2020- 21

Members of the Committee will be invited to consider items for possible inclusion in the Committee's work programme during 2020-21. Work is currently in progress to draw together issues for the Committee to consider. A draft work programme will then be developed and brought to Committee for approval and implementation. The Committee would welcome suggestions for scrutiny items from other Members.

## FUTURE SCRUTINY WORK

During 2019/20, there were a number of issues that had been identified as Items for the Work Programme, but were unable to be considered, due to time pressures. In addition, there were a number of issues that arose from the Committee's deliberation of Items. Therefore, the following may be considered for the 2019/20 Work Programme.

- ❖ Void Properties – development of in-house team and collaboration with local business.
- ❖ The effectiveness of multi-agency work in addressing rough sleepers' needs
- ❖ Management and monitoring of the UK Resettlement Scheme
- ❖ "Designing Out Crime" in New Communities
- ❖ Review of Safety checks in High-Rise Properties
- ❖ Cardiff & Vale of Glamorgan's Violence against Women, Domestic Abuse & Sexual Violence Strategy 2018-2023 (*Update*)
- ❖ Performance Reports
- ❖ Relevant Audit, Inspection and Regulatory Reports.
- ❖ Cabinet Responses to previous Inquiries.
- ❖ Implementation of agreed recommendations from previous Inquiries.
- ❖ Joint Commissioning Strategy for Adults with a Learning Disability 2019-2024 (*Review of Action Plans*)
- ❖ Cardiff Design Standards
- ❖ Welsh Government Rent Cap Updates
- ❖ Council Void Properties – Quarterly Updates
- ❖ Access to Community Mental Health Services.