



My Ref: Scrutiny/Correspondence/Cllr Jenkins
7 Jan 2020

Councillor Lynda Thorne
Cabinet Member Housing & Communities
Councillor Susan Elsmore
Cabinet Member Social Care, Health & Well-being
County Hall
Cardiff
CF10 4UW

Dear Cllr Thorne & Cllr Elsmore,

COMMUNITY & ADULT SERVICES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE – 16 DEC 2019 – QUARTER 2 PERFORMANCE REPORT

As Chair of the Community & Adult Services Scrutiny Committee, I wish to thank you and officers for attending Committee to present the Quarter Two Performance Report, for both the People & Communities Directorate and Adult Services, providing Members with the opportunity to analyse measures and provide feedback.

Although we were unable to welcome Cllr Elsmore to Committee, I wish to convey the Committee's thanks for providing a statement which was circulated to Members outside of committee.

People & Communities

During the meeting enquires were made regarding the difficulties in moving people on from second stage accommodation and the emphasis placed on engagement with private landlords in an attempt to remedy this matter. Members hold concerns that this approach, or indeed over reliance on private sector landlords participation in rectifying matters, will not achieve the desired outcome. The known challenges in this area such as the level of Local Housing Allowance rate, along with understandable concern private landlords may have in housing vulnerable tenants' means it will be extremely challenging to increase the level of engagement with the private sector. Whilst Members appreciate the need for participation and collaboration amongst the council and private sector, Members wish to reiterate the importance of us as a local authority taking ownership of this matter and not placing too much emphasis, or reliance, on other parties. Members would therefore like to request further information on this matter, clarifying how the support for vulnerable tenants and accommodation allocation is weighed up between the council, housing associations and the private sector and how this decision making is informed.

GWEITHIO DROS GAERDYDD, GWEITHIO DROSOCH CHI

Mae'r Cyngor yn croesawu goheblaeth yn Gymraeg, Saesneg neu'n ddwyieithog. Byddwn yn cyfathrebu â chi yn ôl eich dewis, dim ond i chi roi gwybod i ni pa un sydd well gennych. Ni fydd gohebu yn Gymraeg yn arwain at oedi.

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Further to this, Members acknowledge the comments made at Committee, that other avenues in addressing this matter are being explored and that an independent review of hostel services, which includes looking at the whole system approach from bettering the assessment process up to the range of provisions on offer is currently in place and Members look forward to monitoring such developments.

During the meeting, questions were also raised regarding the setting of targets within the report, and if the targets set are ambitious enough. Although Members appreciate some targets are statutory, Members feel a significant amount of the targets within the report were static, with little movement from previous years and are concerned this may represent a worrying culture within the service area. As such, Members would recommend that targets are rigorously developed in order to ensure the right levels are set and that there is a clear focus on setting sufficiently challenging targets, as opposed to working towards targets which have already been achieved. Further to this, it was also highlighted in the meeting that the information in the report surrounding Disabled Facility Grants did not contain all of the relevant information and therefore lacked clarity. Members would appreciate if, going forward, the presentation and format of the reports could be developed in a way which ensures the right information is captured and trends and analysis from previous years is also provided. Members wish to request if consideration could be given to presenting the report in a similar vein to that of social services; for instance ensuring data from previous years is captured through the use of graphs to allow for trends to be identified and to also ensure full detail is captured within the reports, possibly using the three w approach of 'what works well, what are we worried about and what will be done'. Members would appreciate your comments on this request.

Finally with regard to voids, members appreciate the task and challenge in turning void properties around and were pleased to note that following the development of an in-house team a positive start has been made and look forward to monitoring its developments.

Adult Services

Members wish to thank officers for their clarity on the 'strength based approach' which is being carried forward in the directorate. As mentioned at Committee, this is a big piece of work which will shape the tone of social services and requires significant changes both in cultural and in practice. It is for this reasoning why Members were therefore concerned that it lacked prominence within the Quarter 2 report. Raising the concern that there could possibly be discrepancies between the operational level of how this approach is carried forward and the overall strategic vision. It is for this reason why Members wish to accept the offer made at Committee to receive further information on what this approach entails, examples of how it is carried forward on a day to day operational basis, the perceived benefits of this approach and how any potential implications, such as resource strain is being mitigated.

With regard to sickness rates, Members were assured to hear that work is ongoing within the directorate to receive more in-depth detail on a team by team basis to understand why sickness rates appear to be rising. Members were also pleased to hear about the well-being initiatives coming forward toward supporting staff in a more preventative approach and as mentioned at Committee, would encourage and commend this being a key focus for the directorate in the New Year. However it was unclear to Members if this well-being focused initiative will be taken forward with all staff or if it will instead be targeted on staff within frontline services, Members would appreciate clarity on this.

Further to the discussions on delayed transfers of care, although Members appreciate the pressures faced across the whole system, Members do hold concerns over such pressures running over into the spring / summer months. Following the comments made about the plans in place to rectify matters and the jointly agreed 'Winter Plan' with the Health Board, Members would appreciate receiving a detailed report of this work early next spring covering the planning and outcome of this work. Members would appreciate if this report could also capture how both the challenges faced by the local authority and the health board, such as EMI nursing mentioned at committee, are being addressed. I have tasked the Committee's scrutiny officer with liaising with the relevant officers in requesting this written briefing.

Questions were also raised in terms of the 10% drop in direct payments between the end of Q4 (2018/19) and Q1 (2019/20) and Members would appreciate if, as offered at Committee, further information detailing why this drop occurred could be provided.

In terms of the capacity of existing day centres to meet demand, Members note the comments made that this is a continuous piece of work which includes looking across the city and at both ends of the care needs spectrum. Members would appreciate if further information, providing exact detail on what is being done to address this challenge, and in particular in terms of providing additional capacity within this area could be provided. Members wish to note that such pressures could possibly be a consequential effect from the 'day opportunities scheme' and would recommend this scheme being reviewed.

With regard to the overarching quality assurance framework being introduced to join up the current approaches, and frameworks within Adults and Children's services, Members were pleased to note the Director of Social Services' confidence that by the end of the year the review will be complete and the RAG status should improve. However Members would appreciate further clarity on the reasoning for introducing such a framework, the perceived benefits and how the challenges including capacity in introducing such a framework will look to be addressed.

Finally, Members would also appreciate a briefing note covering the council's requirements, implementation and progress of the Regulation & Inspection of Social Care (Wales) Act 2016.

Thank you once again to you and your officers for attending Committee. To confirm, as a Committee, we request further information on the following:

People & Communities

- Clarity on how support and accommodation allocation for vulnerable tenants is weighed up between the council, housing associations and the private sector and how this decision making is informed.
- Comments around the possibility of developing the report format to include a fuller picture, which includes data from previous years, further use of graphs and other possible methods such as the three w approach.

Adult Social Services

- Further information on the 'strength based approach', what this approach entails, examples of how it is carried forward in a day to day operational basis, the perceived benefits and how any potential implications, such as resource strain is being mitigated.
- Clarity on if the well-being focused initiative will be taken with all staff within the service area or if it will instead be targeted on staff within frontline services.
- Reasoning as to why there was a 10% drop in direct payments between the end of Q4 (2018/19) and Q1 (2019/20).
- Information on what is being done to address the capacity in day services, in particular the terms of providing additional capacity within this area and if a review of the day opportunities scheme will, or has, commenced.
- Clarity surrounding the introduction of the overarching quality assurance framework within the directorate, the perceived benefits and how the challenges including capacity will look to be addressed.
- A briefing note covering the council's requirements and an update on the implementation and progress of the Regulation & Inspection of Social Care (Wales) Act 2016.

Yours,



COUNCILLOR SHAUN JENKINS

Chairman - Community & Adult Services Scrutiny Committee

Cc: Sarah McGill, Corporate Director.
Claire Marchant, Director Social Services.
Louise Barry, Assistant Director, Adult Services.
Ceri Tanti, Cabinet Office.
Heather Warren, Cabinet Office.