

## COMMUNITY & ADULT SERVICES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

14 NOVEMBER 2022

Present: Councillor Molik(Chairperson)  
Councillors Ahmed, Ahmed, Ash-Edwards, Boes, Lent, Lewis,  
Littlechild and McGarry

20 : APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

None received.

21 : DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None received.

22 : A NEW HOUSING DEVELOPMENT PARTNERSHIP - TO FOLLOW

The Chairperson advised that this item allowed Members to consider the potential initiation of a second Housing Development Partnership.

Committee Members were reminded that Appendix B of the papers was confidential, and so any questions on that paper must be taken in a closed session.

The Chairperson welcomed, for this item:

- Cllr Lynda Thorne, Cabinet Member for Housing & Communities
- Sarah McGill, Corporate Director People & Communities and;
- Dave Jaques, Housing Development Manager

The Cabinet Member was invited to make a statement after which Officers provided a presentation. Members were then asked to make any comments, observations and to ask any questions.

Members asked about what lessons had been learnt from the current partnership with Wates. Officers advised that partnership arrangements offer flexibility, greater control and a higher speed of delivery and can also help to 'de-risk' the Council's delivery programme, mainly due to the fact there is already an established relationship with the partner and so risks can be identified and resolved sooner.

Members enquired about the Council's role in ensuring that partners targets and delivery timeframes are met. Members were advised that KPI's are drawn as part of contractual arrangements and performance of the partner is continually reviewed.

Members asked about ensuring good value for money within this proposed partnership and that a developer does not monopolise the system. Officers advised that this will be carefully considered within the procurement process that will ensue,

and minimum requirements will be set around cost, resource, workforce, and local investment (et al.) Officers added that there is a flexibility within partnership arrangements that allows for changes in site viability, and response to any changes in legislation. Members were also advised that cost consultants will be closely advising the Council during the procurement process.

Members expressed concern over the size of the proposals contained in this partnership and how this will impact the current Housing Delivery Programme, given that targets in the current programme are not always achieved. Members were advised that at present, around 760 homes have been delivered, over 800 should be complete by the end of the year, with a current total of 1,300 properties either complete or being built.

Members were concerned about the speed of delivery of houses and Officers advised that the partnership arrangement should help reduce the length of time it takes to deliver properties as some of the sites proposed in the partnership already have planning agreed, with other sites currently being worked on with design consultants to help facilitate quicker delivery.

Members noted the point raised that to deliver properties, there must be adequate financial resource, and a sufficient number of properties must be complete to then provide the Council with a rental income, allowing other sites to progress.

Members raised concerns around capacity and were informed that although the Council's internal team is small, there is capacity, and a benefit of initiating a new partnership will be to bring in new resource and expertise.

Members noted how the current context (rising price of materials and energy prices et al.) can, and has, negatively impacted the delivery programme. A discussion took place around how this has also resulted in a developer going into administration and the repercussions this has had. Officers advised that this highlights the benefit of initiating a new housing partnership. Partnership will be a long-term plan, it is hoped the cost of construction will come down in future years, and that the development of new homes will bring income to the Council, to help manage the current financial pressures.

Discussing vacant properties, Members noted the scale, length of time and costings within the proposed partnership, and sought assurance that utilising empty properties would prove more worthwhile at this moment in time, and if this has been carefully considered when deliberating this proposal. Officers advised that the housing delivery team work with the private rented sector team to consider buying empty properties and incorporating them into the delivery programme.

Members wished to stress the importance of ensuring adequate local infrastructure being at the forefront of decision making when developing properties. Members considered that when sites are proposed in the Council's Delivery Programme, local communities are made aware, at the earliest possible opportunity, and their feedback on the proposals, including their view on local need, is adequately and proactively sought.

RESOLVED – That the public be excluded from the meeting at this point during consideration of this item as the Committee discussed exempt information of the description contained in paragraphs 14 and 16 of Part 4 and paragraph 21 of Part 5 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972. The public may be excluded from the meeting by resolution of the Committee pursuant to Section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972 during discussion of this item.

AGREED: that the Chairperson, on behalf of the Committee, writes to the Cabinet Member conveying the observations of the Committee when discussing the way forward.

## 23 : ADULT SERVICES & HOUSING & COMMUNITIES Q2 PERFORMANCE 2022/23

The Chairperson advised that this item allowed Members to consider the performance levels for services that fall into Committee's remit.

The Chairperson welcomed for this item;

- Councillors Thorne, Bradbury, Mackie and Sangani
  
- Officers Jane Thomas and Helen Evans

Cabinet Members were asked to make any opening statements after which Members were invited to ask questions and to make any comments or observations.

Members raised concern around the lack of available qualified Social Workers and Occupational Therapists and asked if the Council are looking to enlist 'Occupational Therapy Assistants' and apprenticeship courses to help lessen the pressure and demand on staff. Officers advised that work is ongoing in deploying both initiatives

Members noted that to alleviate staff pressure, non-qualified staff may be assigned certain tasks. Members wished to stress the need to ensure risk is mitigated in this approach, and the need to ensure the quality of service being provided is not compromised. Officers advised there is clear understanding among staff about what task requires qualified staff and where tasks may be re-directed safely. When work is reallocated, it will be done under supervision with management ensuring the right work is directed to the right staff, with the right level of qualification.

Members discussed Sickness rates amongst staff and asked what was being done to address this issue and the level of support on offer to staff. Members were advised that there are a range of processes and support services in place, with all cases of staff sickness actively reviewed.

Members discussed the long-standing challenge of the revolving door for those facing homelessness. Noting that in Q2, 40% of rough sleepers housed maintained their accommodation, whilst 95% of clients within the 'Housing First' scheme successfully broke the homelessness cycle. Members asked why more individuals

could not be offered this scheme and were advised the issue is due to a shortage of move on accommodation however work is underway toward expanding the scheme.

Members were advised about the impact the delay of the roll out of Liberty Protection Safeguard has had on the Council. Members noted that the backlog of DoLs cases has been addressed but noted the concern of officers that this backlog could re-emerge unless the forthcoming legislation is simplified.

Members raised concern over the amount of time taken to deliver Disabled Facilities Grants and were pleased to be assured the stats detailed in the papers, relates to the completion of the individual's work, and not how long it takes for them to receive the grant. Members were also pleased to hear about the innovative solutions such as modular methods were also being considered to help with the speed of delivering this grant.

AGREED: that the Chairperson, on behalf of the Committee, writes to the Cabinet Member conveying the observations of the Committee when discussing the way forward.

#### 24 : DIRECT PAYMENTS REVIEW - BRIEFING

The Chairperson advised that this item provided Members with the opportunity to feed into the service area's review of direct payments.

The Chairperson welcomed for this item;

- Councillors Mackie and Sangani
  
- Officer - Jane Thomas

Cabinet Members were asked to make any opening statements after which Members were invited to ask questions and to make any comments or observations.

Members advised that they hold concerns with the system of direct payments, and this review is a prime opportunity to ensure the Council has sufficient processes in place to mitigate risks. Individuals offered into the direct payment system, are those with care and support needs. Meaning there is a high possibility of the individual being particularly vulnerable. Members recognised the need for the individual to be fully supported to understand and navigate the system, particularly as complexity of processes, and the responsibilities required such as managing money could prove problematic for an individual requiring care. Officers advised that these concerns are shared and is a key reason behind this review as such support will be provided.

Members reiterated their concerns, particularly around individuals, whom require care and support, potentially being financially abused. Along with the knowledge that Personal Assistants are not required to be qualified or regulated, giving rise to safeguarding concerns. Members were advised that under the proposals, quality assurance process would be in place, ensuring that individuals providing care would be vetted and receive relevant training, providing more checks on Personal Assistants than there currently is.

Members were also concerned about the need to ensure people who are receiving payments (Personal Assistants), are then in turn, providing the individual with care. Members were informed the Council does not continually check to ensure the person being paid is providing care, and it is a responsibility of the individual being cared for (or family) to alert the Council who would then investigate.

Members noted the ongoing challenges around recruitment and queried how the proposal of micro-enterprises will assist the recruitment of Personal Assistants, and does not result in the difficult task, of sourcing care, being 'passed on' to the individual who requires it. Officers advised that the proposed organisation has helped recruit over 5,000 individuals across the current areas they serve, and recruitment will also be enhanced through the micro-enterprise co-ordinator having close liaison with Into Work and Cardiff Works.

Members sought clarification on whether the direct payment rate was in line with current agency rates, with the view that this may provide care givers with a better hourly rate. Officers advised that the direct payment rates are lower to that of commissioned care rates due to the reduced over-head, making it more cost effective for the Council.

Members discussed equity of service, and the need to ensure the access to the system is fairer, allowing more people to enter the direct payments system if they wish, without difficulties. Officers hoped the proposal of micro-enterprise will help address this and provide a more accessible system.

AGREED: that the Chairperson, on behalf of the Committee, writes to the Cabinet Member conveying the observations of the Committee when discussing the way forward.

## 25 : COMMUNITY & ADULT SERVICES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE WORK PROGRAMME 2022/23

The Principal Scrutiny Officer provided an overview of the indicative Work Programme 2022/23 to Members.

Members noted that some meetings had lengthy agenda and discussed which items could possibly move or be removed.

Members considered Hospital Discharge and discussed how they wanted to explore this further including external witnesses to provide evidence and data upfront on capacity.

## 26 : URGENT ITEMS (IF ANY)

None received.

27 : DATE OF NEXT MEETING

12 December 2022

The meeting terminated at 4.50 pm