

13 Dec 2023

Councillor Lynda Thorne
Cabinet Member for Housing & Communities
Sent via e-mail



Dear Cllr Thorne,

COMMUNITY & ADULT SERVICES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE – HOUSING EMERGENCY – 11 DEC 2023 – NON-CONFIDENTIAL

Thank you, to you and officers for attending the Community & Adult Services Scrutiny Committee, to facilitate our consideration of the finalised Housing Emergency proposals, and for the presentation provided to us which covered the specific detail of the property proposals.

The key observations discussed by the Committee on matters in the public domain are captured in this letter. A separate letter has been sent regarding our observations on the confidential matters.

Consultation

As mentioned at the meeting, we welcome the forthcoming consultation on the policy proposals. Through our questions we heard the consultation will be undertaken with individuals on the housing waiting list and key stakeholders such as homeless service providers. We note the consultation will start in the new year and will run for 6 weeks with the results feeding into an overall impact assessment.

At the meeting, we wished to explore the weight of the consultation, and questioned what would happen if the majority, or a significant number of the respondents, did not agree with the policy proposals. We do wish to stress that it is vital that the consultation results must inform the proposals should they be agreed.

Intentionality

We questioned the 'evidence' that would be required to apply intentionality, and we heard it will encompass specific information provided by landlords. Although we heard the number of people the intentionality proposal will affect is very small, our concern remains. We note certain individuals will be exempt from this proposal, but to our understanding, certain families will not. And so, if a family with children is deemed as making themselves

intentionally homeless it raises concern over what would happen to the children, if they may end up in the care of social services and so on.

We would encourage the council to pursue with Welsh Government piloting or testing proposals in the current Welsh Government Ending Homelessness White Paper around a 'deliberate manipulation test', which appears to be the challenge the council is attempting to address.

Offers of Accommodation outside of Cardiff

We note that when offers of accommodation outside of Cardiff are made to individuals, it will be private rented sector accommodation offered. We also heard that should the individual or family become homeless again at a future point, the local authority in which the property resides would then owe the homeless duty. We note the Cabinet Reports advises other local authorities have been notified of this policy proposal and we wish to stress the importance of close collaboration with them on this matter.

We do wish to request clarification on permanency for individuals; so for example the minimum term of a tenancy that will be offered under these proposed arrangements.

Thank you once again to you and officers for attending committee.

To confirm, a response to this letter is required which clarifies the permanency details for individuals when they are offered accommodation outside of Cardiff.

We also wish to request sight of the consultation results for the policy proposals and the subsequent impact assessment but have tasked our support officer to liaise with relevant individuals regarding this request.

Yours,



COUNCILLOR RHYS TAYLOR

Chair - Community & Adult Services Scrutiny Committee

cc. Members of the Community & Adult Services Scrutiny Committee

Jane Thomas, Director, Adults, Housing & Communities

Helen Evans, Assistant Director, Housing & Communities

Dave Jaques, Assistant Director, Housing Development & Regeneration

Group Leaders

Chair of Governance & Audit

Tim Gordan, Head of Communications & External Relations

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