

**RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNCIL HEALTH AND
WELLBEING SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

Minutes of the meeting of the Health and Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee held on Tuesday, 19 November 2019 at 5.00 pm at the Council Chamber, The Pavilions, Cambrian Park. Clydach Vale, Tonypany, CF40 2XX.

County Borough Councillors - Health and Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee Members in attendance:-

Councillor R Yeo (Chair)

Councillor G Holmes	Councillor A Roberts
Councillor M Forey	Councillor J Davies
Councillor J Williams	Councillor P Howe
Councillor G Stacey	Councillor M Tegg
Councillor D Owen-Jones	Councillor C Willis
Councillor W Jones	Councillor E Griffiths

Officers in attendance:-

Mr C Hanagan, Service Director of Democratic Services & Communication
Mr A Wilkins, Director of Legal Services
Mr N Elliott, Director of Adult Services
Ms A Batley, Director of Children's Services
Ms C Jones, Head of Access & Inclusion
Mr P. Mee – Director of Public Health, Protection and Community Services
Mr D James - Service Director - Prosperity and Development

County Borough Councillors in attendance:-

Councillor S Evans and Councillor S Evans

1 Declaration of Interest

In accordance with the Council's Code of Conduct, there were no declarations made pertaining to the agenda.

2 Minutes

It was **RESOLVED** to approve the minutes of the 24th September 2019 as an accurate reflection of the meeting.

3 Information Reports

The Chair referenced the information reports (as listed below), which were available through the 'RCT Scrutiny' website.

- Annual Complaints Report 2018-19
- Cwm Taf Safeguarding Annual Report 2018-19

It was **RESOLVED** that any queries relating to the above report can be directed to the scrutiny email address and will be adhered to in due course.

4 Review of the Health & Wellbeing Scrutiny Work Programme 2019/20

The Service Director of Democratic Services & Communications gave an overview to Members in respect of the Health & Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee Forward Work Programme 2019/20.

It was highlighted that following a number of changes to the Scrutiny arrangements in RCT, one of the improvements have included the development of a more streamlined forward work programme, which contains less items for consideration at each committee meeting to allow for more in depth review of topics and potential referrals from Council, Audit Committee and other sources.

Members were reminded that the forward work programme has been developed from current business identified and matters relating to the Council's Corporate Performance themes and priorities. Reference was also made to the Cabinet/Scrutiny engagement sessions, which were held throughout October between the Scrutiny Chairs, Vice Chairs, respective Cabinet Members and Senior Leadership Officers, which support the Scrutiny arrangements going forward and also informed the respective forward work programme.

In respect of training, Members were reminded about the training session that was arranged for all RCT Scrutiny Members on Friday, 25th October 2019, facilitated by Dr Dave McKenna. The Service Director highlighted the importance of engaging in the training opportunities provided to support Members in their respective scrutiny roles.

Discussions continued and the Service Director noted that further enhancements are underway to provide better access for the public to the business of scrutiny online. This includes providing more user friendly information to support the public engagement process.

Members put forward their comments, one Member requested that bereavement services were added to the work programme for a later date.

Following discussion, Members **RESOLVED** to agree the Health & Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee Work Programme for the Municipal Year 2019/20.

5 Consultation Links

The Chair referenced the consultation links, which were available through the 'RCT Scrutiny' website. The Chair reminded Members that information is provided in respect of relevant consultations for consideration by the Committee, which are circulated on a monthly basis by the Graduate Scrutiny Research Officer.

6 Autism Report (Notice of Motion)

The Service Director Democratic Services & Communication explained that as

Members would recall at the Health and Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee held on the 9th July 2019 Members requested an overview of the current autism support services available in Rhondda Cynon Taf in order to identify the most practical and effective way to improve outcomes and access to services for those living with autism, following the adoption of an amended notice of motion at the Council meeting on the 27th March 2019.

The Service Director Democratic Services & Communications invited the Director of Adult Services to present his report.

The Director of Adult Services presented Members with an overview of the background relating to Autism and the broad areas in which all people with autism will experience difficulties in.

Members were informed that the numbers of people diagnosed with Autism has increased and in turn has increased demand for diagnostic services for individuals of all ages across all services.

Members received an overview of the Service relating to Children & Young People (up to the age of 18 years). It was explained that diagnosis is undertaken by the Neurodevelopmental Team of the Cwm Taf Morgannwg. The multi-disciplinary team provides specialist knowledge and skills for children and young people with complex neurodevelopmental conditions including ASD and attention –deficit/ hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) and their families in the following areas:

- Assessment
- Diagnosis
- Advise and intervention
- Liaison with existing services within the Health Board, partners' agencies and voluntary organisations.

In respect of adults the Cwm Taf Integrated Autism Service (IAS) provides diagnostic assessments for adults aged 18 years and over who are suspected of having autism. In addition to the provision of a diagnostic assessment. The Cwm Taf IAS provides;

- Support for adults with autism with their social, communication, sensory, dietetic , leisure and employment opportunities and independent living skills via individual and group interventions;
- Help parents/ carers of children with autism to understand and support behaviour that challenges their social, communication, sensory, dietetic ,leisure and employment opportunities and independent living skills via individual and group interventions.
- Post-diagnostic support for adults with autism and their parents/carers
- Autism training, consultation and advice to professionals working with people with autism.
- Signposting o other appropriate local services.

The Director of Adult Services explained to Members that in order to support the Committee to develop its understanding of the challenges and experiences of residents in RCT, Officers from Education, Children's Services and Health are present to give an overview of their service areas.

After taking Members through the report in great detail the Director of Adult

Services welcomed Members questions and observations.

The Chair invited Non- Committee County Borough Councillor S. Evans to address the Committee and put forward her questions and observations.

Councillor Evans thanked the Chair for allowing her to speak and thanked Officers for a very comprehensive report and summary of services. She explained that one of her main concerns are how are people sign posted to the services and which is the most appropriate service to adhere to. Who co – ordinates support, who is responsible for looking after families going forward.

She continued to comment that some parents are turning to Facebook group and forums as they don't know where to turn. If there was a directory provide by the health Board in conjunction with the Local Authority this would help. What role does the council have and how can it be improved.

The Director of Adult Services explained that we need to know what the individual needs, we need to work with the 3rd sector and health to provide for individual needs as no two people who have autism are the same.

The Director of Children's Services stated that access to services is a problem and Members agreed that there needs to be a central point of contact which can signpost those looking for help and advice to the right point of contact. It was suggested that some type of community co-ordinators could be put in place who could provide information to parents/ carers to access better services. Members went on to suggest that it would be helpful to have a break down off what services are around for children and adults so that the Committee could assess areas of strengths and weaknesses.

Members felt there more work is needed on the transition from childhood to adulthood to make sure it becomes a smooth transition.

A Member commented that early intervention is critical and the work being done by the Resilience Family Service is vital.

After further discussion Members suggested the following point as next step to facilitate the development of the proposals going forward.

Members **RESOLVED** to:

- Acknowledge the content of the report;
- Invite third party organisations to a future meeting of the Health and Wellbeing Committee to discuss their views
- Invite parents/ carers and service users to a future meeting to seek their views on how the authority can work with other to provide a better support network for those living with autism.

7 Tackling Empty Homes

The Service Director - Prosperity and Development presented Members with an update on the progress made in implementing the Council's approach to tackling

empty homes, which is set out in the Empty Homes Strategy for the period 2018-2021.

The Service Director explained that the strategy has been implemented for one year and has provided a frame work for all empty home activity, ensuring a co-ordinated approach across the borough. It was highlighted that the strategy enables the positive work undertaken over recent years to be built on in order to decrease the total number of empty properties in the county borough.

The Service Director Prosperity and Development highlighted the five objectives of the strategy as follows and gave an update as to where we are since the approval by Cabinet:

1. To develop partnerships and vehicles that will enable an increase in the scale of empty homes being brought back into use.
2. To maximise the use of current funding and identify further funding models to increase the number of empty homes that are brought back into use.
3. To continue to use a range of interventions to ensure all types of empty homes are targeted and enabled to be brought back into use and monitor the outcomes related to these closely.
4. To undertake further research in communities and evaluation of existing schemes to understand why there are high numbers of empty homes.
5. To identify possible solutions that could prevent homes from becoming empty and also develop interventions for different market areas and types.

The Officer explained that during the financial year 2018/19 the Housing Grants team received 102 empty homes grant applications and all applications were surveyed and 88 (86%) were approved. By the end of the financial year, 61, (69%) were complete, the remaining 27 cases are ongoing and have rolled over into 2019/20 programme. It was explained that the total spend against the grant for the financial year 2018/19 as £1.24m, which brought 61 empty homes back into use.

The Service Director continued and concluded his report by explaining that the empty property data for 2018/19 clearly evidences that the Empty Homes Strategy and collaboratively working with partners, is being successful in having a positive impact on reducing the numbers of empty homes across RCT.

The Chair thanked the Officer for the report and opened up the Meeting for Members questions and observations.

Members also thanked the Officer for a very informative report. A Member asked if probate on properties is causing a problem. It was explained that this is a challenge however we are working with the enforcement teams to try and overcome the problem.

In relation to the scheme a Member requested clarity on how the Local Authority are promoting the grant to first time buyers. It was explained that the grant criteria is on the Council's website, Members requested officers circulate the link so this could be passed on to their residents as many are unaware that this is available. Members were also informed that 17 homes were purchased by first time buyers.

Another Member commented on the stress the empty homes are putting on the neighbour, Officers explained that this would be taken up with the enforcement team.

A Member commented that he was pleased to see the progress made in his area it is a good scheme and grants made for families would be pleasing to see. The Member also commented that a single point access would benefit residents with one telephone number.

After further discussion Members **RESOLVED** to:

- Acknowledge the content of the report
- Monitor the progress of the scheme going forward.

8 Community Hubs Progress Report

Director, Public Health, Protection & Community Services provided Members of the Health and Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee with an overview of the progress of the implementation plan of the Council's Hubs.

It was explained that significant developments have taken place in respect of the developing community hubs in Rhondda Cynon Taf over the past year, and there remains considerable work to be done in collaboration with partners to develop new community hubs and embed the wider neighbourhood network approach to providing services that communities want and that are co-produced with them.

Members were informed of the two community hubs which have recently been opened – Yr Hwb (Ferndale) which forms part of a public Service Board Community hub pilot with the Gurnos in Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council and Canolfan Pennar (Mountain Ash)

The Committee were updated on the next stage of the process, it was highlighted that plans are at an advance stage for the establishment of community hubs at Porth Plaza and Llys Cadwyn (Pontypridd). Both these developments will be Council run facilities while a third sector led development is being planned with Age Connect Morgannwg at Aberdare.). Members were also given an overview of future proposed developments.

The Director, Public Health, Protection and Community Services continued to explain that that it is currently too early to tell the impact of these changes on the early intervention and prevention agenda and the development of an appropriate framework is being prioritised.

Members thanked Officers for a very informative report and put for their questions and observations to the Officers. After further consideration Members **RESOLVED:**

- To acknowledge the content of the report
- To acknowledge the progress that has been made with the delivery of the action plan;
- That the Health & Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee continue to monitor the progress in the future

This meeting closed at 18:45

**CLLR R. YEO
CHAIR.**