



RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNCIL HEALTH AND WELLBEING SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
Minutes of the virtual meeting of the Health and Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee held on Tuesday, 8
December 2020 at 5.00 pm.

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

Councillor R Yeo (Chair)

Councillor S Evans	Councillor A Roberts
Councillor J Williams	Councillor G Stacey
Councillor D Owen-Jones	Councillor W Jones
Councillor E Griffiths	Councillor L De Vet
Councillor J Harries	Councillor G Jones
Councillor S Powderhill	

Officers in attendance:-

Mr C Hanagan, Service Director of Democratic Services & Communication
Mr G Isingrini, Group Director Community & Children's Services
Mr N Elliott, Director of Adult Services

County Borough Councillors in attendance:-

W.Lewis – Vice Chair Overview & Scrutiny

6 Welcome and Apologies

The Chair welcome Members to the first Committee of the 2020/2021 Municipal Year, the Chair took the opportunity to welcome new Members and thank previous Member for all their contributions over the what has been a very uncertain year.

The Chair continued and thanked Cllr G Holmes for his support as Vice Chair during the previous year and wished him well for the future, he also welcomed Cllr S Evans to the Committee as Vice Chair for this Municipal Year.

7 Declaration of Interest

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

8 Minutes

It was **RESOLVED** to approve the minutes of the 14th September 2020 as an accurate reflection of the meeting, subject to information in respect of the day centre provision be provided to Members.

9 Consultation Links

The Chair advised members of the consultation links which were provided for their information and for the Committee to note any consultations that were relevant to the Committee

10 Health and Wellbeing Scrutiny Work Programme 2020/2021

The Service Director Democratic Services and Communications explained to Members that the report provides Members with the Draft Forward Work Programme for the Municipal Year 2020/2021.

It was highlighted to Members that the Work Programme requires flexibility especially during these unprecedented times allowing business critical matters to be prioritised.

Members of the Health and Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee were asked to identify any items they would like to review further and agree the Work programme for 2020/2021 up until the end of March.

The Chair thanked the officer for the report before them and opened up the meeting for Members comments and questions.

Members agreed that it is important to focus on critical matters under the current circumstances however felt that there should be an added item to the work programme to consider the health and wellbeing of residents caused by the country leaving the European Union.

After further consideration Members RESOLVED to:

- Acknowledge the content of the proposed work programme for 2020/2021
- Acknowledge the progress and achievements and the effectiveness of scrutiny work programme and practices; and
- Continue to monitor topic for future scrutiny throughout the year.

11 Adult Services COVID 19 Response and Winter Planning

The Director of Adult Services provided Members of the Health and Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee with an update on the Adult Services Response to the Covid-19 pandemic and the usual winter pressures across the Cwm Taf Morgannwg region.

The Director explained that the Service continues to work within its statutory duties, although there continues to be some temporary disruption while prioritising services and modifying care and support offers based on assessed needs and risk.

It was highlighted that the Covid-19 pandemic has meant that Adult Services has needed to implement new ways of working and extensive national guidance in partnership with health and social care providers and partners.

The Director of Adult Services updated Members on the current response to

Covid-19 which included a table that provided an update on the services recovery actions, which are included in the Council's Corporate Plan.

It was highlighted that some people and carers have elected to decline services because of concerns about Covid-19 this has resulted in a greater reliance on carers and families and evidence now shows that there is a higher demand on adult social care and that support for carers is becoming an increasing issue. It was explained that separation from families and friends has been difficult for people living in care homes and supported living, the Director explained that the Council's supported living service and commissioned providers have made use of new technologies to ensure residents have some communication with is in line with Welsh Government Guidelines.

The Director also presented Members with overview of the new extra care facilities that have been developed across Rhondda Cynon Taf which has been of great interest to Members of the Committee.

The Director went on to highlighted the impact the pandemic has had on staff across the adult social care service, he continued by explaining some of the support and provision that have been made available to the workforce across the County Borough.

In relation to care home provision the Director of Adult Services gave an overview of the current position in respect of Rhondda Cynon Taf and explained that currently there currently 37 care homes with a total of 1.449 registered beds for older people – in February 2020 care homes were reporting 165 empty beds and in September 2020 they reported 363 empty beds, but importantly we have not lost a provider due to the pandemic.

With regards to testing Members were informed that all care home staff and residents are currently tested 2 weekly and that this process has identified asymptomatic residents and staff and infection control measures are immediately followed in response.

It was highlighted that Welsh Government has developed a national action to support care homes across Wales following a rapid review by Professor John Bolton during the summer, also the Cwm Taf Morgannwg Partnership Board have developed a regional action plan to focus on the key areas identified in the review.

In respect of the Winter Pressure the Committee acknowledged the increased pressures placed on health and social care during the winter period. The Committee considered the key priorities for the Council and considered the Winter Protection Plan.

After consideration of the information put before the Members put forward their questions and observations.

Members thanked the Director for a very comprehensive report and thanked all staff throughout the Social Care Service for all their hard work and commitment through these pressing times.

A Member asked whether we have enough staff and support to cope with the changing situation due to Covid and also with regards to vulnerable young adults that may be struggling, lonely in need of support is there any support there for

them.

The Director explained that as a service social care could always do with more staff, however, whilst currently we have some staff absence across the sector, we are managing to provide cover for most services. The Director also explained there is help from occupational health and HR for any staff that are struggling at this time and risk assessments are continuing to be updated to ensure the safety and support available for staff. The Director continued to explain the recruitment process that is currently ongoing and presented Members with figure of new positions that have been taken up since the pandemic.

In terms of the second question the Director explained that any person known to adult social care will be provided with support to meet their assessed needs. It was explained that during the pandemic some families have had concerns with staff entering their homes and temporarily stopped home care services from continuing. In these cases, we have undertaken risk assessments and carried out welfare checks to ensure these families have support in place and, if needed, offered additional support. The Director remained Members that if they were aware of any issues they could contact Adult Services and appropriate action would be taken and support provided, if needed,

Another Member asked with regards to the empty beds in our care homes and what was the reason behind this is - was his just down to Covid? The Director explained that as reported previously to this Committee more people were wanting to stay in their own homes for as long as they can and those assessed as needing care home placements have more complex needs – requiring nursing and dementia placements rather than traditional residential care. However, the Director also mentioned that Covid had compounded these reduced occupancy levels, particularly residential care and that care home capacity will continued to be monitored as we continue to assess future demand, which will now also be influenced by the long term needs people affected Covid,

The Member praised the Modernisation of Care Homes programme and thanked the Council for listening to residents and carers when considering the next steps.

Members also wanted clarity on what support is available for family Members who are caring for relatives as Covid seems to have highlighted an increased support need for them and what were we doing to support them.

In response the Director explained there are a range of services available to support carers, although some of these services have affected by Covid, in particular respite for those people with dementia. The Director explained that he would bring a report to the next Committee in relation to the work carried out with carers.

After further discussion Members RESOLVED to:

- Acknowledge the content of the report;
- Provide a report in respect of the support available for carers;
- Receive a further update in respect of Covid-19.

12 Chair's Review and Close

The Chair thanked Officers and Members for their contribution to this evenings Committee and wished the well.

This meeting closed at 6.00 pm

**CLLR R. YEO
CHAIR.**