

RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNCIL HEALTH AND WELLBEING SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
Minutes of the meeting of the Health and Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee held on Tuesday, 12
January 2021 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 P Howe
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 A Wilkins, Director of Legal Services
Ms L Davies, Director, Public Health, Protection and Community Services
Mr P Mee, Group Director Community & Children's Services
Mr N Pilliner, Environmental Protection and Housing Standards Manager
Ms C Emery , Housing Solutions and Supporting People Manager

County Borough Councillors in attendance:-

Councillor W Lewis – Vice Chair Overview & Scrutiny

13 Declaration of Interest

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

14 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

15 Information Reports

Members were informed that the Social Services Annual Complaints and Compliments. Report for 2019/20 available, it was highlighted that the report was provided for information and that if Members had any queries relating to the report then they could direct their query to the Scrutiny inbox where officers would be able to address.

After consideration Members **RESOLVED** acknowledge the link.

16 Hope Rescue Service Level Agreement (SLA) Review report

The Environmental Protection & Housing Standards Manager explained to

Members of the Health and Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee that the Council explored different ways of delivering services in order to ensure that they are cost effective in the future. He continued to explain the outsourcing the kennelling requirements to a third party organisation three years ago had proven to be a more suitable option.

Members were informed that the Service Level Agreement with Hope Rescue has demonstrated sustained improvements in service delivery and has been delivered within the allocated budget. It was highlighted that proposed changes to the out of hours service can be accommodated as required and that any specific amendments to the Service Level Agreement can be considered to ensure it is fit for purpose going forward.

The Chair thanked the officers for the report and commented that he found the service exemplary and explained to Members that the Committee previously visited Hope Rescue to see work carried out by the service first hand.

A Member asked what procedure were in place to deal with any stray dogs that had been found outside of the out of hour's service. Officers explained that this would be dealt with as an emergency welfare issue.

The Member went on to ask if a member of the public transported a stray dog to the kennels and anything happens to the dog as a result of an accident etc. would there be insurance cover for example from the Council or Rescue centre. In response the Officer explained that the information is not available at present but with the agreement of the Chair and Member the officer would come back to the Committee with the information.

Members also wanted clarity on what happens to the dog after the 7 day period if not claimed by the owner. It was explained that in accordance with the legislation that covers the Council's statutory duties to stray dogs, the dogs are transferred by the Council to the care of Hope Rescue who work to rehome them and will keep them as long as needs be.

After further discussion Members thanked the service for its work especially during these unprecedented and **RESOLVED**:

- To acknowledge the achievement of the Service Level Agreement with Hope Rescue and acknowledge the content of the report; and
- Endorse the proposal to renew the Service Level Agreement with amended agreement for the cost of providing out of hours response for stray dogs.

17 PUBLIC PROTECTION SERVICES- COVID-19 RESPONSE

The Director of Public Health Protection and Community Services provided Members of the Health and Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee with an overview of the Public Protection Services response to the Coronavirus pandemic in Rhondda Cynon Taf along with an overview of the Cwm Taf Morgannwg Contact Tracing Service operated by RCTCBC on behalf of the Region.

It was explained that the report provides Member with an opportunity to examine the response of Public Protection Services to the pandemic, in terms of Regulatory Services (including Environmental Health, Trading Standards, Licencing, and Community Safety), Homelessness Provision and the Registrar Service.

The Director continued and explained that the pandemic has a particular impact across the Service and since the first lockdown was announced successive Regulations have been enacted by the Welsh Government to impose restrictions and other controlled measures on businesses in Wales. It was also highlighted that demands for services to vulnerable such as homeless people have increased significantly. New Challenges in preventing and controlling the coronavirus infection in the community have come within the remit of the department.

The Director continued to explain that the new series of regulations from Welsh Government commenced with The Public Health (Coronavirus Restriction) (Wales) Regulations have continued to be amended and new amended regulations have been required in response to the control measures imposed by the Government. Members were informed that specific statutory guidance has been issued with each piece of legislation and has been tailored to each setting and trade affected by the new laws.

The Director highlighted to Members that the enforcement of each set of regulations has fallen to Trading Standards, Licencing, Environmental Health and Community Safety Officers of the Public Protection Department. The Committee acknowledged the incredible amount of pressure staff have faced in putting the new laws in to place within a short space of time.

The Director presented the Committee with a table outlining the actions and activity that had been undertaken by the Department. Officers continued and explained that many premise have received proactive advice and guidance on more than one occasion however in spite of the proactive work carried out by the department some of the hospitality trade has been subject to the most frequent enforcement action. It was also highlighted that to ensure business compliance, officers from the department have been liaising with other Council services to ensure compliance and share good practice.

The Director informed Members that in Septembers 2020, Welsh Government provided additional resource to local authorises to employ specific Coronavirus Enforcement Officers and explained that there are ten new officers employed by RCT and work jointly with Merthyr Tydfil CBC and South Wales Police. It was explained that the additional staff work with Public Health and Protection Officers to respond to complaints.

The Director informed Members that licensing had been affected along with the taxi trade. In relation to homelessness Officers explained that the Welsh Government required local authorities to ensure there was adequate accommodation available to ensure that no one had to sleep rough during the pandemic. It was explained that in RCT action was taken by the Housing Solutions Services to work with local hotel and bed and breakfast to ensure accommodation was available. Officer presented Members with figure to show what the service had done to date.

The registrar's service had to take urgent action to ensure there was adequate capacity and trained staff to deal with the pandemic. Members acknowledged that staff from other departments were redeployed to the service.

The Director gave an overview of the Regional Contact Tracing Service, highlighting that RCTCBC was the host for the region's single Contact Tracing Service for Cwm Taf Morgannwg and the service went live on the 1st September 2020. The Officers explained that as a result of this service 30,570 cases of

coronavirus have been identified after been contacted by the service between 1st September and the 31st December 2020. 78,179 contact have been identified through these interviews.

On concluding her report the Director opened up the meeting for Members questions and observations.

Members thanked the Officers for a detailed report and gave thanks to all the staff in the service for all their hard work during these unprecedented times.

A Member asked for clarity on where shops are open what are they able to sell and are the enforcement officers visiting these stores. The Director explained that where premises are open covid officers from the authority have visited some stores to advise on the sales of essential items and non- essential items as advised by Welsh Government.

The Member also wanted clarity on the volunteers for the individual that are shielding there isn't the same numbers as in the first wave and there is no indication that they are on the priority list for vaccinations.

The Group Director advised on the priority groups 1 – 4 at present and the volunteers may be considered in the future if further support for the vulnerable was required.

Another Member commented on the good work that the authority had done to rehome a family within his area and wanted to give his thanks for the work that had been done.

A Member acknowledge the work that had been done to ensure any homeless person had a roof over their head, however had some concerns in relation to vulnerable shielding residents and their carers. The Member asked if there was any plans to vaccinate the carers along with the most vulnerable. It was explained that the 1-4 priority groups include the most vulnerable adults however there is no indication yet in respect of their carers but it made a great deal of sense for this to happen .

Members also asked if staff's wellbeing had been taken in to consideration, it was explained that staff's mental health and physical health is paramount to the authority and the service work with occupational health union etc, to ensure all is being done for the workforce.

After further discussion Members RESOLVED:

- Acknowledge the content of the Report;
- Receive further updates at a future Meeting ;
- Receive a report on homelessness at future Meeting.

18 Chair's Review and Close

The Chair thanked Members and Officer for their contributions to this evenings meeting and advised Member the next Meeting will be held on the 8th February

2021.

**This meeting closed at Time Not
Specified**

**CLLR R. YEO
CHAIR.**