



**CYNGOR BWRDEISTREF SIROL
RHONDDA CYNON TAF
COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL**

COMMITTEE SUMMONS

C Hanagan
Service Director of Democratic Services & Communication
Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council
The Pavilions
Cambrian Park
Clydach Vale CF40 2XX

Meeting Contact: Claire Hendy - Senior Democratic Services Officer (07385401935)

YOU ARE SUMMONED to a meeting of **HEALTH AND WELLBEING SCRUTINY COMMITTEE** to be held on **TUESDAY, 16TH MARCH, 2021** at **5.00 PM.**

Non Committee Members and Members of the public may request the facility to address the Committee at their meetings on the business listed although facilitation of this request is at the discretion of the Chair. It is kindly asked that such notification is made to Democratic Services by Friday, 12 March 2021 on the contact details listed above, including stipulating whether the address will be in Welsh or English.

AGENDA

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No's**

1. WELCOME & APOLOGIES

To Welcome Members and Officers to the Health and Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee and to receive any apologies for absence.

2. DECLARATION OF INTEREST

To receive disclosures of personal interest from Members in accordance with the Code of Conduct

Note:

1. Members are requested to identify the item number and subject matter that their interest relates to and signify the nature of the personal interest: and
2. Where Members withdraw from a meeting as a consequence of the disclosure of a prejudicial interest they must notify the Chairman when they leave.

3. MINUTES

To receive the minutes of the previous meeting of the Health and Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee which was held on 12th January 2021

5 - 10

REPORTS OF THE SERVICE DIRECTOR DEMOCRATIC SERVICES AND COMMUNICATIONS

4. CONSULTATION LINKS

Information is provided in respect of relevant [consultations](#) for consideration by the Committee.

REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR, PUBLIC HEALTH, PROTECTION & COMMUNITY SERVICES

5. REPORT ON THE PROGRESS OF THE INTEGRATED SUBSTANCE MISUSE SERVICE IN RHONDDA CYNON TAF AND MERTHYR TYDFIL.

To a report on the implementation and progress of the Integrated Substance Misuse Service in RCT and Merthyr Tydfil.

11 - 20

6. HOMELESS STRATEGY 2018/2022 PROGRESS REPORT

For Members to consider the progress made by the Housing Service in relation to the RCTCBC Homeless Strategy 2018/2022.

21 - 26

7. CHAIR'S REVIEW AND CLOSE

To reflect on the meeting and actions to be taken forward.

8. URGENT ITEMS

To consider any items, which the Chairman, by reason of special circumstances, is of the opinion should be considered at the meeting as a matter of urgency

Service Director of Democratic Services & Communication

Circulation:-

The Chair and Vice-Chair of the Health and Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee (County Borough Councillor R Yeo and County Borough Councillor S Evans respectively)

County Borough Councillors:

Councillor A Roberts, Councillor J Davies, 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 and Councillor S Powderhill

County Borough Councillor G Hopkins, Cabinet Member for Adult & Children's Community Services

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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 quires 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.**

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RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

MUNICIPAL YEAR 2020/2021

HEALTH AND WELLBEING SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

16th March 2021

A report on the progress of the Integrated Substance Misuse Service in Rhondda Cynon Taf and Merthyr Tydfil

REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR PUBLIC HEALTH, PROTECTION & COMMUNITY SERVICES

**Author: Ceri Ford; Cwm Taf Morgannwg Area Planning board – Lead Officer
(Substance Misuse)**

1.0 PURPOSE OF REPORT

1.1 The purpose of this report is to provide an update to the Committee on the Implementation and progress of the Integrated Substance Misuse Service in RCT and Merthyr Tydfil.

2.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that the Committee:

2.1 Note the information contained within this report

2.2 Scrutinise and comment on the information provided

3.0 BACKGROUND

3.1 In Cwm Taf Morgannwg the responsibility for the strategic planning and commissioning of services for the treatment and prevention of substance misuse rests with the Cwm Taf Morgannwg Substance Misuse Area Planning Board (APB)

The APB is accountable to the Strategic Partnership Board and ultimately the Public Services Board in respect of all its activities, including the oversight of Welsh Government grant funding expenditure.

- 3.2 In Cwm Taf Morgannwg, the majority of substance misuse services are funded through two Welsh Government funding streams,
- The Substance Misuse Action Fund (SMAF): **£4M**;
 - The Local Health Board ring fenced substance misuse allocation: **£3.5M**.
- 3.3 Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council is the nominated banker and “grant recipient” for the Substance Misuse Action Fund allocation on behalf of the Area Planning Board.
- 3.4 All services currently commissioned for substance misuse within Cwm Taf fall within a 4-tier conceptual framework, which refers to the level of intervention provided:
- **Tier 1:** Consists of a range of drug-related interventions that can be provided by generic providers, depending on their competence and partnership arrangements with specialised substance misuse services;
 - **Tier 2:** Interventions are provided by specialist substance misuse providers and include a range of harm reduction interventions and interventions that engage, retain and support people in treatment. Support for families and concerned others, are also considered to be a tier 2 interventions;
 - **Tier 3:** Specialist provisions including all clinical functions. substitute prescribing programmes and community detoxification;
 - **Tier 4:** Services provide substance misuse inpatient detoxification and residential rehabilitation programmes.
- 3.5 In 2016 as part of a process of modernisation to respond to changes in legislation and service user need, the APB commissioned consultants Health and Social Research to carry out a review of substance misuse service provision in RCT and Merthyr Tydfil with a particular focus on tier 2 and 3 services. They were also asked to develop a model of service ensuring a cohesive whole system approach with equitable and accessible services across the Area.
- 3.6 The review included significant consultation with a wide range of partners, stakeholders and service users, analysis of National and local data and information. Following a Strategic Visioning Workshop on 6th April 2017 attended by APB members and strategic partners across Cwm Taf, consensus was gained for a new substance use service model. The revised model was then presented to a Stakeholder Visioning Workshop on 26th April to ascertain its feasibility in practice.
- 3.7 The Cwm Taf Integrated Substance Misuse Service model was presented to the Strategic Partnership Board on 22nd June 2017 and was approved by the

Public Services Board on 28th June 2017. The APB were then tasked with developing the service specifications.

- 3.8 An update report was provided to the RCTCBC Cabinet on 21st September 2017; and a presentation given to the RCT Health and Well Being Scrutiny Committee on 30th January 2018.

4.0 OVERVIEW OF THE INTEGRATED SERVICE

- 4.1 Following an RCT CBC procurement process, the tier 1 and 2 service was awarded to Barod in December 2018. The contract term is for 5 years with an option to extend for a further 2 years. Tier 3 services are commissioned and provided by Cwm Taf Morgannwg UHB. Both Tier 1/2 and Tier 3 services operate in line with the principles and specification agreed by the APB for the new service model as a whole. The new services commenced on 1st April 2019.

- 4.2 CTM UHB and Barod work in partnership with the APB to contribute towards the following overarching outcomes:

- Reduce problematic substance misuse and dependency in our population;
- Enable early detection and support of individuals who are misusing substances;
- Provide high quality, evidence-based treatment and support according to service user need;
- Support service users to sustain long term recovery.

- 4.3 The new service comprises the following interconnecting components:

- A prevention and early identification/intervention pathway;
- A single Point of Entry;
- A children and young people's service pathway;
- A transition service pathway (for young people leaving children and young people services);
- A pathway for low intensity intervention/treatment and support (Adults Tier 2);
- A specialist service pathway (Adults Tier 3);
- A pathway for shared care services (Tier 3);
- A pathway for sustained recovery.

- 4.4 Providers will work to the following principles:

- Evidence based practice. Psychologically informed treatments and interventions, transparent data to understand demand and manage trends, Continuous improvement based on research and best practice to improve outcomes for service users and staff, a prudent healthcare approach including prioritising treatment for those with greatest need, making the most effective use of skills and resources;

- Person centred care Recovery oriented philosophy building on people's strengths, holistic approach based on effective working alliance between service user and therapist, harm reduction approaches, non-judgemental and non-discriminatory;
- Accessible points of entry Equity of access and a standardised approach across Merthyr and RCT;
- Commitment to Service User Involvement, working alongside service users as equal partners sharing power and responsibility;
- Partnership Working Integration and collaboration between all parts of the service, good communication and clear pathways into Mental Health, Housing, Community and Children Services, Criminal Justice. Working links with community organisations;
- Greater emphasis on Prevention and Early identification Universal and targeted education and advice. Assertive outreach to include proactively engaging with hard to reach groups and communities;
- Outcome focussed with a clear evaluation framework.

4.5 The APB Commissioning team worked closely with Barod and the UHB throughout the implementation phase. In line with the APB monitoring framework, the providers are monitored using the following mechanisms:

- KPI reporting via quarterly performance scorecards;
- Quarterly commissioner and service provider review meetings;
- Quarterly APB progress updates;
- Annual contract compliance monitoring and data verification exercises;
- Compliance with RCTCBC financial procedures.

5.0 ACHIEVEMENTS OF THE SERVICE LEVEL AGREEMENT

- 5.1 The major change to the new Integrated service has been the awarding of the tier 1 and 2 service to a single provider. Previously there were multiple providers with individual contracts for each service component which restricted the flexibility to adapt to changes in demand and service user need. The single provider for the new service allows for resources to be easily moved between the interconnecting components to the areas of high demand when required.
- 5.2 The table below illustrates the comparison to key performance information since the implementation of the Integrated Substance Misuse Service in April 2019.

Table illustrating WG Key Performance information for services prior to the implementation of the ISMS (2018-19) and first year 2019-20.

	2019-20	2018-19	2017-18
KPI1 Increase the number of clients who engage with services between assessment and planned ending of treatment by reducing the incidences of clients who do not attend (DNA) or respond to follow up contact post assessment date. Target; less than 20%	153 / 7.73%	221 / 10.09%	206 / 9.21%
KPI2 Achieve a waiting time of less than 20 working days between referral and treatment. Target; more than 80%	1,706 / 91.18%	2,089 / 89.46%	2,038 / 92.17%
KPI 5 Number / percentage of cases closed (with a treatment date) as treatment completed. Target; 76.9%	1,171 / 88.64%	1,635 / 87.01%	1581 / 87.44%
Number of referrals	2,784	3,216	3,102
Number of assessments	1,991	2,381	2,322
Number of treatment start	1,883	2,350	2,216
Number cases closed	2,803	2,895	3,036
Number in treatment	2,206	2,215	2,005

- The Cwm Taf area has continued to meet the WG targets in each of the KPIs since the implementation of the new service in April 2019.
- In its first completed year, 2019-20, the new service exceeded the previous years (2018-19) performance in all KPI's. In addition, for the same year, performance was above the Wales average in 2 of the 3 KPI's, the only exception being KPI 2.
- The number of referrals reported since the implementation of the new service in 2019-20 is lower when compared to the previous years.
- The percentage of assessments completed remains at over 70 % of those referred. With over 90 % of those assessed beginning treatment.
- 2019-20 information shows that the number of service users in treatment is comparable to the year before the implementation of the new service.

5.3 A number of improvements and innovative measures have been implemented since the start of the new contract in April 2019. In addition, the impact of the Covid 19 Pandemic required significant changes to service delivery. Both Barod and CDAT worked to adapt to new ways of working in line with WG Covid Guidelines.

- The existing drug and alcohol single point of access has been strengthened and improved, growing in momentum despite the challenges of Covid in 2020.
- Weekly partnership joint allocation meetings (JAMs) allow for multi-disciplinary discussion of all new referrals to promote the right service, right time principle. The meetings also provide an opportunity for discussion of individual SU moving between the different tiers of service. The JAM's have worked particularly well digitally during Covid and continue to reduce barriers and offer advocacy to those service

users who were assessed as priority for clinical intervention. There are key partners who have come to the fore in driving the JAM principle forward, particularly in Cwm Taf where the best practice between Tier 2 and Tier 3 has been identified.

- The webchat facility which was piloted in Cwm Taf has attracted hundreds of contacts and reached people who would not normally easily engage, in particular, those concerned others affected by a family member's drug or alcohol use. This has been very important as many families have struggled to manage at home throughout the pandemic. It has opened a new referral pathway into the service
- Co-occurring Mental Health and substance Misuse. Two Mental Health workers provide closer links with mental health services to improve outcomes for SU with co-occurring issues. The relationship between RGH and Barod has improved throughout Covid by adapting to the situation and creating more direct methods of communication with service users who have been admitted to hospital.
- Increased focus on prevention, early identification and intervention. The flexibility of the new contract has enabled resources to become more fluid. As a result, there has been an increase with targeted outreach during lockdown and an increase in partnership working, (third sector and local authority Housing). This has enabled agencies to provide a full package of support for the service user.
- Closer links with housing providers responsible for those with problematic housing issues and ongoing work with hostels and the homeless
- Reaching out to the community – this work included a large food bank initiative, whereby throughout December 2020, Barod collected donations for the Foodbank from the staff, community and supermarkets. This culminated in 50 food parcels for families and individual households.
- Since the start of the contract, Barod identified the need for counselling support for family, carers and concerned others. The counselling service has now been extended to include family members
- Children, young people and families service. Since April 2020, although numbers of referrals have been affected by school closures and have been lower than 2019-20, there has been a move to on-line video sessions which have been well received. The service has delivered a Ketamine campaign and a harm reduction promotion #weare. There have been several substance misuse; facts and myths and personal safety sessions delivered to schools across Cwm Taf. A newsletter is being published on a quarterly basis. The first issue was published in December 2020.

- The peer mentoring service has been focussing on school leavers, responding to the changes in education, e.g. with examination assessments. The service now offers access in to peer support for issues such as next steps in education, careers advice, interview skills and getting job ready.
- Welsh Government Winter Covid fund has provided the opportunity for service users receive digital devices to enable them to maintain engagement.
- Evening clinics are available which provides flexibility for service users in employment or training. These clinics also offer appointments with the CTM UHB Sexual Health nurse and the opportunity for Blood Borne Virus screening.
- As a result of Covid, one to one appointments are now offered virtually (zoom), via telephone and face to face according to assessed need and service user choice.
- During Covid, offices have remained open to facilitate Specialist Needle Exchange Provision as a priority.
- Barod continue to provide online training on a variety of subjects including; Prevention training, Prenoxad, alcohol awareness, overdose awareness, safeguarding, IPEDs. Online self- help resources were delivered to coincide with National campaigns. Safeguarding week, Mental Health Awareness week, Alcohol Awareness week.
- Service User involvement – see section 7

6.0 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS

6.1 There are no equality and diversity implications associated with this report. Service specifications outline the specific requirements for being responsive to the needs of all service users including those with protective characteristics.

7.0 CONSULTATION / INVOLVEMENT

7.1 Service user participation / Involvement (SUI) is a key priority for the Area Planning Board and a key theme running through the service specifications. Each agency is expected to fully embrace the concept. The responsibility for overseeing SUI rests with the APB Compliance and Monitoring officer (CMO) in line with the Cwm Taf Morgannwg APB Service User Involvement and Participation Strategy.

7.2 There is an active CTM SUI group with over 40 former service users from across the Region. Barod in collaboration with the CMO co-ordinate weekly SUI meetings which are now via the Zoom platform in line with Covid requirements.

7.3 The group regularly receive requests for consultation on a wide range of subjects and from a variety of agencies including Key partners, stake holders and Welsh Government.

8.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATION(S)

8.1 Substance misuse services are financed through two Welsh Government funding streams.

- The Substance Misuse Action Fund (SMAF): **£4M**;
- The Local Health Board ring fenced substance misuse allocation: **£3.5M**.

The Integrated service is funded through these external grants therefore there is no financial implication for the Council.

9.0 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS OR LEGISLATION CONSIDERED

9.1 There were no legal implications arising from the service change, however the proposals were reviewed to ensure they were in accordance with the conditions attached to the Welsh Government Grant Funding requirements.

9.2 The model complies with best practice guidelines and legislation, particularly, The Crime and Disorder Act 1998, The Welsh Government Substance Misuse Service Delivery Plan 2019-22. NICE Guidelines, the Social Services and Well-Being (Wales) Act 2014, the Wellbeing of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015, the Adverse Childhood Experiences Study (2015) and the NHS Prudent Healthcare principles.

10.0 LINKS TO THE CORPORATE AND NATIONAL PRIORITIES AND THE WELL-BEING OF FUTURE GENERATIONS ACT.

10.1 By taking steps to shift the focus of approach from treatment to prevention, and focussing on improving the health and well-being of individuals and families, we are supporting the delivery of the Governments well-being objectives in "*Prosperity for all: the National strategy*"

10.2 The links to the Welsh Government "*A Healthier Wales, our Plan for Health and Social Care*" can be evidenced in the partnership working arrangements between Health, Social Care and other agencies to provide a holistic care and treatment plan for service users. The Integrated service is person centred, with a public health approach, an emphasis on harm reduction, prevention and treatment, and sustained recovery. Reducing substance misuse also aligns to the quadruple aims.

10.3 The WG National Substance Misuse Delivery Plan and the CTM Local Delivery Plan aligns to 5 ways of working in the *Well Being of Future Generation Act 2015*. Throughout the priorities and commitments in the plans, there is a focus on having a **long-term** impact on individuals and families, **prevention** of substance misuse is a key priority throughout the plan.

Effective working requires **collaboration, involvement and integration**, which are evident throughout the actions in the plans.

These principles and priorities are replicated in the service specification for the Integrated service.

11.0 NEXT STEPS

- 11.1 As part of the Local Authority boundary change in April 2019, the Bridgend area moved into Cwm Taf to form Cwm Taf Morgannwg. Therefore, the APB is now responsible for the planning and commissioning of substance misuse services for the Bridgend population. The APB has convened a Bridgend Development subgroup to manage the transition of services from Western Bay to Cwm Taf Morgannwg and to develop Substance Misuse services in Bridgend that will align with the current Integrated Service in RCT and Merthyr Tydfil.
- 11.2 The APB commissioning team will work closely with CDAT and Barod to manage Covid recovery planning in line with National and local guidance.

12.0 CONCLUSIONS

- 12.1 The implementation of the Cwm Taf Integrated Substance Misuse Service in April 2019 represented a significant change in service delivery in the tier 1 and 2 service. The transition period was managed well with minimum disruption for service users.
- 12.2 A single provider promotes equitable and consistent service provision across RCT and Merthyr
- 12.3 The change from several individual contracts to a single provider has improved flexibility and assisted with innovation. Resources have already adapted to meet the demand for additional outreach support and counselling services for those individuals affected by someone else's substance misuse issues. Close working with providers and provision of data and intelligence provide evidence to adapt further in the future when appropriate.
- 12.4 Closer financial monitoring assist with ensuring value for money going forward.
- 12.5 Working with a single provider has also assisted with strategic planning and co-ordination.
- 12.6 The recommissioning of services in the Bridgend area will utilise the RCT/Merthyr integrated service model and principles to promote equitable and consistent service provision across Cwm Taf Morgannwg.

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RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

MUNICIPAL YEAR 2020-21

16th MARCH 2021

REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR, PUBLIC
HEALTH, PROTECTION & COMMUNITY
SERVICES

**PROGRESS WITH THE
HOMELESSNESS STRATEGY 2018-
2022**

Author(s): Cheryl Emery, Temporary Head of Community Safety and Community Housing

1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1.1 The report will update members of the committee with the progress made by the Housing Service in relation to the RCTCBC Homelessness Strategy 2018-2022 and the Action Plan supporting that Strategy.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that the Committee:

- 2.1 Note the information contained within this report.
2.2 Scrutinise and comment on the information provided.

3. BACKGROUND

- 3.1 The Housing (Wales) Act 2014 took effect on the 27th April 2015 and placed a number on new duties on local authorities in respect of homelessness which included:
- Provision of advice and assistance to anyone threatened with homelessness;
 - Provide appropriate help and support to any homeless person to help secure a suitable home;

- New powers to local authorities to discharge their homelessness duty into the private rented sector.
- 3.2 The Housing (Wales) Act 2014 has changed the way local authorities tackle homelessness, with aim is to create a safety net to ensure no-one is turned away without help.
- 3.3 Section 50 of the Act also required local authorities to undertake a homelessness review to produce a homelessness strategy which sets how the Council, in partnership with other stakeholders, would address the prevention of homelessness.
- 3.4 The Rhondda Cynon Taf Homelessness Strategy and Action Plan 2018 – 2022 sets out its vision for Rhondda Cynon Taf where homelessness is prevented if and where it does occur, people are supported to secure accommodation and support as part of the below objectives.

Objectives

1. Preventing homelessness and repeat homelessness from occurring, wherever possible, therefore reducing homelessness.
2. Ensuring that appropriate support and accommodation, including temporary and emergency accommodation, is available to meet the needs of homeless and potentially homeless people
3. Ensuring people with housing support needs have these fully assessed and have access to services to help sustain independent living.

Homelessness Applications

- 3.5 The Covid-19 pandemic triggered no immediate overall increase in homelessness applications. Most individuals who presented as homeless required interim accommodation which triggered a surge in Bed and Breakfast placements. This was particularly relevant for single homeless people following the emergency measures put in place by Welsh Government to protect people at risk of rough sleeping.
- 3.6 Single people aged 25 and over account for 70% of all homelessness applications and placement in Bed and Breakfast accommodation in RCT. The main reason for homelessness from the 1st April 2020 to date is breakdown of relationship with family and friends, which has impacted on the number of households successfully prevented from homelessness.
- 3.7 Due to unprecedented demand, we have experienced a 29% increase in the use of Bed and Breakfast accommodation in 2020/21 with **701** households placed in 2019/20 and **659** as at 1/03/21.
- 3.8 Both Storm Dennis and the pandemic have had a significant impact on our homelessness service in 2020/21, increasing service demand for both temporary and permanent accommodation. It has also become harder to place homeless households in both the social housing and the private rented sector, largely due to the impact of

restrictions creating challenges for housing providers to prepare voids for re-occupation and delays in progressing applications for housing.

Progress and Update on Homelessness Strategy 2018 -2022

3.9 The RCT Homelessness Strategy 2018 – 2022 is going into its final year. During the last two years, progress has been made towards completing the actions and a number have already been achieved, despite the significant and on-going challenges faced since March 2020 in delivering effective homelessness services.

3.10 **Objective 1: Preventing homelessness and repeat homelessness from occurring, wherever possible, therefore reducing homelessness**

(a) Review of Personal Housing and Support Plans and Homelessness Decision Letters

To ensure our frontline service is responsive and co-ordinated to meet the needs of service users. We have worked closely with Shelter Cymru who carried out a consultation exercise with our Housing Solutions Team and service users to help us simplify the information we provide on our complex homelessness duties. The service developed new step by step guidance that ensures service users can identify what to expect when they make a homelessness application with Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council. This includes how to review all decisions we make as part of our responsibility to prevent homelessness or secure suitable accommodation.

A review of our decision letters in consultation with service users was also undertaken to ensure an easy to read format and provide a clear understanding of the legal duties owed to them at each stage of their homelessness application in conjunction with the above guide.

(b) IT Arrangements

An upgraded IT Homelessness Module has helped us simplify our assessment process and Housing and Support Plans to ensure they are accurate and can be provided following the outcome of a homelessness assessment. This has helped the client and support worker in understand their housing options and the actions required to help prevent loss of accommodation

(c) Improve Early Intervention and Prevention for those in need of Financial Support

We have also worked closely with our colleagues in Pontypridd Citizens Advice Bureau, DWP and the Housing Benefit Department to continue to maximise the use of Discretionary Housing Benefit Payments as well as ensuring effective pathways are in place for those impacted financially by Covid-19 and the impact of Welfare Benefit Reform. This has included setting up the CAB Financial Project which assisted 500 households with a dedicated housing and welfare advice service for those at risk of homelessness.

3.11 **Objective 2: Ensuring Appropriate Support and Accommodation, including Temporary and Emergency Accommodation, is Available to Meet the Needs of Homeless and Potentially Homeless People**

(a) Rapid Rehousing

To ensure the availability of appropriate accommodation for those with multiple needs, we have been piloting a Housing First programme for adults and young people. This offers accommodation to alleviate the initial housing need for people with very complex needs including drug and alcohol dependence and enduring mental and physical health problems. The programme provides intensive and a high level of outreach support to deal with the longer-term complex needs with the aim of referring service users into other support services.

(b) Housing First for Adults

The project is funded by Welsh Government and based on the principles of Housing First. We have supported 29 single homeless people through this new project. Many have experienced revolving door homelessness and have high complex support needs. It is also pleasing to report the project is currently working with 15 individuals to help them maintain their tenancies within the social housing sector.

(c) Housing First for Youth

The project is a partnership with Llamau who provide intensive support also based on the principles of Housing First for young people aged 16 -24. The project is currently supporting 7 young people including 2 of whom have been offered their first tenancy.

(d) Alternatives to Bed and Breakfast Accommodation

In recognition of the unsuitability of Bed and Breakfast accommodation, we have commissioned 13 units of interim accommodation with a private landlord, as an alternative to Bed and Breakfast for young people aged 16 to 24 and single homeless people.

Additional financial resources made available by Welsh Government under Phase 2 Grant Funding to assist with homelessness pressures impacted by of Covid-19 have helped:

- Provide an additional 4 units of refuge provision for women who have or are experiencing domestic abuse in partnership with Women's Aid RCT;
- The development of an additional 4 units of supported accommodation for young people aged 16 -24 in partnership with support provider Hafan Cymru and Rhondda Housing Association. The project is due online in the summer of 2021 and will be built using Modern Methods of Construction (MMC).

(e) Social Letting Agency

We are currently in the process of setting up a Social Letting Agency with the team recently recruited and in post to assist in increasing housing supply and to work collaboratively with private sector landlords.

It is still very early days but there has been some interest from private landlords helping to discharge our legal duty to 4 households to access accommodation in the private rented sector.

3.12 **Objective 3: Ensuring People with Housing Support Needs Have These Fully Assessed and Have Access to Services to Help Sustain Independent Living**

(a) Multiple and Complex Needs

Plans are well underway to develop a new regional multi- agency Substance Misuse and Mental Health Housing Outreach Team. This collaborative working model will build on the work of the general nurse funded by the Taff Ely GP Cluster and Cwm Taff Health Board in Rhondda Cynon Taf to assist single homeless people who do not engage with traditional health provision. The new model will comprise of two support workers and specialist nurse posts funded by Housing Support Grant and Cwm Taf Health Board. The new service will be co-located with the Housing First Team and will provide a range of health and wellbeing support for vulnerable adults with substance misuse, offending and homelessness profiles.

(b) Staff Training

Training has also taken place with our frontline Housing Solutions Team and Support workers to provide an update on homelessness prevention options, awareness of domestic abuse and homelessness/ housing legislation.

(c) Extending the use of Mediation and support for young people being asked to leave the family home

A programme of mediation between family members and young people has been running for some time and is managed by Llamau. A review of the service has increased staffing resources to two support workers offering support to both the young person and the family helping to prevent homelessness for young people aged 16 -24. The workers also support the young people to return home at any time if they were asked to leave at the time of presenting as homeless.

(d) Domestic Abuse Support for Males

We have put in place housing related support arrangements with Women's Aid RCT to help support males who have experienced or are experiencing domestic abuse Since the 1st April 2020, 18 males have been supported to remain in their own homes.

(e) Review of Support -Temporary Accommodation

In recognition of the high number of single homeless people placed in temporary accommodation with multiple and complex needs, a review of support arrangements has been undertaken to ensure all residents can access one to one support during their stay in all forms of temporary accommodation.

A more formal and wider review of these support arrangements is planned in 2021/22.

4. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

4.1 No financial implications arising from this report as this report is provided for information.

5. CONCLUSION

5.1 The impact of key policies such as raising the Local Housing Allowance (LHA) and suspending evictions have had some impact in preventing homelessness. Despite this progress, the pandemic has further exposed the severe shortage of affordable homes.

5.2 Post lockdown, we also expect to see an increase in the levels of homelessness. This will be particularly relevant to people being evicted from the private rented sector and an increase in newly unemployed people made homeless because of the pandemic

5.3 Whilst a considerable amount of work is being undertaken to address the immediate housing and support needs of single homeless people, further work is needed to reduce the number of people placed in bed and breakfast accommodation and explore more sustainable long-term accommodation options.

5.4 It is also vital we work in partnership with Health and our third sector partners to ensure appropriate support services are in place to address needs such as substance misuse and mental health.