



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

Minutes of the meeting of the Health and Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee held on Tuesday, 19 March 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 A Roberts	Councillor L De Vet
Councillor L Jones	Councillor J Williams
Councillor A Chapman	Councillor P Howe
Councillor G Stacey	Councillor M Tegg
Councillor G Hughes	Councillor D Owen-Jones
Councillor C Willis	

### **Officers in attendance:-**

Mr A Wilkins, Director of Legal Services  
Ms L Davies, Service Director – Public Protection Services  
Ms R Hope, Health Protection and Licensing Service Manager  
Ms A Lewis, Health & Wellbeing Improvement Manager  
Mr P Cushion, Head of Employee Relations

### **County Borough Councillors in attendance:-**

Councillor E Webster, Councillor R Lewis and Councillor S Evans

#### **34 Declaration of Interest**

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

#### **35 Minutes**

It was **RESOLVED** to approve the minutes of the 12th February 2019 as an accurate reflection of the meeting.

#### **36 Food Hygiene Scheme Update**

The Food and Health and Safety Manager, along with the Service Director Public Protection presented Members with an update on the Food Hygiene Rating Scheme and the current performance and activity within RCT.

Members were presented with a brief background of the Scheme. It was explained that voluntary Food Hygiene Rating Scheme was launched in Wales by the Food Standard Agency in October 2010 and was adopted by Rhondda

Cynon Taf at the same time.

It was explained that this scheme was developed with the aim of providing consumers with information to enable them to make informed choices about where to eat or shop for food and through these choices, encourage businesses to improve their hygiene standards. It was also explained that the Local Authority Environmental Health Officers enforce the scheme.

It was explained that in RCT we currently have 2042 registered businesses. 1770 businesses already have a rating, 32 new businesses are awaiting an inspection and 241 businesses are exempt from receiving an inspection and therefore a food hygiene.

A Member queried why some businesses were exempt and asked for an explanation.

Officers explained that establishments where the sale of food is not the primary activity of the establishment, and the only food made available to consumers is the food that wrapped or packaged before it is brought to the establishment for example Leisure centres with only vending machines selling only drinks or pre-packed confectionary .

Members continued to scrutinise the report and put forward their questions. A Member asked officers if food businesses get any warning of an inspection. Officers replied that there is no prior warning they are unannounced visits.

In respect of appeals against their ratings, a Member asked is there any indication of any or many that are changed after an appeal. It was also asked in relation to re- rating is there any percentage data around to show improvement. It was explained that the appeals process is against the findings of the inspection and not that owner of the premises is unhappy with the decision made.

Whilst looking at the data a Member questioned why Rhondda Cynon Taf is below the Wales Average. It was explained that over the last five years has improved steadily but due to Rhondda Cynon Taf having a high turnover of businesses and new ownership this can cause an impact as many new owners have lack of experience and knowledge when being inspected.

The Chair thanked the Officers for a very informative report and **RESOLVED:**

- To acknowledge the content of the report
- Receive an update in respect of the Food Hygiene Rating Scheme in RCT at a future meeting.

### **37 Consultation on the Draft Local Toilet Strategy**

The Health and Wellbeing Improvement Manager presented Members the Draft Local Toilets Strategy for Rhondda Cynon Taf.

It was explained that on the 24<sup>th</sup> January 2019, the Director of Public Health, Protection and Community Services in consultation with the Cabinet Member Councillor Rhys Lewis made a delegated officer decision to approve the commencement of a 12-week public consultation on the draft Rhondda Cynon Taf Toilet Strategy.

Members were informed that the delegated decision agreed:

1. To approve the initiation of the draft Local Toilet Strategy for public consultation for a minimum of 12 weeks, in line with statutory requirement to develop and publish a Local Toilets Strategy, as required by Part 8 of the Public Health (Wales) Act 2017.
2. That the Director of Public Health Protection and Community Services consider the consultation responses with a view to preparing a Final Draft Strategy for consideration by Cabinet in May 2019.

Officers explained that there is a statutory requirement to develop and publish a Local Toilet Strategy, as required by part 8 of the Public Health (Wales) Act 2017. It was highlighted that the Act places a duty on each Local Authority in Wales to prepare and publish a Local Toilet Strategy for its area. The Strategy is developed following the completion of a needs assessment to:

- Assess the community's need for toilets, including changing facilities for babies and changing place facilities for people with disabilities.;
- Provide details of how to meet the identified need;
- Produce a Local Toilet Strategy; and
- Review the Strategy, update and publicise revisions.

Members were informed that the Local Authority must prepare and publish their strategies by 31<sup>st</sup> May 2019. It was brought to the Members attention that the duty to prepare a Local Toilet Strategy does not require Local Authorities to provide and maintain public toilets directly. However, the Local Authority must take a strategic view on how facilities can be provided and accessed.

A Members were presented with the Consultation document and were informed that the comments and feedback of the Health and Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee will form part of the formal consultation feedback to the Cabinet.

The Chair thanked the Officer for presenting the document and opened up the meeting for Members questions and observations.

Member wanted clarification in respect of the responses; he asked whether 91% of the respondents was that of the 97 responses or otherwise. It was explained that it was of the 97 responses.

In respect of baby changing facilities and disabled toilets fit for purpose Members felt there should be a lot more done to encourage private sector and other groups to work together to make these facilities available where they are needed.

A Member questioned the provision of toilet facilities for local events and whether there is a set number of toilet in ratio to people attending. It was explained that there is an events advisory group and this would be considered under their remit.

The Chair highlighted the great importance these facilities can be to residents of the County Borough and that knowing that there is toilet provision in many areas can make a difference in that person leaving their home. This will in turn have a positive effect on their wellbeing. Members also felt strongly that the lack of advertising is a problem as many residents are unaware of any facilities that offer the use of their toilet provision for public use.

In response to Members concerns Officers explained that it is an important part of the strategy and we are working with businesses, and other organisations to encourage them to display sticker in a prominent place, indicating that toilets are available for the public. The sticker will display the logo stipulated by the Welsh Government.

Another point was raised regarding the location of facilities within stores can be an obstacle as many of the toilet facilities are in out of the places areas with poor access. It was felt that work needed to be carried out to encourage store to locate them at the front of the store. It was explained that this could be considered under the Objective 2 of the proposed action plan.

Members of the Health and Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee made many other suggestions and further discussion Members **RESOLVED**:

- To acknowledge the Draft Local Toilet Strategy
- That the feedback and comments of the Health and Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee form part of the formal consultation response of the Director of Public Health, Protection and Community Services when preparing the Final Draft Strategy for consideration by Cabinet in May 2019

## **38 Tackling Mental Health Report**

The Chair explained that, as Members would recall the Health and Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee at its Meeting on the 18<sup>th</sup> December 2018 received a presentation in respect of the Mental Health Services with Rhondda Cynon Taf in line with the “Notice of Motion” which was received at the Council Meeting on the 24<sup>th</sup> October 2018. Members agreed to receive a report from Human Resources at a future meeting to inform Members of the work carried out by that service in addressing mental health problems within the work place.

The Chair asked Member whether they would agree to refer the topic to the Strategic Partnership Board for them to consider in detail and report back to the Committee later date, as it was felt they had more scope to deal with it collaboratively.

The Chair went on to welcome the Head of Employee Relations and asked him to present his report.

The Head of Employee Relations provided Members with an overview of the work carried out by the Human Resources Department in addressing the issue of mental health in the Council.

It was explained that as a Council we strive towards a culture of well-being for its workforce, which would encompass a raft of different initiatives, one of which being mental health, and that over the last 15 years there has been an increase in the awareness , acceptance and action taken in addressing mental health,

including in the workplace.

Taking Members through the report the Head of Employee relations explained that statistically in Rhondda Cynon Taf Council, the figure attributed to mental health absence is around 30%, however in reality the figure is likely to be much higher.

The Committee were informed that according to the mental health charity MIND it reported that the overall number of people with mental health problems has not changed significantly in recent year, however worries about things like money, jobs and benefits can make it harder for people to cope. It was also explained that it appears that how people cope with mental health problems is getting worse, as the number of people who self-harm or have suicidal thoughts is increasing.

Members were informed of human resources interventions that are in place, the Occupational Health, Wellbeing Unit supports the strategic wellbeing, and attendance management approaches for the Council. This function provides mental health services to help maintain attendance at work and encourage a speedier return, potentially via reasonable adjustments and/ or rehabilitative return to work.

It was explained that between 1<sup>st</sup> January 2018 and 1<sup>st</sup> January 2019 there were 2300 mental health appointments provided and these include counselling services, managing my life etc. Members were provided with list examples of interventions that have been put in place.

The officer highlighted that Human Resources have also been working with the relevant trade unions to secure additional funding (WULF) to provide Mental Health Awareness training. The funding secured in 2018/19 was matched funded by the Council, which demonstrates its commitment to support this issue.

Members were given examples of various way in which the Council has actively promoted mental health awareness and future developments that are being undertaken, some of which can be seen below;

- A wellbeing working group has been established to build on the work already undertaken to look at further initiatives and maintain the drive to reduce the stigma and normalise mental health issues within the Council;
- Look to develop the Council's intranet site to advertise organisations, both internal and external, that may be of assistance to employees when needed this would be done in conjunction with IT.
- In addition to this, we will look to develop communication of these organisations to the harder to reach workforce that do not have access to the intranet during work time.

Discussions ensued and Members put their questions to the Officer, a Member commented on the number of mental health appointments that had been provided between 2018 -19 and asked for clarification as to whether they were individual cases or repetitive. It was explained that some were repeat cases.

A Member commented on the number of people taking up appointments seemed to be extremely high and asked what is being done to address this. Officers explained that staff are our biggest assets and it is vitally important that we

support staff's needs. We have put in place many tools to improve the health and Wellbeing of staff for example mental health awareness training courses across the Council, Mindfulness and Stress Control taster sessions along with many more.

With regards to figure of 30% of sickness absences relating to Mental Health a Member asked if we the authority had any comparative data with other Local Authorities. It was explained that each authority collect their data differently therefore it would be very difficult to compare.

Another Members commented that the number of mental health appointment that have been taken up may considered high, however he felt that this was a positive thing in that staff are starting to break down the barriers and are starting to speak out about their mental health issues which is a step in the right direction.

Members were keen to find out what training is available for Councillors in respect of mental health awareness training. Officers explained that enquires would be made with the relevant officers and information would be passed back to Members in the future.

The Chair thanked the Head of Employee Relations for a very informative report and RESOLVED to

- Acknowledge the content of the report
- Receive information in respect of Mental Health Awareness Training for Members
- Refer the topic to the Regional Partnership Board for them to consider, and receive information later for consideration by the Health and Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee.

## **39 URGENT ITEMS**

**This meeting closed at 6.50 pm**

**CLLR R. YEO  
CHAIR.**