



**RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNCIL OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY 2022-2027 COMMITTEE**  
Minutes of the meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny 2022-2027 Committee held on Friday, 27 September 2024 at 10.00 am at the Council Chamber, 2 Llys Cadwyn, Taff Street, Pontypridd. CF37 2TH / ZOOM.

This meeting was live streamed, details of which can be accessed [here](#)

**County Borough Councillors – The following Overview and Scrutiny 2022-2027 Committee Councillors were present in the Council Chamber:-**

Councillor J Edwards (Chair)  
Councillor B Stephens  
Councillor R Davis  
Councillor M Powell    Councillor G L Warren  
Councillor R Williams

**The following Overview and Scrutiny 2022-2027 Committee Councillors were present online:-**

Councillor J Bonetto  
Councillor Sheryl Evans  
Councillor W Jones  
Councillor S Emanuel

**Officers in attendance:-**

Mr N Elliot Director Social Services  
Ms S Nowell Director Adult Social Services  
Mr A Wilkins Director Legal and Democratic Services  
Mr C Hanagan, Service Director of Democratic Services & Communication  
Ms S Daniel, Principal Democratic Services Officer

**County Borough Councillors in attendance:-**

Councillor G Caple  
Councillor C Lises  
Councillor K Johnson  
Councillor P Evans

**Apologies for absence**

Councillor Sheryl Evans    Councillor G Hughes  
Councillor C Middle    Councillor L A Tomkinson

**5        Declarations of Interest**

Councillor B Stephens – Personal Interest – Item 2 – “I am the Chairman of National Association of pensioners”

**6        CALL IN: RESIDENTIAL CARE HOMES FOR OLDER PEOPLE**

The Service Director Democratic Services & Communications presented the report which outlined the procedure for the meeting, as set out in rule 17 of the Overview & Scrutiny Committee Procedure Rules. The Service Director advised that a call-in request was received from County Borough Councillors C Lises, K Johnson and P Evans within the prescribed timescales, on 24 September 2024, which complied with the relevant criteria and considered valid by the proper officer

The call-in requested that the decision of Cabinet in respect of Residential Care Homes for Older People taken at its meeting held on the 19th September 2024 be considered by the Overview & Scrutiny Committee.

The Service Director outlined the procedures for the meeting with the three signatories, who signed the call-in form, to address Committee first, setting out their reasons for requesting the call-in and why they consider the decision should be referred back to the decision maker for reconsideration. Secondly, the registered public speaker will have the opportunity to address Members before the Director of Adult Services and Cabinet Member address the comments made by the speakers. Members of the Overview & Scrutiny Committee will have the opportunity to consider the valid reasons set out in the report together with all contributions before voting on whether they consider whether the matter should be referred back to Cabinet.

It was confirmed that the nominated signatory, Councillor C Lises would make the final address before a roll call vote is taken on whether or not to refer the matter back to the relevant decision maker for reconsideration. It will be for the Director of Legal and Democratic Services to clarify and summarise the Committee's decision.

### **Councillor C Lises**

Councillor Lises stated that she is aware of the cost pressures facing the Council but felt this decision needs to be based on more comprehensive information presented and a thorough assessment has been undertaken to ensure transparency. Councillor Lises stated that she did not agree that the report presents a more cost effective solution for care homes which are sustainable for the future, as once changes are made there will still be a £7m deficit. Councillor Lises referred to the occupancy rate of Pentre House being 62% which is lower than Cae Glas at 71%, which she suggested is a different cause to close. She questioned why Cae Glas would be proposed for closure when there is a waiting list and stated that a new evidenced based report with more information for each care home with reasons for the deficit made clear including detail on the building, design, maintenance and staff costs. Detail is also needed on the number of residential care beds that will be needed now and in the future.

### **Councillor P Evans**

Councillor Evans stated that this decision has come as a shock to many residents. A decision that will affect many people living with dementia which will be an emotional and worrying move for residents with the care staff being second families to residents. Expecting residents to move from one area to another will be detrimental to residents and their families and more so to those who do not drive and are reliant on public transport. Councillor Evans stated that the decision will place further burden on the NHS during the winter months. She

stated that we should be looking after our elderly and vulnerable residents, who cannot make decisions for themselves and not placing further stress on them.

### **Councillor K Johnson**

Councillor Johnson stated that this decision impacts the most vulnerable in our community. The report does not highlight the full impact. He questioned how many residents will be moved for a second time and how will visitors with no transport get to a new care home to visit family. He considered that the Taff area will be impacted by this decision to the highest degree and stated that resources were not being fairly targeted. He stated that the occupancy figures does not reflect the Cae Glas figures accurately stating that beds were not utilised as they could not be due to safe staffing levels. He stated that there is currently a waiting list for this care home and Cabinet need a full picture before decision is taken.

The Chairperson thanked the Members for their contributions and advised that she and the Head of Democratic Services had spoken at length with the Members of Ferndale in relation to the proposal who are supporting residents with concerns on the proposal to decommission Ferndale House and stated that the Members have chosen not to attend this meeting as they do not feel the reasons for the call in reflects the campaign to save Ferndale House. Something we have done with previous call-ins.

The Chair thanked the Councillors for their submissions and invited the public speaker to address the Committee

Following conclusion of the submission from the public speaker, The Service Director Democratic Services and Communications reminded Committee of the process.

The Director Adult Services acknowledged the personal impacts and stated that they are not underestimated, however the Council has to make difficult decisions. The gross cost per occupancy bed is significantly higher at Ferndale House and Cae Glas compared to other Council care homes, combined with high subsidy level at each care home has resulted in annually overspending therefore adding significant cost pressures to the council each year. The current decommissioning proposals provide savings annually of approximately £2m. The Director acknowledged that RCT will continue to operate in house services with significant subsidy, however this is to ensure that the Council continues to meet demands. Performance will continue to be monitored to ensure occupancy is maximised to achieve an efficient and sustainable service going forward. She continued that the service is focussed on reducing absence and filling vacancies to meet assessed need. The Director believed that there is sufficient evidence to support the recommendations to consult on the matter, however more detail can be provided in a future report to Cabinet to inform future decision making. The Director stated it was important to note that none of the Councils care homes could be refurbished to represent the Council's high level of care. She also stated that it was not possible to develop new builds on existing care homes as architects concluded the buildings do not lend themselves to new care homes.

The Cabinet Member Health and Social Care thanked the Committee for the opportunity to address Members. He reassured that officers had provided a comprehensive assessment which outlines the rationale to modernise and

continually improve our adult social care facilities. He continued that people are encouraged to remain in their own homes for as long as possible. He advised that the proposals before Members, were difficult, sensitive and evoke strong emotions with the public. However, he reassured that in line with the Council's ethos of strong scrutiny, the proposals will undergo thorough consultation and scrutiny. He continued that no elected member wants to decommission homes, however we have to take into consideration the demand and severe financial constraint, not of our making. He stated it is imperative that Welsh Government works together with UK Government to establish adequate and sustainable funding for our Social Care System to ensure everyone has the support they require.

The Chairperson thanked the Director and Cabinet Member for their contributions and invited members of the committee to make comments and ask questions of officers present.

A Member spoke of personal experience of family members moving care homes and understood the potential detrimental impact moving from one home to another can be. The Member stated that the staff have always been caring and professional and asked that if the proposal goes ahead that any move is carefully and sensitively managed professionally and undertaken with the resident's needs and wellbeing first. The Director Adult Services advised that individual needs are difficult to accommodate under one care home provision. She advised that whilst interim placements are used in care homes, consent is required and residents have the right to choose which care home they wish to reside in.

A Member referred to the Flood plain as a reason for Cae Glas as a reason for it to not be redeveloped and asked if there were different procedures for Care Homes and Education establishments to be developed on Flood Plains. The Director Adult Social Services advised that she was not sure of the planning requirements but thought the procedure would be different as the care homes will have residents in occupancy 24 hours a day. The Member replied that this is a reason for a more detailed report to come back to Members, before the proposals go out to public consultation.

Another Member welcomed more information being provided following the public consultation such as the waiting lists, unoccupied beds and staffing issues.

The Director Social Services advised the Committee that the Service regularly meets with health board to discuss issues. He also advised that the recommendations on the construction of new care homes were made by professionals who had the skills to determine whether construction could go ahead on the current sites. He stated for the record that figures have not been manipulated with regards to occupancy rates and as part of the monitoring waiting lists will be considered. The needs of individuals are taken into account and the reason for low occupancy rates.

The Chair thanked Members of the Committee for their contributions and invited Councillor Cathy Lises as lead signatory to the Call in to make a final address to Committee.

Councillor Lises stated that the proposals will have a detrimental effect both residents and their families with the potential of residents having to be moved further away from their families. She stated that it is Members responsibility to care for those who elected us. The proposal effects our most vulnerable

residents who we should be protecting and the proposal is disproportionate on the Taff area. The Corporate Plan has an ambition to improve wellbeing, which she believed this proposal will not. Councillor Lises called for the data to be presented to Members in a clear and open way, now, not after the public consultation as we have a duty of care to our residents.

The Chair thanked Councillor Lises and referred Members to the recommendation and sought their vote via roll call

**RESOLVED:** Not to refer the matter back to Cabinet for reconsideration

NB – Councillor M Powell voted to refer the matter back.

**7 Urgent Business**

None

**8 CHAIRS REVIEW AND CLOSE**

Mae'r ddogfen hon ar gael yn Gymraeg / This document is also available in Welsh

**Councillor J Edwards  
Chair.**