

Minutes of the Meeting of Healthier Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee held virtually on Tuesday, 15 March 2022

PRESENT: Councillors Bryan Davies (Chairman), Lyndon Lloyd MBE (Vice-Chair), Gethin Davies, Marc Davies, Odwyn Davies, Alun Lloyd Jones, Dan Potter, John Roberts, Lynford Thomas, Ivor Williams.

Cabinet Members Present: Councillors Rhodri Evans, Catherine Hughes, Gareth Lloyd & Alun Williams.

Officers in attendance: Sian Howys (Corporate Lead Officer: Porth Cynnal); Elen James (Corporate Lead Officer: Porth Cymorth Cynnar); Carwyn Young (Corporate Manager: Porth Cymorth Cynnar); Dwynwen Jones (Overview and Scrutiny Officer); Neris Morgans (Democratic Services Officer); Carol Thomas and Rhidian Jones, (Translators).

(2.00pm - 3.11pm)

- 1 Apologies and Personal Matters**
 - i) Councillor Keith Evans apologised for his inability to attend the meeting due to the change of date.
 - ii) Councillor Mark Strong apologised for his inability to attend the meeting.
 - iii) Councillors Marc Davies and Alun Lloyd Jones apologised that they may have to leave the meeting early.
 - iv) Councillor Catherine Hughes extended her sincere condolences to the family of Gethin Bennett, a former Cabinet Member and the last Chairman of Dyfed County Council, who recently passed away.

- 2 Disclosures of personal interest (including whipping declarations)**

Members are reminded of their personal responsibility to declare any personal and prejudicial interest in respect of matters contained in this agenda in accordance with the provisions of the Local Government Act 2000, the Council's Constitution and the Members Code of Conduct. In addition, Members must declare any prohibited party whip which the Member has been given in relation to the meeting as per the Local Government (Wales) Measure 2011.

There were no disclosures of Personal and Prejudicial Interests (including whipping declarations) from Committee Members.

- 3 Independent Reviewing Service Performance Management Report QTR 2 2021 - 2022**

Councillor Alun Williams (Cabinet Member for Porth Cynnal) presented the Independent Reviewing Service Report Quarter 2 2021/2022. Quarterly reports are taken to the Healthier Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee as part of an ongoing examination of the topic to ensure that the Local Authority fulfils its duties as the Corporate Parent. The report includes national and local standards and targets used to measure outcomes for looked after children and care leavers at the time of their review meeting and includes Welsh Government Performance Indicators.

On the basis of the information available and the views expressed during the review meeting, the IRO makes a professional judgement about the effectiveness of a child/young person's care plan in meeting their needs and may recommend changes to the care plan. During the review meeting the IRO considers whether the child/young person requires assistance to identify relevant other people to obtain legal advice/take proceedings on their behalf. This action was not deemed necessary by the IRO for any child in the period. In addition, the IRO has regard as to whether the child/young person's human rights are being breached in any way and, if so, might make a referral to CAFCASS Cymru. This action was not required at any of the review meetings in the period.

Councillor Alun Williams proceeded to present a Summary of the Key Points noted on page 2 of the report.

Sian Howys noted that the impact of Covid-19 continues, which has led to increased workloads and statutory duties but the collaboration across the Through Age and Wellbeing Model has been positive. Given the circumstances and the pressure on staff, the report was pleasing and they were aware of the areas in need of improvement.

In response to a question, Sian Howys noted there was a national shortage of foster carers in general, but encouraging bilingualism was the aim. There was an ongoing recruitment campaign for foster carers.

Due to a shortage of foster carers, children were either placed in county or with foster carers who work for Independent Fostering Agencies who live in West Wales or nearby. No children were placed with foster carers in England, however, there were children placed with family members outside of Wales.

There was some use of residential placements in England due to the lack of availability in Ceredigion. Planning Permission has been granted for a small residential care home in the Dyffryn Aeron area. Posts have been advertised. More information will be shared in due course. The need for placements due to offending were generally low in Ceredigion as was the need for specialist placements such as hospitalisations.

Research into Children's Social Care by Cardiff University has been published. Officers will be encouraged to read the report. Welsh Government have identified reducing the number of children in care as a priority; Sian Howys highlighted that this must be done safely.

Since the beginning of the Covid-19 pandemic, which has led to increased pressures on families, the number of Looked after children has increased. It was suggested that an increase in numbers reflects that children are being seen by professionals and that officers are conducting their work well.

Sian Howys clarified that the active offer of advocacy was not only determined by age, but also cognitive or emotional functioning. A considerable amount of time and effort is given by carers or a trusted

individual to gain the views of each child. Where necessary, the IRO can arrange a 1-1 meeting with the child or someone that is known to the child.

Reviews have been held virtually. One foster carer review was held out of timescales due to a staffing issue. As reviews are chaired by a member from outside the team for objectivity, it has been challenging to meet timescales with absences and covering gaps in staffing.

Committee Members thanked Sian Howys for a comprehensive report and asked her to express their thanks to the department for their hard work.

Following questions by the Members of the Committee, it was agreed to note the contents of the report and the levels of activity within the Local Authority.

4 Wellbeing Centres Service – Promotional Offers

Councillor Catherine Hughes (Cabinet Member for Porth Gofal, Early Intervention, Wellbeing Hubs and Culture) presented the background to the report. It was noted that the proposal had been discussed prior to the budget. The Wellbeing Centres Service of Porth Cymorth Cynnar plays a critical role in providing opportunities that contribute to the health and wellbeing outcomes of our residents. One aspect of the Wellbeing Centres Service's is the operation of the council's leisure facilities. Encouraging residents to participate regularly in physical activity directly contributes to the improved mental and physical health of our communities and helps to build individual resilience and decrease reliance on health services.

The service generates income by charging for use of its facilities and access to the activity programmes it provides. In 2018/19 (pre pandemic) the income generated by the service equated to £752,673 of which approximately £176,000 was through membership packages (monthly set fee for various levels of access to swimming, fitness suite and exercise classes). Income Generation and Grant Aid accounted for 55% of the total cost of providing the Wellbeing Centre Service, with the remainder being provided by council core funding. As a non-statutory service, the Wellbeing Centre Service has to attract people to use its facilities. There are a number of factors that may influence where and when a person chooses to be active and pricing is one of them.

Elen James reported that the service had been severely impacted over the last 2 years but different to some local authorities, staff were redeployed and have since returned to the service. All leisure centres and swimming pools in the county have re-opened and over 350 children have registered for swimming lessons with an additional 70+ children on the waiting list. Prior to the pandemic, the service had over 900 memberships, they now only have approximately 400+, therefore work is needed to market the Wellbeing Centres, in order to encourage people to return to exercise and feel safe in doing so. The proposal is to introduce short-term offers similar to other local authorities, to increase service users of all ages to return to use the facilities. It is difficult to give examples of fees as the offers will depend on the data collected, but examples of offers were presented to the committee.

It was noted there should not be much additional cost in running the centres with the promotions in place. The purpose is to attract more people regularly.

In response to a question regarding Hywel Dda University Health Board, Elen James clarified the local authority continued to receive contributions to support the National Exercise Referral Scheme (NERS). It was reported yesterday at the Performance Board that there were over 300 new referrals. 16 weeks of support is provided and the intention is to encourage clients to continue using the facilities, after these 16 weeks, to help prevent further health problems.

No information leaflets are sent with the Council Tax Bill but the service has a website, information is also available on social media and the press office share stories. It was highlighted that the community councils should be made aware of what was on offer for all ages, to be able to publicise the service locally.

The benefits of exercise sessions to individuals' mental health was raised by Committee Members. Elen James noted that although the wellbeing centres had been closed, thousands of people have been involved / attended sessions over the last 2 years, both virtually and in-person. Over 2,000 people have participated in the wellbeing walks.

Groups held at community centres are encouraged to continue. It will be important for the local authority to work with them to ensure the public have various opportunities to improve their health and wellbeing.

Following questions by the Members of the Committee it was AGREED to delegate authority for the Corporate Director and the Corporate Lead Officer Porth Cymorth Cynnar, in consultation with the portfolio Cabinet Member to vary the Fees & Charges for 2022/23 to run short term/time limited promotional offers to incentivise more children, young people, individuals and families to participate in regular physical activity and lead healthier lifestyles.

Elen James agreed to report on the promotional offers in the new administration period.

5 To confirm minutes of the previous meetings and to consider any matters arising from those Minutes.

It was AGREED to confirm the minutes of the meeting held on 31 January 2022.

Matters arising:
None.

It was AGREED to confirm the minutes of the meeting held on 14 February 2022.

Matters arising:

Councillor John Roberts queried whether Arwyn Morris (Corporate Lead Officer: Customer Contact) had given an update regarding Domiciliary Care for Ceredigion.

It was agreed that the item would be included in the forward work programme for the next administration to discuss.

6 Any other business

The Chair stated that this would be the last meeting for this administration. He thanked all members for their input and for Dwynwen Jones's support. The Chair wished all members well and a happy retirement to those who had decided against standing for re-election.

Confirmed at the Meeting of the Healthier Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on Date Not Specified

Chairman: _____

Date: _____