

**Minutes of the Meeting of the Healthier Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee held at the Council Chamber, Neuadd Cyngor Ceredigion, Penmorfa, Aberaeron and remotely on Monday, 18 September 2023**

**Present:** Councillor Caryl Roberts (Chair), Councillors Ceris Jones (Vice-Chair), Amanda Edwards, Elaine Evans, Eryl Evans, Keith Evans, Wyn Evans, Gwyn James, Sian Maehrlein, John Roberts, Mark Strong & Carl Worrall.

**Also in attendance:** Councillors Ifan Davies, Rhodri Evans, Hugh Hughes & Chris James.

**Cabinet Members present:** Councillors Catrin M S. Davies, Keith Henson, Wyn Thomas, Matthew Vaux & Alun Williams.

**Officers in attendance:** Audrey Somerton-Edwards, Interim Corporate Lead Officer- Porth Cynnal; Ricky Cooper, Corporate Lead Officer- Porth Cynnal; Elizabeth Upcott, Corporate Manager- Safeguarding; Greg Jones, Corporate Lead Officer- Porth Cymorth Cynnar; Llyr Hughes, Corporate Manager- Housing Services; Cerys Purches-Phillips, Senior Housing Officer - Strategy & Monitoring; Donna Pritchard, Corporate Lead Officer- Porth Gofal; Nerys Lewis, Corporate Manager- Direct Services; Helen Harries, Project Officer; Wendy Cushley, Business Solutions Officer; Dwynwen Jones, Overview and Scrutiny Officer and Neris Morgans, Democratic Services Officer.

(10.00am- 11.47am)

**1 Welcome and Apologies**

Councillor Ann Bowen Morgan apologised for her inability to attend the meeting.

**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.**

- i. Councillor Eryl Evans declared a personal interest under item 4.
- ii. Councillor Alun Williams declared a personal interest under item 5.

**3 Independent Reviewing Service Performance Management Report Quarter 4, 2022 - 2023**

Councillor Alun Williams (Cabinet Member for Through Age and Wellbeing) presented the Independent Reviewing Service Report Quarter 4 2022/2023. Quarterly reports were 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 included national and local standards and targets used to measure outcomes for looked-after children (LAC) and care leavers at the time of their review meeting and includes Welsh Government (WG) Performance Indicators.

Based on the information available and the views expressed during the review meeting, the IRO made 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 considered whether the child/young person required assistance to identify relevant other people to obtain legal advice/take proceedings on their behalf. This action was deemed necessary for 7 young people by the IRO in the period. In addition, the IRO has regard as to whether the child/young person's human rights were being breached in any way and, if so, may make a referral to CAF/CASS Cymru. This action was not required at any of the review meetings in the period.

The reports are considered within Multi Agency LAC Quality Assurance Meetings which met quarterly; these meetings provided an opportunity to identify and act upon performance and other issues with this area of work. The reports were also circulated and reviewed by the Local Authority's Corporate Parenting Group, which took place quarterly. Councillor Alun Williams proceeded to present a Summary of the Key Points noted on page 2 of the report.

Members were provided with the opportunity to ask questions which were answered by Officers present and Councillor Alun Williams. The main points raised were as follows:

- There were many reasons for the increase in the number of LAC, including the impact of the cost-of-living crisis, the complexities involved and an improved response rate to referrals.
- Under WG's plans to eliminate profit-making from the care of LAC, the local authority was in the process of developing internal resources in 3 locations across the county, which were due to open in 2024. Although Ceredigion had fewer out-of-county placements compared to other local authorities, the aim was to enable children to remain in their local communities and to maintain links with family and schools.
- Given the resources required, the lack of detail from the Home Office and the financial pressure on the local authority's budget, concerns were raised with how the National Transfer Scheme Protocol for Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children operated.
- Additional foster carers had been recruited recently, but the campaign was generally slow and steady. As current foster carers were an ageing cohort, Members were encouraged to recruit in their communities.
- Having a Permanency Plan by the second review if a return home had not been planned depended on many factors such as the need for expert advice, which could lead to a delay. Ensuring the right decision was made as opposed to a quick one was key.
- Schools had identified LAC teachers and a designated safeguarding lead. All schools were focused on the needs of the children and had a duty of care to all.

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

#### **4 Housing Strategy, Setting out Ceredigion's vision and plans for housing in the County for the next 5 years**

Councillor Matthew Vaux (Cabinet Member for Partnerships, Housing, Legal and Governance and Public Protection) explained that following agreement from Scrutiny and Cabinet, a public consultation on the Draft Housing Strategy began on 5<sup>th</sup> May and ran until 30<sup>th</sup> June 2023. The Consultation Survey asked a total of 10 questions and from the findings, most responses were positive and in agreement with the proposed strategy. Therefore, the Housing Team remained confident that these directions were fit for purpose and did not require changing. A key theme identified from the consultation responses was empty properties. This area had been recognised by the Housing Service and given due consideration and priority within the Housing Strategy and therefore, it was positive to see agreement on this area of work within the responses received. An overview of the additions to the Housing Strategy following consultation and internal reviewing was provided.

Members were provided with the opportunity to ask questions which were answered by Officers present and Councillor Matthew Vaux. The main points raised were as follows:

- Phosphates was a significant issue within the county and prevented development, but it was not within the scope of the Housing Strategy.
- In response to concerns raised that there was less contact with small-scale local builders than in the past, it was noted that the Strategic Housing Partnership's partners included registered social landlords and private developers.
- Members expressed their disappointment with the lack of response to the consultation. Despite this, the nature of the responses was positive. It was suggested there was an issue nationally with low response rates to consultations.
- As it was an anonymous consultation, no demographic details such as the location of the respondent or whether the response was from an individual or an organisation were available.
- The service had identified other initiatives to increase the supply of Housing, such as the Empty Property Action Plan and were included within the National Empty Homes Grant Scheme.

Following questions by the Committee Members, it was agreed to recommend that Cabinet recommend the approval of the Housing Strategy to Full Council and accept the recommendations following the end of the consultation period and approve for full adoption.

#### **5 To present to the Committee the outcome of the Ceredigion Dementia Implementation Plan**

Councillor Alun Williams explained that the purpose of the report was to scrutinise the outcome of the public engagement and the Implementation Plan developed and make recommendations if required to Ceredigion County Council's Cabinet. A priority area for Ceredigion County Council was to develop a local dementia Implementation Plan to support the Regional Dementia Strategy. On the 6<sup>th</sup> of December 2022, Attain were appointed to undertake and facilitate engagement sessions to explore what actions were

needed to support people living with dementia in Ceredigion. The engagement period took place over a 6-week period from 13.02.2023 to 31.03.2023. Over the engagement period, Attain spoke with a wide remit of stakeholders, from individuals living with dementia, their careers, and professionals from across Health and Social Care, including support networks in the 3rd sector. As part of this work, Attain developed a report and an Implementation Plan that would support Ceredigion County Council and Hywel Dda University Health Board (HDdUHB) to address some of the challenges and gaps identified.

Key findings from the finalised report suggested that the current number of people living with Dementia (PLWD) in Ceredigion was approximately 1,260 and by 2040, the predicted growth of PLWD ranged from 600 to 2000. An overview of the key themes, recommendations and next steps as noted in the report was provided.

Members were provided with the opportunity to ask questions which were answered by Officers present and Councillor Alun Williams. The main points raised were as follows:

- The local authority worked closely with neighbouring local authorities via the West Wales Regional Partnership Board (WWRPB) to ensure there was a consistent approach to the delivery of dementia services and a large proportion of funding was accessed regionally. To ensure the residents of Ceredigion benefited, there was an emphasis on the local delivery plan and consideration was given to the work ongoing with respite and day services too.
- Members felt there were opportunities for the local authority and HDdUHB to work together to ensure dementia patients remained in their local communities. A new dementia residential unit at Hafan Deg Care Home, Lampeter would open shortly.
- It was acknowledged that the diagnostic rate regionally was very low, partly due to the lack of training GPs received to diagnose dementia. In addition, the public's perception of the lack of support available following diagnosis was a key factor. A Dementia Connector role was being developed to support individuals on their journey.
- The Cabinet Member clarified that dementia was included in his role as Ceredigion's Champion for Older People. He was not directly involved in discussions with the HDdUHB, but it was key that the local authority and HDdUHB worked closely at officer level along with the WWRPB.

It was noted that it had been recommended at a previous meeting that when an agenda item involved Hywel Dda University Health Board, Councillor Rhodri Evans as the elected member of the Board should be informed.

The Chair praised the number of organisations involved in the stakeholder engagement.

Following questions by the Committee Members, it was agreed to note the report for information and to recommend that Cabinet approve the Dementia Implementation Plan for Ceredigion, subject to:

- Present the report to the Healthier Ceredigion Strategic Group and create an integrated Health, Social Care and 3<sup>rd</sup> Sector Development Group to oversee the delivery of the implementation plan.
- To communicate the initial findings of the engagement with the public, and to develop a Communication and Engagement Plan ensuring that the public were aware of the on-going progress relating to the delivery of the implementation plan.
- To return to the Healthier Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee with an Annual Progress report.

**6 To consider the minutes of the previous meeting on the 3rd of July 2023 and to discuss any matter arising therefrom**

It was agreed to confirm the minutes of the meeting held on 3 July 2023.

Matters arising: None.

**7 To consider the Forward Work Plan 2023-2024**

It was agreed to note the contents of the Forward Work Programme presented.

**8 Any other business**

The Chair extended thanks on behalf of the Committee to Audrey Somerton-Edwards, Interim Corporate Lead Officer: Porth Cynnal for her dedication to the work and wished her well for the future. It was noted that she would be a loss for the local authority. Ricky Cooper, who had recently started in his role as Corporate Lead Officer: Porth Cynnal had left the meeting early and therefore, would be welcomed at the next meeting.

Councillor Alun Williams echoed the Chair's words and stated that it had been a pleasure to work with Audrey Somerton-Edwards who advocated strongly for the needs of the most vulnerable of citizens.

**Confirmed at the Meeting of the Healthier Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on 22 November 2023**

**Chairman:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Date:** \_\_\_\_\_