

**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, 2 September 2024**

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

**Also in attendance:** Councillors Rhodri Evans & Gareth Lloyd.

**Cabinet Members present:** Councillor Gareth Davies & Alun Williams.

**Officers in attendance:** Audrey Somerton-Edwards, Corporate Lead Officer: Porth Cynnal; Elizabeth Upcott, Corporate Manager: Safeguarding; Nerys Lewis, Corporate Manager: Direct Services; Heather West, Corporate Manager: Targeted and Short-Term Services; Lowri Edwards, Corporate Lead Officer: Democratic Services; Nia Jones, Corporate Manager: Democratic Services; Dwynwen Jones, Overview and Scrutiny Officer & Neris Morgans, Democratic Services Officer.

(10.00am-1.13pm)

**1 Welcome and Apologies**

- i. Councillors Caryl Roberts and Mark Strong apologised for their inability to attend the meeting.
- ii. Donna Pritchard, Corporate Lead Officer: Porth Gofal 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**

Councillor Rhodri Evans declared a personal interest under item 5.

**3 CIW Performance Evaluation Action Progress**

Councillor Alun Williams (Cabinet Member for Through Age and Wellbeing) explained that Care Inspectorate Wales (CIW) carried out a performance evaluation inspection of the local authority's Social Services in March 2023. He noted that most improvement areas have now been addressed. In addition, the launch of a formalised Quality Assurance framework in the Spring of 2024 and the deployment of regular Thematic Reviews and Practice Assessments within this strengthened the Division's oversight. The report focused on areas where continued activity was underway across the four domains namely People (voice and control), Prevention, Wellbeing and Partnerships.

Development/repair activity across the four domains of SSWBA remained a key focus for the Social Care Teams as they were central to the overall long-

term Through Age Wellbeing (TAW) strategy. Despite the significant recruitment challenges referenced throughout (meaning that one in four statutory roles currently required Agency personnel to cover), the permanent management teams within the Social Care establishment continued to collaborate on the Division-wide priorities of Safeguarding, prevention, early help and step-down recovery to independence and wellbeing. It was envisaged that as the third year proper of the six-year TAW Model Strategy came to an end (in October 2024), the planning for the second half of the programme would focus even more on strengthening the base practice, responding to and leveraging repair action from the CIW evaluation. This should ensure the full benefits of Proportionate Assessments, What Matters Conversations and Early Interventions could be fully achieved.

Audrey Somerton-Edwards, Corporate Lead Officer: Porth Cynnal explained that the inspection was the first undertaken by CIW with the TAW Model in place. The improvements highlighted in the report were foreseen by the local authority and steps were in place to address these.

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:

- Social care recruitment challenges had not improved for any local authority across Wales. This was compounded by the county's rurality, shortage of staff, a reduction in the number that enrolled on social care courses at university and that the sector was not recognised financially. A single national pay grade would somehow address this and although Welsh Government had agreed to this in principle, there were no resources financially to support this at present.
- It was clarified that the local authority's Learning and Development team were active in promoting Social Care as a career to schools, universities and further education providers.
- Collaboration regionally and with other local authorities was already in place, but ultimately, each local authority had its own constitution and policies.
- At the last count, 38 agency workers covered Social Care posts in the local authority, and although agency staff were paid more, they were not entitled to the same benefits as local authority employees such as annual leave, pension contributions, sick pay etc.
- As awareness of the Centre of Independent Living's relocation to Penmorfa increased, the take up of services had slowly increased too.

It was AGREED:

- To continue to monitor CIW Evaluation Actions at CLO level, including visibility at Leadership Group
- To return to Healthier Communities Scrutiny and Overview in early 2025 providing more detail on closing out the Actions and to update on expected evaluations by Social Care inspectorates that are due in the interim.
- To send a letter on behalf of the Committee to Welsh Government to highlight the need for and the importance of a National Pay Grade for

Social Care in Wales, and to explain that local authorities were impacted financially at present due to its absence.

#### **4 CIW Hafan y Waun Residential Care Inspection Report**

Councillor Alun Williams explained that Hafan y Waun (HYW) Residential Care home came under the ownership of Ceredigion County Council in November 2023. The home offered 90 residential placements including short-term, temporary, permanent, respite and care and support for people living with dementia. Care Inspectorate Wales (CIW) completed a routine inspection of the home on 26.06.2024 – the first inspection since the change of ownership. The inspection report provided an overview of the home and its performance under the 4 key areas inspected (Wellbeing, Care and Support, Environment & Leadership and Management) and highlighted positive and complementary areas within the home.

Nerys Lewis, Corporate Manager: Direct Services and Audrey Somerton-Edwards, Corporate Lead Officer: Porth Cynnal commended the report and highlighted that it provided reassurance of the journey since the change of ownership and the staff's support and dedication during the transition.

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

- Members congratulated all involved for a positive report and thanked all for their work.
- The NHS is currently using one of the wings on a short-term basis. It was noted that there are discussions taking place regionally in terms of further collaboration and the county's requirements for nursing care in the long term.
- It was highlighted that the Manager and Deputy Manager at HyW were able to converse bilingually with the home's residents.
- The local authority worked closely with the health board's Dementia and Speech and Language Therapy Teams to ensure residents received the appropriate nutrition.
- Inspection reports were sent to the local authority's Commissioning and Quality Assurance teams when privately-owned homes were inspected, therefore they had an overview of the standards and services provided.
- Officers worked closely with Property Services with the maintenance of HyW. Each home's registered manager had a maintenance and repair budget to utilise, although some projects such as the replacement of the carpet at HyW with infection control flooring required capital funding.
- Many agency staff worked at HyW as had been the case before the transfer to the local authority and their contribution to the team was very valuable. Recruitment was currently being worked on and promoted.

It was AGREED to note the report that provided information and assurance regarding the operation of the home following the home being taken into Council ownership.

## 5 **Cartref Tregerddan Residential Care Home Public Consultation**

The Chair extended her condolences to the family of Councillor Paul Hinge, Councillor for Tirymynach ward who recently passed away.

Councillor Alun Williams presented the report and recommendations following the consultation on the proposal to transfer the residential care service from Cartref Tregerddan to Hafan y Waun Residential Care Home. On 19.03.2024, the Cabinet agreed *'To approve to progress with the statutory requirement to consult on the transfer of the residential care service from Cartref Tregerddan to Hafan y Waun Residential Care Home.'* An overview of the public consultation process held from 22.04.2024 and 05.07.2024, the key findings, and responses to the key points were provided. Councillor Alun Williams extended his thanks to all for their work with the consultation and to all who had responded.

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:

- Cartref Tregerddan currently has 22 residents (17 of which were permanent), but there was capacity for a total of 26 residents. The wing available to the residents at Hafan y Waun could accommodate 20 residents, with some flexibility in the rest of the home.
- Some Members expressed concern with the proposal to close Cartref Tregerddan, as Ceredigion was deemed an ageing county, which would lead to an increased demand for residential and nursing care.
- In response to queries raised around whether there were plans to develop Hafan y Waun further, it was noted that the local authority had submitted a 10-year plan for regional capital funding for the county. Partnership work was underway to assess the different types of provisions available in the county.
- If Cabinet approved the proposal to close Cartref Tregerddan, staff would be transferred with the residents and as the staff were already employees of the local authority, contractual terms would remain the same, but there would be a need to align the rotas of the two homes.
- Feedback from families that have seen the 2 upgraded rooms at Hafan y Waun has been immensely positive, and some residents have reportedly started to pack their belongings. If approved, all residents would be transferred in one cohort before the end of the year, following discussions with the residents and their families to ensure all needs were met.
- Reassurance was given that work was ongoing to develop security functions for the Tregerddan residents to leave Hafan y Waun as they wished, as it had a locked door environment in place. It was noted that there was good access to public transport from Hafan y Waun, with a bus stop outside.
- Every effort was undertaken to facilitate respite care across the local authority's care homes, although it had been challenging in recent times due to maintenance being undertaken in some homes. Officers were exploring options around how respite care would look in the future and were working with the private and independent sectors.

It was AGREED to recommend that Cabinet:

1. note the background and rationale for considering the transfer of residents and merger of staff teams between Cartref Tregerddan to Hafan y Waun Residential Care Home.
2. note the results of the consultation process conducted between 22nd April 2024 and 15th July 2024.

Recommendations 3 and 4 were considered following an amendment to the recommendation proposed by Councillor Carl Worrall and seconded by Councillor Wyn Evans, as follows:

3. To keep Cartref Tregerddan open.

Following a vote, the result was as follows:

5 For the amendment, 5 Against and 1 abstained from the vote. In this circumstance, the Chair had a casting vote and therefore this recommendation was **not** agreed.

The Chair then reverted to recommendations 3 and 4 as follows (as per the report):

3. that it approves the transfer of residents and merger of staff teams between Cartref Tregerddan with Hafan y Waun Residential Care Home.
4. Subject to the approval of (3) above, to authorise the Corporate Lead Officer – Porth Gofal to:
  - i. Ensure a schedule is drawn up for the resident transfers between homes, in a way that:
    - a. balances the need for each individual and their family to have appropriate time to make decisions against the overall need for the closure process,
    - b. is to be managed within a timescale that minimises uncertainty for the residents, families, and staff.

Following a vote, 4 were For, 5 Against and 2 abstained from the vote.

As the amended recommendation (to keep Cartref Tregerddan open) and the original recommendations 3 and 4 were not agreed, the Committee did not have any further recommendations for Cabinet relating to the transfer of residents and merger of staff teams between Cartref Tregerddan and Hafan y Waun Residential Care Home.

## **6 Independent Reviewing Service Performance Management Report quarter 3 - 1.10.23 - 3.12.23**

Councillor Alun Williams explained that the quarterly reports were presented to the Committee as part of an ongoing examination of the topic to ensure the Local Authority fulfilled 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 included 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

could 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 6 young people by the IRO in the period. In addition, the IRO had regard as to whether the child/young person's human rights were being breached in any way and, if so, could 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.

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

- The complexity and volume of cases had risen significantly since the Covid-19 pandemic which had led to an increase in the number of LAC. Early intervention and prevention were key to ensure children remained in familiar surroundings, where safe to do so.
- Several factors impacted why Pathway Plans were not held within timescales, including the availability of young people and agencies.

It was AGREED to note the contents of the report and the levels of activity with the Local Authority and to send a reminder to all agencies highlighting the importance of attending Pathway Plan meetings.

## **7 Children's Safe Accommodation - update**

Councillor Alun Williams explained that the Cabinet approved a proposal to establish a small group of sites to provide safe accommodation for children in Ceredigion on 07.12.2021. The aim was to support children and young people, who required 24/7 care and support, to remain in Ceredigion whilst medium to long-term community placements could be sourced. An update on the development of an in-house 24-hour Children's Safe Accommodation provision in Aeron Valley, Aberaeron and Aberystwyth was provided.

The flexible placement options, which if successfully registered with Care Inspectorate Wales (CIW) as Through Age settings would be a first for Wales and a valuable addition to the safeguarding proposition for Ceredigion. Alongside expanded Foster Carer recruitment, an uplift in Adoption Social Work focus, new propositions for Special Guardianship Orders and Support Lodgings placements, it was hoped that having local accommodation in Ceredigion could better support children and young people in need as family environments post-pandemic continued to present significant challenges.

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

- In response to Members expressing disappointment that it was not possible to commence the CIW registration process until the physical site works had been completed, Officers shared that they were due to meet with CIW this week to discuss options on how to progress this.

- The Children's Safe Accommodation had been developed according to the availability and suitability of unused buildings in collaboration with the Asset Management Service. There was an aspiration to develop further in the south of the county.

It was AGREED to return to the Healthier Communities Scrutiny and Overview in early 2025 to provide more detail regarding the impacts on the financial model for Social Care and progress with the implementation phase(s) of the provision.

**8 Domiciliary Care - Update report on the 15 pledge points**

Councillor Alun Williams presented the progress update following the implementation of the 15 Point Pledge under the new Domiciliary Care Sector Framework launched in June 2023. All providers who joined the Dynamic Purchasing System signed up to the new contract terms and conditions and schedules. This included the 15-Point Pledge. It was agreed to survey all Providers on the Framework in Q4 of 2023/24 to identify the level of compliance with the mandatory and good practice pledges. The survey was issued in late Q3 to all Providers to self-report their current position. An overview of the findings of the Ceredigion 15 Point Pledge Survey 2023/24 was provided.

It was AGREED to note the information.

**9 To confirm minutes of the previous meeting and to consider any matters arising from those minutes**

It was AGREED to confirm the minutes of the meeting held on 15 July 2024.

Matters arising: None.

**Confirmed at the Meeting of the Healthier Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on 17 September 2024**

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

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