

**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, 11 March 2024**

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

Also in attendance: Councillors Euros Davies, Raymond Evans, Rhodri Evans, Hugh Hughes, Chris James & Gareth Lloyd.

Cabinet Members present: Councillor Wyn Thomas, Matthew Vaux & Alun Williams.

Officers in attendance: Greg Jones, Corporate Lead Officer: Porth Cymorth Cynnar; Llyr Hughes, Corporate Manager, Housing Services; Cerys Purches-Phillips, Senior Housing Officer - Strategy and Monitoring; Caitlin Theodorou, Research and Performance Officer; Elizabeth Upcott, Corporate Manager, Safeguarding; Iwan Davies, Corporate Manager, Early Intervention; Dwywen Jones, Overview and Scrutiny Officer & Neris Morgans, Democratic Services Officer.

(10.00am- 11.51am)

1 Welcome and Apologies

No apologies received.

**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, Quarter 2 2023-2024

Councillor Alun Williams (Cabinet Member for Through Age and Wellbeing) presented the Independent Reviewing Service Report Quarter 2 2023/2024. 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 (LA) 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 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 2 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 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 Elizabeth Upcott and Councillor Alun Williams. The main points raised were as follows:

- Recruitment continued to be a challenge, particularly within the Planned Care Team. Several factors accounted for the staffing issues in quarter 2, such as staff on annual leave and the transition from one contracted team to another. This impacted on care and support plans being completed on time, however, it was being addressed and monitored accordingly.
- Three residential units were in the process of being developed across the county that would provide 24-hour care for between 7-9 children and young people. The aim was to create a family-orientated environment and to enable individuals to return or remain in-county.
- Many grants from WG were channelled through the Regional Partner Board and where suitable, the LA took full advantage of any funding available.

It was AGREED to note the contents of the report and the levels of activity with the LA. and to request a report on the in-house residential provision, to include cost-related savings and benefits to the TAW Programme.

The Chair expressed her appreciation to the service as a whole.

4 Ceredigion Carers Unit Annual Report 2022-2023

Councillor Alun Williams (Cabinet Member for Through Age and Wellbeing) presented the report on the achievements of the Ceredigion Carers and Community Support Team and progress against their agreed targets and objectives during the year 2022-2023. The team brought together the Carers Development Officers, Community Connectors and Ageing Well Officer to work in a single team, with a focus on the provision of information, advice and assistance to unpaid carers and support to community members in Ceredigion. A Carer was defined as 'Anyone who cares, unpaid, for a friend or family member who due to illness, disability, a mental health problem or an addiction, cannot cope without their support'. Carers had a right to a life beyond their caring role and to do so, needed effective services to support the people they cared for and for them as Carers in their own right.

WG referred to a "Carer Friendly Wales" and that unpaid Carers of all ages were a valued and valuable part of society. The 2021 Census revealed that there were approximately 310,000 unpaid carers in Wales which equated to

10.5% of the over 5 population of the country. The Census also showed that 7,246 people in Ceredigion provided unpaid care, with 3,664 who provided more than 20 hours of unpaid care a week. A report written jointly by Carers UK and the University of Sheffield showed that unpaid carers in England and Wales contributed £162 billion per year to the economy.

Councillor Alun Williams congratulated the service for producing an easy-to-read report, which reflected on the LA's commitment to Carers.

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:

- Members expressed their gratitude to all who had a caring role across the county and for their valuable contribution to society.
- Social Care and Education accounted for around two-thirds of the Council's budget, similar to other LAs nationally.
- The Team agreed to share the details of Community Connectors with Elected Members and of any Community drop-in events locally to them.
- Reassurance was provided that the Team were involved in discussions with Porth Gofal on the re-design of respite and day opportunities.
- The Team continually explored ways to support Carers to enhance their lives beyond the caring role, such as the expansion of carers' breaks.

It was AGREED to accept the Carers and Community Support Team Annual Report.

Committee Members congratulated the Team for their hard work and commitment.

5 Local Housing Strategy Action Plan

Councillor Matthew Vaux (Cabinet Member for Partnerships, Housing, Legal and Governance and Public Protection) presented the Action Plan for the Local Housing Strategy – Housing for All (2023 – 2028). In order to deliver the Local Housing Strategy, the actions and measures identified in the Action Plan would be monitored through the Strategic Housing Partnership and, as and when appropriate, Overview and Scrutiny.

The Action Plan highlighted the objectives identified within the Local Housing Strategy, together with the actions and details as to how the LA envisaged them to be achieved. Each action point had a clear measure/s and would support with reaching the desired outcomes. It was acknowledged that the Housing Strategy and actions set out within were not achievable solely by the Housing Team and as such, clear partnership working was highlighted within the Plan. It was anticipated that the Action Plan would be reviewed, amended and updated annually throughout the life of the Strategy and the intention was for the first progress report to be presented to the Strategic Housing Partnership in April 2024.

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:

- In terms of the Action Plan, a 5-year timescale was given intentionally for some actions, to give the opportunity to prioritise and to work collaboratively with partner agencies and services to deliver the actions.
- It was clarified that Landlord Forums were held twice a year and this met the need at present but could be held more/ less often if required.

It was AGREED to note the information.

6 Local Housing Market Assessment

Councillor Matthew Vaux (Cabinet Member for Partnerships, Housing, Legal and Governance and Public Protection) explained that the Local Housing Market Assessment (LHMA) was a Statutory requirement of all LAs, under the Housing Act 1985, and placed a duty on LAs to periodically assess the level of housing need in the County. LHMA's were considered as part of the evidence base for preparing Local Development Plans (LDP), Strategic Development Plans (SDP) and Local Housing Strategies. LAs were expected to rewrite LHMA's every five years and refresh the LHMA once during a five-year period (between years two and three). Ceredigion was currently at the refresh stage and the deadline for submission was 29 March 2024.

Ceredigion County Council's in-house Research, Housing and Planning Policy teams used the newly developed WG provided tool to undertake the refresh. Unfortunately, versions of the tool did not work due to technical errors with the tool and the declining household projections for Ceredigion, which subsequently resulted in a delay in the production of the LHMA. WG undertook amendments to the tool, and the LA were now working with version 3.2, which had provided the outputs outlined in the report. Despite this, the LA were not entirely satisfied with the figures produced by the tool given the significant difference to figures provided historically, particularly around the affordable and open market need.

The intention for the next LHMA rewrite was to commission a demographer/planning consultant to produce a range of population and housing growth scenarios for Ceredigion. This would provide further clarity on the housing growth options available, which could feed into the WG LHMA tool. Further consideration of this and subsequent costings would be undertaken in due course and part of the commissioning would be to provide a methodological approach for the Council to use in-house longer term, for undertaking the LHMA in future years.

Caitlin Theodorou, Research and Performance Officer provided an overview of the headline results for the LHMA. It was noted that a letter had been sent from the Leader of Ceredigion County Council to the Welsh Minister for Housing to express concerns with the Tool's methodology and outputs. A written response had been received in early February. Hopefully, during the next rewrite, WG would be open for discussions.

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:

- The greatest need as estimated by the tool was for 1-bedroom properties. The tool utilized data from the Housing Register and given that over half of people in emergency accommodation were single people, there was a clear need for 1-bedroom properties in towns, more so than in the past.
- The importance of delivering property to future proof was deemed key, however, it was noted that the Housing Register considered the needs rather than the wants of people hence why the greatest need was for 1-bedroom properties. There could be implications on affordability, such as the bedroom tax if properties were too large.
- Given the pause on the replacement LDP, the LHMA would have limited impact, however, a replacement LDP or SDP would require a full re-write of the LHMA, with a full re-write required by March 2025. The refresh had enabled the LA to raise concerns with the Tool's methodology and output.
- Although the delivery of 145 affordable units a year for the first 5 years would address the backlog of housing needs, there was a need for adequate housing across the board.

It was AGREED to approve the LHMA following the end of the consultation period and adopt.

7 Rapid Re-Housing (RRH) Plan

Councillor Matthew Vaux (Cabinet Member for Partnerships, Housing, Legal and Governance and Public Protection) explained that WG published the 'Ending Homelessness Action Plan in November 2021, which committed to making Homelessness 'Rare, Brief and Non-repeated'. This followed the principles of the TAW model and as such the Housing Services RRH plan had been devised with this in mind. RRH was an internationally recognised approach which ensured that anyone who experienced homelessness could be moved into a settled home as quickly as possible, rather than staying in temporary accommodation for long periods.

Key areas of focus had been identified that would enable the transition to a RRH approach. In addition, five priorities had been identified within the Plan with Actions listed to aid and monitor their effectiveness. From a financial perspective, the RRH Transition Plan aimed to identify other sources of funding and partner working opportunities which could assist with preventing and relieving homelessness and improve pathways for service users.

It was AGREED to approve the plan and priorities identified.

8 Review of Additional Licensing Scheme for Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMOs)

Councillor Matthew Vaux (Cabinet Member for Partnerships, Housing, Legal and Governance and Public Protection) presented the Report for the Re-Designation of the Additional Licensing Scheme for HMOs for Ceredigion. The Housing Act 2004 Part 2 placed a duty on LAs to license HMOs of 3 or more storeys, five or more persons, forming two or more households. An

overview of the aim of the legislation was provided. In addition to Mandatory HMO Licensing, the LA may also designate additional licensing, in the whole or part of the Authority's area, based on the number of occupiers/ households and storeys).

The LA have operated an Additional Licensing scheme since 2009, when the first designation Additional Licensing Scheme operated between 1 April 2009 - 31 March 2014 and covered the whole of Ceredigion. Two further designation Additional Licensing Scheme with slight amendments have followed, with the latest due to expire on 14 April 2024. A 10-week public consultation on the re-designation of the Additional Licensing Scheme was recently conducted and from the 17 responses, 65% were in favour of the scheme. Committee Members were requested to consider the 3 options presented in the report, prior to Cabinet approval.

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:

- From an operational perspective, the service ensured that any new HMO builds or renovations were compliant with the HMO license scheme.
- Mandatory HMO Licensing was county-wide, whereas the Additional Licensing Scheme was more focused on areas with possibly more issues.
- Members raised concerns with the rubbish left by some residents who resided in HMOs. All landlords had a duty to comply with the HMO license. Members were encouraged to contact CLIC if issues continued, to enable the matter to be explored by the most appropriate service.
- Following the introduction of the limit of 3 black bags of residual waste per residential household per 3 weekly collections at the 24/25 budget setting process, concerns were raised with the practicality and the impact of this decision on HMOs.

It was AGREED to recommend Option 1 as outlined in the report to the Cabinet.

9 To consider the Forward Work Plan

It was AGREED to note the contents of the Forward Work Programme presented subject to the following:

- Update on the children and young people's in-house residential provision
- Update on the financial situation for services under the Committee's remit (July 2024)
- Update on Tregerddan/ Hafan y Waun Residential Care Homes

10 To consider the minutes of the previous meeting and any matters arising therefrom

It was AGREED to confirm the minutes of the meeting held on 8 February 2024.

Matters arising: None.

Confirmed at the Meeting of the Healthier Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on 21 March 2024

Chairman:_____

Date:_____