

HEALTHY LIVING AND SOCIAL CARE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Minutes of a remote meeting held on 14th September 2021.

The Committee agenda is available [here](#).

The Meeting recording is available [here](#).

Present: Councillor S.J. Griffiths (Chair), Councillor N.C. Thomas (Vice-Chair); Councillors J. Aviet, J.E. Charles, O. Griffiths, T.H. Jarvie, R. Nugent-Finn and J.W. Thomas.

Also present: Councillors B.T. Gray (Cabinet Member for Social Care and Health and E. Williams (Cabinet Member for Legal, Regulatory and Planning Services).

334 ANNOUNCEMENT –

Prior to the commencement of the business of the Committee, the Chairman read the following statement: “May I remind everyone present that the meeting will be live streamed as well as recorded via the internet and this recording archived for future viewing.”

335 MINUTES –

RECOMMENDED – T H A T the minutes of the meeting held on 6th July 2021 be approved as a correct record.

336 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST –

No declarations of interest were received.

337 PRESENTATION - FOSTER WALES –

Amy McArdle, Vale of Glamorgan Marketing and Recruitment Co-Ordinator, presented the presentation. The purpose of which was to advise members that between August 2018 and August 2019, Narrative Edge (the National Fostering Framework (NFF) commissioned communications consultancy) worked with a nominated and empowered working group representing Local Authority fostering services across Wales to co-create a brand proposition for Local Authority Fostering, that would support the recruitment and retention of more foster carers for the 22 Local Authorities across Wales. The brand had now been completed, approved, and launched in July 2021.

Local Authority Fostering was facing a recruitment challenge. There were more children in need of foster placements than there were registered carers. Local

Authority Fostering Teams across Wales had decided to act, to significantly increase the number and range of foster carers recruited directly to Local Authorities. This required Local Authority fostering and recruitment teams across Wales to think bigger, to combine their efforts and expertise to create a significant national impact on awareness that fostering was an option, and that fostering with the Local Authority was the best option. The new collaboration was called Foster Wales.

Following the Officer's presentation and subsequent questions from the Committee, the Marketing and Recruitment Co-Ordinator with support from the Head of Children and Young People Services further advised that:

- The Local Authority undertakes a matching process that helps to inform its commitment to place every child in the most appropriate setting. Every effort was made to match a child's needs, although it was recognised that the Council's ability to do this improved if it could increase the number and variety of placements.
- In response to a question about the turnover of social work staff, officers highlighted the importance of continuity wherever possible and the value the service placed on its decision to develop a Children Looked After Team that worked closely with its Placements Team. Foster carers were supported by their Supervising Social Workers and each child had a Social Worker. Each child also had a Care Plan and an Independent Reviewing Officer that helped to ensure consistency in how a child's needs were understood and met. Many of the Vale's foster carers had been carers for many years and new carers were welcomed into the Foster Carers Forum.
- The need to increase upon the number of carers available would always be relevant due to already registered carers reaching capacity and/or accommodating long term placements. By increasing the number of new foster carer approvals and increasing the diversity and abilities of registered foster families, the Council would have a wider choice of foster homes and improved placement matching.

In conclusion, Councillor Gray stated that he was looking forward to the launch of the national TV advert from Monday 20th September and called for all Elected Members of the Council to promote Foster Wales as widely as possible to collectively support an increase in the number of foster carer applicants.

RECOMMENDED – T H A T officers be thanked for their positive and informative presentation.

Reason for recommendation

To ensure that the Committee was kept up to date with progress regarding the Foster Wales collaboration to significantly increase the number and range of foster carers recruited directly to Local Authorities.

338 CLOSURE OF INDEPENDENT RESIDENTIAL CARE HOMES (REF) –

The Director of Social Services presented the reference from the 19th July 2021 Cabinet meeting to ensure that Scrutiny Members had the opportunity to consider the issues contained within the report.

In relation to the closure of both the Island View (Barry Island) and Tower Hill (Penarth) care homes, the Director advised that the Council would not have chosen to remove so much capacity all at one time however, the transition of residents to alternative settings had been very successful.

As a supplementary matter, the Director apprised members on the significant difficulties that the Council was experiencing in accessing domiciliary care and advised that approximately 60 individuals were waiting to receive new domiciliary care packages. By way of context, the Director advised that the supply of domiciliary care had increased by 22% over the last two years.

In response, Councillor N. Thomas stated that the Vale of Glamorgan was an attractive retirement area, and some individuals were frightened by the idea of residential care therefore, this went some way to explain the increase in demand for domiciliary care packages. The effects of Coronavirus within care homes had also increased levels of anxiety for individuals facing residential care. The Director added that not increasing the number of institutional options for care within the vale remained the Council's strategic intention and care provided within individual's own homes remained the preferred approach.

Councillor Gray then advised that Cabinet were aware of the increasing pressures regarding domiciliary care and would consider these in relation to changes in funding from Welsh Government going forward. The cohort of 60 individuals fluctuated continuously based on the individual needs and circumstances and the Council's strength in communicating with the domiciliary and residential sectors before and during the national pandemic had resulted in a meeting of minds putting the council in good stead for moving forward.

RECOMMENDED - T H A T both the Cabinet Reference and appended Report be noted.

Reason for recommendation

To ensure that Committee was apprised of and had the opportunity to consider the issues contained within the Cabinet report.

339 ANNUAL DELIVERY PLAN MONITORING REPORT: QUARTER 1 PERFORMANCE 2021/22 (DSS) –

The purpose of the report was to present quarter 1 performance results for the period 1st April 2021 to 30th June 2021 in delivering the Annual Delivery Plan commitments as aligned to the Corporate Plan Well-being Objectives.

RECOMMENDED –

- (1) T H A T the performance results and progress towards achieving the Annual Delivery Plan 2021/22 commitments as aligned to our Corporate Plan Wellbeing Objectives within the remit of the Committee be noted.
- (2) T H A T the remedial actions to be taken to address areas of underperformance and to tackle the key challenges identified within the remit of the Committee be noted.
- (3) T H A T the progress being made through the Council's recovery strategy and Directorate Recovery plans in response to the ongoing Coronavirus pandemic be noted.

Reasons for Recommendations

- (1) To ensure the Council clearly demonstrates the progress being made towards achieving its commitments in the Annual Delivery Plan 2021/22 aimed at making a positive difference to the lives of Vale of Glamorgan citizens.
- (2) To ensure the Council is effectively assessing its performance in line with the requirement to meet its performance requirements as outlined in the Local Government & Elections (Wales) Act 2021 and reflecting the requirement of the Wellbeing of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 in that it maximises its contribution to achieving the well-being goals for Wales.
- (3) To ensure members maintain an oversight of the recovery issues impacting on the work of the Council and their respective Scrutiny Committee.