

No.

HOMES AND SAFE COMMUNITIES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Minutes of a meeting held on 18th September, 2019.

Present: Councillor Mrs. S.D. Perkes (Chairman); Councillor Ms. J. Aviet (Vice-Chairman); Councillors J.C. Bird, Ms. B.E. Brooks, Mrs. C.A. Cave, Ms. A.M. Collins, Mrs. S.M. Hanks and L.O. Rowlands.

Also present: Mrs. G. Doyle, Mrs. W. Davies, Mr. A. Raybould and Ms. H. Smith (Tenant Working Group Representatives).

289 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE –

These were received from Councillors S.J. Griffiths, A.C. Parker and Ms. D. Murphy (Citizens Advice Cardiff and Vale).

290 MINUTES –

RECOMMENDED – T H A T the minutes of the meeting held on 16th July, 2019 be approved as a correct record.

291 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST –

No declarations were received.

292 ANNOUNCEMENT –

The Chairman noted that Mrs. I. Gannon of the Tenant Working Group Representatives had now retired and been replaced by Mrs. W. Davies.

293 ANNUAL CORPORATE SAFEGUARDING REPORT 2018/19 (REF) –

Cabinet, on 29th July, 2019 had referred this report to all Scrutiny Committees for consideration and be provided with update reports.

The Head of Housing and Building Services outlined the report and explained that there was a corporate responsibility to ensure that effective arrangements were in place for safeguarding children and adults who required specific Council services. The Annual Report provided an overview of the Corporate Safeguarding Group Work Plan and other safeguarding activities taking place across the local authority.

Historically, safeguarding activity by different parts of the Council had been reported separately to Cabinet via the Scrutiny Committees and Corporate Management Team. The Annual Report brought together safeguarding activity undertaken by the Social Services, Learning and Skills, Managing Director's Office

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and Resources, Environment and Housing Directorates and also an overview from Corporate Safeguarding Group. This provided a more holistic representation of safeguarding activities across the Council. The report provided a composite update of activity across Directorates. Scrutiny Committees would need to consider elements of the report in line with their portfolio areas.

The Head of Housing and Building Services went on to outline the key issues for consideration.

The Wales Audit Office undertook a follow-up review in February 2019 of their 2014 review, and issued their final report in May 2019 (attached at Appendix 2). The purpose of the review was to seek assurance that the Council had effective corporate arrangements in place and had addressed the findings and recommendations from their 2014 report and the subsequent recommendations made.

The 2018-19 review found that overall the Council had implemented most of the previous recommendations and proposals for improvement, some areas needed further attention. They had identified five proposals for improvement to strengthen aspects of the Council's safeguarding arrangements. The areas for improvements would be addressed within the CSG work plan, at Appendix 3, which would be referred to Audit Committee.

Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) remained a key priority area for both the Regional Safeguarding Children's Board and the Vale of Glamorgan Council. There was a Lead Manager for Child Sexual Exploitation who ensured there was appropriate identification, response and co-ordination in CSE cases. The role facilitated multi agency safety planning when required and contributed to the networking and intelligence meetings that regularly took place.

In 2018/19 there were four Child Practice Reviews published by the Regional Safeguarding Board, one relating to a child in the Vale of Glamorgan. During this time there was a concentrated focus on addressing the backlog of 12 Child Practice Reviews that were required. There were now a further 6 reviews in progress however only one of these reviews related to a child in the Vale of Glamorgan, and this was a widely publicised review. Following the completion of that review an action plan was developed that detailed the recommendations for learning. Each agency was required to implement these recommendations and report back their progress to the Regional Board.

The Learning and Skills Directorate continued to invest considerable effort in supporting schools to achieve compliance with Safer Recruitment. Compliance rates had improved significantly since 2014 with schools recording 100% compliance in recent months. The Directorate had been clear that anything less than 100% compliance was unacceptable.

Recent recommendations to the Corporate Safeguarding Group would strengthen the Corporate Safer Recruitment Policy. This was monitored through the CSG to ensure consistent and effective implementation of the Corporate Safer Recruitment Policy across all the Directorates and school appointments.

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In the last few months HR had recently implemented an electronic transfer system for DBS checks. This would speed up the DBS checking process which formed part of the pre-employment checks. The system provided an electronic portal where applicants were able to apply for a DBS check online, allow checks to be approved and tracked by the Council, and the disclosure outcome would be available in the majority of cases within 24/48 hours.

The Vale of Glamorgan Council adopted the Violence Against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence Regional Strategy on 30th July 2018 (min C392). Structures and accountability were in place to ensure that the Council were able to deliver positive outcomes against the overarching objectives that had been agreed.

The Head of Housing and Building Services went on to refer to the specific actions around safeguarding with relation to Homes and Safe Communities.

Housing

Safeguarding remained a key priority for the Housing team and a number of activities and events had taken place over the last 12 months to strengthen processes and raise awareness amongst staff, tenants and partners. The Departmental Management team monitored any safeguarding concerns regularly and these were fed down through team meetings to front line staff. Safeguarding was also a standard agenda item at staff meetings and monthly 1-1s.

All Housing staff received regular training in Safeguarding and related themes. Over the last year, 84 people have completed Safeguarding training and 78 have benefitted from training in relation to Violence against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence (VAWDA-SV).

Staff from Housing were represented on the Cardiff and Vale Regional Safeguarding Board as well as several sub groups looking at issues around Exploitation and Child and Adult Practise Reviews. In addition, a number of events took place over the last year which were organised by Housing staff to promote Safeguarding. These included a week-long series of 'drop in' sessions held in the main Reception area in the Civic offices during national Safeguarding week, where staff and customers were able to pick up information and chat informally to staff about Safeguarding issues. There were also community roadshows where Housing staff went out into communities and spoke to tenants about issues. These were in addition to events held in partnership with local schools where children and young people were involved in awareness raising.

The Housing team had also taken an active role in the raising awareness of the issues around Domestic Abuse. This included attending several groups and meetings to tackle issues but also arranging staff sessions to promote the White Ribbon Campaign, with posters, leaflets and signage put up around Council buildings as well as onto Council repairs vehicles. Male members of staff from the Housing team were also asked to make pledges to challenge Domestic Abuse and

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there were used as case studies of those used on the staff intranet – to promote the White Ribbon Campaign.

Safeguarding activity within Community Safety (Housing and Building Services)

Violence Against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence (VAWDASV)

The Vale of Glamorgan Council adopted the VAWDASV Regional Strategy on 30th July 2018 (min C392). Structures and accountability were in place to ensure that the Council were able to deliver positive outcomes against the overarching objectives that had been agreed.

One area of development involved the MARAC (Multi Agency Risk Assessment Conference) which was a multi agency meeting to discuss safeguarding issues for victims of domestic abuse that had been assessed as High risk. During 2018/19 there were a total of 257 cases that were assessed as high risk and were subject to a MARAC discussion. Whilst this was a reduction of 62 cases from the previous year there were still opportunities to reduce the number of cases being heard at MARAC through earlier identification and preventative support. This work was being led by the MARAC Steering group which comprised of senior representation across agencies to identify opportunities for improvement. The MARAC Steering group had already arranged specialist training by Safe Lives for practitioners attending the MARAC to ensure they were aware of their safeguarding duties.

During June 2018 the Domestic Abuse Assessment and Referral Co-ordinator (DAARC) Service was launched within the Vale of Glamorgan Council. The service was established as a result of the number of High Risk cases being discussed at MARAC and the need to focus on earlier identification and preventative support to safeguard vulnerable victims. At this point in time there was very little or no support/ co-ordination offered to victims that were assessed as Standard or medium risk. As a result a new service was piloted within the Community Safety team to address this gap in service and provide a much needed earlier intervention service. From 18th June 2018 – 31st March 2019, there were a total of 1658 referrals received, which were assessed, the victim was contacted where consent was provided and further support was provided in terms of onward referral to specialist services or to provide updates on their situation. It was rare that Domestic Abuse would happen in isolation and there were often other support needs identified which were not being addressed, for example, substance misuse, therefore through the DAARC service they are able to identify those needs and signpost to the relevant team to ensure that appropriate safeguarding was in place and reduce the opportunity for the situation to escalate to high risk. In 2019 the DAARC service was nominated for a UK Housing Award and whilst the service did not win the award it was highly commended, the service did however win the Vale of Glamorgan Council Team Awards for Innovation and Bright Ideas 2019.

The Supporting People team provided funding to Community Safety to provide Target Hardening equipment for victims of domestic abuse. This service was

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tailored to the needs and risk of the victim, for example CCTV, intruder alarm, door locks and lighting, that was offered in order to make the victim feel safer and enabled them to remain in their own home. During 2018/19, 99 properties within the Vale of Glamorgan received target hardening. The majority of victims wanted to remain in their own home and therefore the service enabled us to ensure appropriate safeguarding was in place, met the needs of the victim and was a cost effective service for the Council in terms of not identifying refuge provision.

Anti Social Behaviour (ASB)

The Anti Social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014 enacted new provisions aimed at reforming the anti social behaviour rules and tools previously available. The changes had made it easier for the Vale of Glamorgan to respond swiftly to reports of Anti Social Behaviour.

The Community Safety Team within the Council co-ordinated the multi-agency Problem Solving Group (PSG) that discussed ASB to ensure that early identification and intervention could be offered to perpetrators of ASB and that safeguarding measures were put in place for victims of ASB. During 2018/19 the ASB team developed the way in which they researched cases and cross referenced individuals with other departments / agencies to improve the support offered and information sharing. Within the Vale there was a 4 stage approach to managing ASB which provided the opportunity to identify wider needs and support requirements with the aim of stopping the behaviour turning into criminal activity. For young people the 4 stage approach was the same, however a restorative approach was adopted to maximize the opportunity of stopping any further incidents and to identify preventative support for the Youth Offending Team.

From April 2019 the PSG had widened their remit to include County Lines and Cuckooing within their problem solving and safeguarding duties to ensure information was appropriately shared and action was taken to safeguard vulnerable victims. Numbers remained low in the Vale of Glamorgan however there were process in place to ensure early identification.

During 2018/19, there were 223 victims of ASB (these were classified as victims and not witnesses or informants). Victims were supported through a variety of means, including victim support and multi-agency action plans to ensure that all safeguarding options had been effective.

There was a high proportion of ASB perpetrators that were vulnerable and had additional support needs. The ASB team now accessed each individual and would complete onward support for them, via Supporting People, Taith, FACT etc in order to provide help and support that would stop them from committing ASB. The following table highlighted the number of perpetrators of ASB during 2018/19.

Channel Panel (Prevent)

Channel was a programme which focused on providing support at an early stage to people who were identified as being vulnerable to being drawn into terrorism. The programme used a multi-agency approach to protect vulnerable people by:

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- Identifying people at risk
- Assessing the nature and extent of that risk
- Developing the most appropriate support plan for the individuals concerned.

There was a regional Cardiff and Vale multi agency Channel Panel that met to discuss the referrals and ensured that the appropriate action was taken. In 2018/19 there was 1 individual identified as requiring support through this process, this was a reduction of 5 cases compared to 2017/18.

It was anticipated that there would be new guidance for Channel released from the Home office later this year.

The Head of Housing and Building Services went on to say that a large amount of safeguarding activity happened at corporate level and that he sat on the Corporate Safeguarding Board that oversees this.

A Committee Member asked how far the Vale of Glamorgan Council are working with other police forces and agencies and if we were sharing information with these. The Head of Housing and Building Services replied that work and information sharing was coordinated through the Community Safety Team, Social Services, various police forces and local authorities, for example, police officers had sat down with local Vale Housing Officers in order to obtain information or intelligence on local issues around cuckooing and County Lines. The Community Safety Team is also embedded within Barry Police Station.

The Housing and Strategic Projects Team Leader also added that their team received information from the police regarding anti-social behaviour which exemplified sharing between local authorities and other agencies. Also, as part of this a multi-agency group had been set up which dealt with such anti-social behaviour often related to complex cases and involved families with a number of issues and challenges. He also made reference to the County Lines issue where there was a number of examples of co-ordination between the Vale of Glamorgan Council and police, for example the local authority with other third agencies offered peer support as well as collaborating with the police and other agencies to deal with this complex issue.

A Member of the Tenant Working Group stated that a tenant had approached her about a problem in their block of flats and who asked who they would need to contact in order to deal with this issue - whether it was the police or the local authority. The Head of Housing and Building Services replied that the tenant, in the first instance, should contact the Council to see if they could assist and if necessary they may need to be assisted through the Neighbourhood Team or Police.

A Committee Member asked how tenants could be given such information or contact details direct for help with housing or other issues to which the Head of Housing and Building Services replied that he would be looking to put some information in the next Tenant Newsletter.

No.

It was subsequently

RECOMMENDED – T H A T the work that had been undertaken to improve corporate arrangements for safeguarding and protecting children and adults be noted.

Reason for recommendation

To ensure that the Scrutiny Committee was aware of recent developments in corporate arrangements for safeguarding.

294 HOUSING DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY, HOUSING DEVELOPMENT POLICY AND HOUSING DEVELOPMENT PROCEDURES (REF) –

The Head of Housing and Building Services outlined the report explaining that this was the first Strategy of its like for a number of years. This was a five-year Strategy that set out the Council's vision and objectives for the delivery of new-build Council homes and the approach the Council would take to ensure new Council homes contributed to successful communities and growth in the local economy whilst maintaining the financial health of the Housing Business Plan.

The Head of Housing and Building Services stated that the Housing Business Plan was the Council's 30 year plan which sets out the investment requirements of the housing stock and the finances available to commit to the annual build programme. This was the first time the Council had built new homes in over 25 years.

He went on to say that so far the Council has delivered 3 fully adapted bungalows as a pilot programme in order to test the principles of local authority new development. The Council had further procured and was managing the on-site delivery of an addition 39 units new social housing at two sites in Barry. The Council also has potentially a further 251 units of social housing at various stages of design, feasibility and approval, from Penarth to Llantwit Major which are being considered for development by 2024. Overall there would be a spending commitment of £260 m on new social housing over the next 30 years.

The Head of Housing and Building Services outlined the four strategic objectives on the Housing Development Strategy 2019-24.

- Objective 1 - Develop a lasting and positive legacy of distinctive and well thought of homes.
- Objective 2 - Build homes which contribute to successful communities and growth in the local economy for present and future generations.
- Objective 3 - Embark on an ambitious programme of development underpinned by strong risk management and financial viability principles.
- Objective 4 - Take a planned approach to development opportunities which provide value for money while maximising supply.

No.

A Committee Member cited the example of Nottinghamshire Council where another avenue explored was to re-buy houses previously bought under the 'Right to Buy' scheme from the local authority. The Head of Housing and Building Services replied that a proposed Housing and Property Acquisitions Policy would be going forward to Cabinet on 23rd September which would give the local authority the ability to buy houses such as empty homes. However, the difficulty could be that home-owners may ask for a considerable amount of money and the local authority would also have to consider the condition of the home and whether it was viable to refurbish the property.

A Committee Member stated that it was great to see a Strategy now being developed and provided an example of a previous building project in Gibbonsdown with bungalows for children with life-limiting illnesses which were completed to a high specification. The Councillor also referred to the section in the report concerning the Council's plans to complete 164 new Council homes for 2022. She asked whether this would be achievable in that time frame. The Head of Housing and Building Services replied that a number of the housing schemes would be going to Planning shortly and these plans would be achievable in conjunction with other schemes such as acquiring houses via sellers.

A Tenant Working Group Member also asked around affordable houses for older people such as at Oak Court. The Head of Housing and Building Services stated that the Council was looking at sheltered housing and extra beds in a scheme in Penarth. In order to keep rents low for these it would require subsidy in order to contribute to the costings. The Head of Housing and Building Services also mentioned that an extra 39 homes would also be available but not necessarily age or use specific, for example, these could also be used to house young people with dementia issues. He went on to mention that they would be looking at developing bungalows with dormer space in order for carers to be located there for both short and longer periods of support. These were currently at the pre-application stage and preparatory work would continue until at least mid-year next year. The Head of Housing and Building Services also stressed that it was important to have homes for elderly residents within the community they have lived in previously.

The Chairman stated that these were exciting times in terms of the strategy and housing development. She asked that when planning do the Housing Department look at housing lists in order to see what housing is required. The Head of Housing and Building Services replied that the Council is required to assess local housing needs via a Local Housing Market Assessment which he added would be revised next year and the Welsh Assembly Government would be looking to have an all-Wales version of the assessment in place in the future.

It was

RECOMMENDED – T H A T the details of the inaugural Housing Development Strategy 2019-24 and its attendant Housing Development Policy and the operational content of the Housing Development Procedures be noted.

No.

Reason for recommendation

To ensure that Members are aware of the Strategy and for them to give appropriate consideration and scrutiny of these important documents.

295 SUPPORTING PEOPLE CONTRACTS – ONE STOP SHOP (REF) –

The Head of Housing and Building Services outlined the key points of the report.

This report set out the vision for a Vale of Glamorgan One Stop Shop to deliver support services to individuals who had housing related support needs, including those who were homeless or threatened with homelessness.

The provision would be delivered from a centrally based office and provide satellite services across the Vale of Glamorgan to meet demand. Service users would be able to 'drop in' to the One Stop Shop for support, which could potentially allow for the delivery of group courses, as well as hosting other appropriate, related services. In addition, the Service would provide outreach support, for example, accompanying service users to appointments.

The need to develop this Service was evidenced in the Council's Supporting People Local Commissioning Plan, and was compliant with the Supporting People Programme Guidance from Welsh Government. It also reflected the vision and direction of travel of the Programme. The service would be able to provide support on demand, reduce waiting times and provide a more early intervention, preventative service. It would free up floating support services to be targeted at the most vulnerable people living in the Vale of Glamorgan.

It would also help to protect the most vulnerable service users if funding was reduced in the future by providing more efficient, targeted services. In addition, it would assist the local authority in fulfilling its duties under The Housing (Wales) Act 2014, The Social Services and Wellbeing (Wales) Act 2014 and The Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015.

Similar services developed in neighbouring local authorities had reported that high numbers of people who do not normally engage with traditional SPPG services had accessed support through "One Stop Shops", providing more opportunity for an early intervention, preventative approach and reducing the burden on statutory services, such as Homelessness Services, Social Services, Police and Health.

The Head of Housing and Building Services stated that a further report would be brought to Cabinet in 12 months time outlining the progress made and outcomes achieved by the One Stop Shop project.

The Chairman asked a question around the numbers of Council staff allocated for the One Stop Shop. The Head of Housing and Building Services replied that staff would be appointed by third sector agencies commissioned via an existing Supporting People Framework and therefore not be Council employees.

No.

A Committee Member raised two typographical errors that she had noticed on the report, the first one being on reasons for recommendations number 2 the word should read as 'the' and an extra full-stop on paragraph 2.12.

Another Committee Member queried if the One Stop Shop would be located at a suitable location for people to access for example an area where there are good public transport links. The Head of Housing and Building Services replied that access to public transport links would be part of the considerations for the location of the One Stop Shop but this also had to be weighed against accessibility for the rural Vale as well. The provider would be required to say how they would provide access in rural users as well as those in more urban areas.

A Committee Member asked if services would include all aspects of housing such as anti-social behaviour. The Head of Housing and Building Services replied that all housing related support issues, which would include owner-occupiers as well, would be considered and that there would be a number of providers at the One Stop Shop who would provide bespoke services such as support for those with mental health issues.

Another Committee Member had a query relating to procurement and procurement paperwork for this project to which the Head of Housing and Building Services replied this project would be tendered and that they were looking for implementation in the next 12 months.

It was

RECOMMENDED – T H A T the report be noted.

Reason for recommendation

The Committee has consideration and oversight of the project.

296 UPDATE REPORT FOR THE CIVIL PROTECTION UNIT (DEH) –

The Principal Civil Protection Officer (PCPO) explained the aim of the report was to raise awareness of what the Civil Protection Unit does and its role in ensuring that the Council fulfils its statutory duties under the Civil Contingencies Act 2004. She went on to say that she would be happy to come to another Committee meeting in the near future if further information was required. The Principal Civil Protection Officer referred to the Civil Protection Officer (CPO) role which had received an appointment to the post in February 2018 and had undertaken training, coaching and a programme of development and learning about the Council and the profession.

The Principal Civil Protection Officer then went on to outline the key issues currently being faced by the Civil Protection Unit.

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The Barry Chemical Complex External Plan (COMAH) had been reviewed as part of the COMAH regulations and in line with the 3 year required cycle. The multi-agency exercise to validate the plan was held 19th January 2019.

The review of the Council Business Continuity Management Programme had been restarted. The Business Impact analysis that had involved a review of the Council Priority Services (previously called critical) was completed and would allow for a solid base on which to progress this project.

An all Wales BREXIT risk assessment allowed us to overlay this onto the Priority one services business impact analysis. This would allow us to review the current business continuity plans and also give an opportunity to strengthen areas where there was likely to be more risk due to BREXIT. This work was in the final stages of completion.

The reporting structures that had been activated for BREXIT followed the Counter Terrorism C3 structure. The CPU co-ordinated the Council response into this structure, it was anticipated that work would re-commence in early September 2019, to meet the 31st October 2019 deadline.

The CPU had responded to a number of incidents over the period including fires at Barry and Llandow, coastal incidents and cliff falls, loose horses, unauthorised travellers encampments and the recent hot weather.

The CPU duty officer procedures had been reviewed and the internal and external contacts directories had been updated in line with the Council's GDPR policy.

The work of the Building Security Group had been paused, the Principal Civil Protection Officer was currently in discussion with the Council's Facilities Manager and Security Manager on re-invigorating the group.

The Events Safety Advisory Group (ESAG) met every 6 weeks and had dealt with a number of long standing planned events and new and one off events within the Vale.

The Principal Civil Protection Officer was a member of the Cardiff Airport Emergency Group, a major exercise was held on 11th March 2019 for which the Principal Civil Protection Officer was the exercise monitor at the Tactical (Silver) command. Following this further work was being undertaken to strengthen procedures and ensure staff were trained.

The new SWLRF Co-ordinator commenced in post at the beginning of October 2018, this post had been vacant since February 2018 and the CPU had acted as the interim co-ordinator to ensure that the SWLRF could function and provide continuity. It was anticipated that this would need further support; this would include managerial support and monitoring of tasks.

The Principal Civil Protection Officer worked with the SWLRF Co-ordinator on the provision of emergency mortuary facilities project within South Wales area, this project was complex due to the fact that in Wales there were no public mortuaries.

No.

The Health Boards provided the mortuary service, funded by Local Authorities via the Coroners Service.

The Principal Civil Protection Officer stated that at present the main focus of their work would be taken up by issues around the BREXIT process.

The Chairman wished to provide the thanks of the Committee to the Principal Civil Protection Officer and her team in dealing with a number of statutory and serious issues around the Vale of Glamorgan.

It was

RECOMMENDED – T H A T the work of the Civil Protection Unit be noted.

Reason for recommendation

To ensure that Members of the Committee were aware of the work undertaken by the Civil Protection Unit.

297 TIMEBANKING – MONITORING REPORT (DEH) –

The Housing and Strategic Projects Team Leader outlined the report first stating that Timebanking continued to be a success and goes from strength to strength.

All of the targets for Timebanking had been met and the scheme had been an effective way of increasing the levels of volunteering amongst Council tenants. 488 tenants had signed up to the scheme and taken part in volunteering, donating over 4,516 hours of their own time to community activities and events. This had proved beneficial to the participants, enabling them to build confidence, increase their self-esteem, get to know neighbours and make friends. It had also helped some people to gain work experience and jobs. In terms of community benefits, volunteering had brought neighbours together built community spirit and improved the areas where people live.

The Housing and Strategic Projects Team Leader went on to say that during the last 6 months there had been several interesting developments for Timebanking in the Vale for example 93 new members joined the scheme and there was an increase in community spend of 208 hours. He went on to explain that community spend involved Timebanking members having set up their own events and charging entry for events via time credits such as coffee mornings, fund raising events, garden parties and day trips.

An example of new groups being signed up to Timebanking were the Llantwit Major Garden Project in partnership with the Safer Vale which involved motivating and getting people involved with activities such as helping the elderly, clearing rubbish and similar activities.

There had been several good news stories involving individuals and groups who were involved in Timebanking during the past 6 months. Firstly, group leader

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Janet Rees from Cwtch Cymru, a Peer Led Mental Health support group who held their meetings at the Vale Hub, won Volunteer of the Year at the Bro Radio Community Awards for her work in supporting the group as their Timebanking lead.

Nicky Vickery won the 'Be a Good Egg award' at the Bro Radio Community Awards for her continuing excellent work at Gibby Green Fingers community gardening group. During the past 12 months Nicky had secured funding from the Strong Communities Grant Fund and the Waterloo Foundation to support her role as a community champion and the Gibbonsdown lead for the litter picking groups.

One of the issues identified to date had been that Timebanking was restricted to Council tenants in the Vale. This was due to the way the scheme was funded (via the Housing Revenue Account). Discussions had therefore taken place with a range of partners about the scope to roll this out and to secure additional resources or alternative sources of funding. These discussions included a workshop which a wide range of organisations attended. This enabled partners and potential partners to hear, first hand some of the successes of the project, via presentations from individuals and groups who had taken part and to have discussions in groups about how Timebanking could support the aims of different partners.

Following the workshop, a working group was established in order to review the ideas and develop proposals for expanding Timebanking across the Vale. Further information would be shared about potential approaches as part of future monitoring reports.

A Committee Member stated that the Timebanking project had been a success story for the Council in terms of volunteering which was echoed by another Member of the Committee. A Member of the Tenant Group wanted to raise some of the more practical issues or challenges around the Timebanking Project, for example, she had been involved with volunteers with a 'ground force' Timebanking project where after doing related gardening work there was a large amount of debris that needed to be removed and she was not sure who to contact about this. The Housing and Strategic Projects Team Leader responded by saying the Tenant Working Group member would need to speak to the relevant Community Investment Officer and did cite examples where other agencies had also helped with these types of practicalities such as in Llantwit Major where police vehicles had helped with the removal or moving of items.

The Chairman asked how could other agencies and services such as the Health Service utilise Timebanking to which the Housing Strategic Projects Team Leader responded by saying that they would be looking to see if funding and grants with other agencies and partners could be arranged in order to achieve this.

The Head of Housing and Building Services stated that they were a nominated lead on the Public Service Board for Timebanking. As part of this they had identified other volunteering activity going on and it was important for greater co-ordination between the Vale of Glamorgan Council and these other volunteer agencies in order to avoid duplication and also to deal with the issues that the

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Council could not as it did not have enough capacity to run a Vale or regional scheme on their own. He went on to say that they needed to look at employing key beneficiaries of the Timebanking scheme and needed dedicated volunteers and key allies in other services.

A Committee Member asked whether housing associations would be able to chip in in terms of funding in order to access the Timebanking project. The Head of Housing and Building Services referred to an example of Newydd which had their own Timebanking and similar projects and that other agencies could potentially be interested as well.

It was

RECOMMENDED – T H A T the monitoring report in relation to the Timebanking Project be noted.

Reason for recommendation

To ensure that the Timebanking Project was implemented effectively and key outcomes are achieved.

298 HOMELESSNESS PREVENTION STRATEGY 2018-2022 – MONITORING REPORT (DEH) –

The Head of Housing and Building Services stated the Homeless Strategy had been approved in June, however, a lot of activity around the homelessness issue had already been done prior to this approval since the introduction of the Housing (Wales) Act 2014. This was reflected in the annual statistics collated by Stats Wales Welsh Government which had placed the Vale of Glamorgan Council as top performing local authority in Wales for homelessness prevention in 2018/19 achieving an 82% success rate. The Head of Housing and Building Services went on to say that the overall aim of the Strategy was to prevent homelessness at the earliest opportunity and to help negate the pressures and challenges on service users and also on support services across the Vale of Glamorgan. It would also be important to ensure that services were monitored and were able to adapt to changing needs of users so that the required outcomes were achieved.

There was a focus on training to ensure that the Councils front line Housing staff, as well as those in partner agencies had the tools and knowledge to provide the required support and advice to prevent homelessness. A bespoke staff induction and training package was being developed with Shelter Cymru which could be updated regularly to take into account any changes in National Policy and Legislation.

The Housing Solutions Service was also developing staff shadowing opportunities with staff from its key partners, including the Probation Service, Department of Works and Pensions and Prison Support Staff in order to gain a better understanding of Services and further improve communication.

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The Head of Housing and Building Services went on to mention the significant work that had taken place to develop the housing opportunities available in the private rented sector through increased engagement with landlords. The Head of Housing and Building Services said an example of this was Housing Solutions Team which held a quarterly landlord forum which attracted over 55 landlords to the last meeting. Subsequent feedback from landlords led to a new support service funded by the Supporting People Programme for landlords in this sector looking at improvement on the sustainability of tenancies and to give private sector tenants improved security of tenure. The Council had also introduced the Emphasis Project in partnership with Llamau. This service developed links with all secondary schools across the Vale of Glamorgan in order to provide homelessness and support awareness sessions directly to pupils and teachers. This gave pupils greater understanding of homelessness and how they could prevent it and it provided teachers with a method that identified the early signs of potential homelessness and avenues for advice and support.

A Support Service gateway was now in place which provided a single point of access for vulnerable people to ensure they were able to access the most appropriate support service for their needs to gain the life skills to maintain a home, live independently and integrate into the community.

The Head of Housing and Building Services went on to explain the current status of the Operational Delivery Plan on the report. There were a number of actions still ongoing for the financial year. He went on to say going forward they would be looking at more specific actions in future monitoring reports. The Head of Housing and Building Services went on to refer to the completed areas within the Operational Delivery Plan and cited several examples including the action around the development of a Standard Service Promise to demonstrate commitment to the client. He went on to explain the Promise was a two-way agreement signed by both the caseworker and the client and set out the appropriate standards of behaviour and be respected by each party. Another example used was the development and implementation of a Supporting People Gateway to create a single point of access to all housing related support services. The Gateway had been set up for all support services funded by the Supporting People Programme with a clear referral and monitoring framework in place.

A Member of the Tenant Working Group asked about youth homelessness, in particular regarding shared accommodation. The Head of Housing and Building Services replied that due to previous welfare reforms, there had been limited single persons access to accommodation. The Chairman went on to thank the Homeless Prevention Team for all their work.

It was

RECOMMENDED – T H A the progress to date in implementing the Homelessness Prevention Plan be noted.

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Reason for recommendation

To ensure that the actions in the Homelessness Action Plan were progressing and were driving improvements in the quality of the homelessness service.

299 TENANT ENGAGEMENT STRATEGY – MONITORING REPORT (DEH) –

The Housing and Strategic Projects Team Leader outlined the report explaining that this was a framework for giving tenants a say in how services were delivered. This engagement could be seen in a variety of ways, for example, Scrutiny Committees down to tenants getting involved in a Residents Board, volunteering, etc. The Strategy included four key priority areas: making tenant engagement an integral part of the business, providing opportunities for tenants to be engaged, building capacity for tenants to make a difference via support, training and development opportunities and lastly, using customer feedback to drive service improvements.

The Strategy highlighted the need to make tenant engagement an integral part of the Housing Service for example, influencing how services are provided, how decisions are made and how money is spent. As part of this it was important that the number of tenants on key groups such as the Quality Design Forum and Tenants Working Group were expanded. The Housing and Strategic Projects Team Leader also referred to the current attempt to recruit additional tenant members to these various groups and the challenge involved in this. However, he went on to add that further recruitment exercises were due to take place to try to attract new tenants. As part of the Strategy a tenant scrutiny group would be established which could undertake service testing reviews. A number of tenants had been identified and had agreed to take part in this project. The next step would be to run some training events to equip the tenants with the knowledge and skills required to start this work and to produce terms of reference for the group in order to clarify their remit and responsibility.

The Housing and Strategic Projects Team Leader went on to say there had been considerable interest in this but follow on or take up had not been as great as expected with seven people identified as being very keen to be involved but ideally the 12 – 15 range would be better.

A significant amount of work had taken place to help give tenants skills and the confidence to take part. Over the last year, over 100 tenants had attended training sessions on a wide range of things including: confidence building, personal effectiveness, health and safety and first aid. In addition, tenants had taken advantage of work experience and volunteering opportunities and several had been able to secure employment as a result.

There had been significant progress in gathering feedback from a wide range of tenants and to use this to drive further improvements in services provided for example a consultation exercise was carried out with Residents Boards and individual tenants over three months which had informed the draft Neighbourhood

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Plans. This had given valuable feedback regarding experiences of tenants and their priorities for their area. The Neighbourhood Plans were in the process of being finalised and would be shared with various stakeholders such as tenants, Councillors and others in the near future. The Housing and Strategic Projects Team Leader also referred to another consultation exercise around the Home Swap service where existing tenants could swap homes. A large number of tenants had responded to the survey which had identified some key issues but overall had provided strong support for the scheme which had led to the subscription of Home Swap being extended.

The Housing and Strategic Projects Team Leader stated that a budget had been set aside to run a large scale tenants survey (STAR) and a specification produced in order to advertise the opportunity for experienced market research companies to submit expressions of interest. Quotations had been received and it was anticipated that survey work would start in October with the final report being published in December 2019. The results of the survey would be used as a comparison to previous surveys in order to track progress and would provide valuable intelligence regarding what tenants thought of the services provided by their landlord as well as other priorities being highlighted.

A Committee Member referred to the FestiVale event which they said had been a fantastic day for families, children and other tenants as it had various stalls relating to Police, Safer Vale and Housing, whom they said provided an excellent service on the day.

The Housing and Strategic Projects Team Leader thanked the Councillor for their input and that he would pass this feedback on to the Housing Team. He went on to say that FestiVale provided an excellent opportunity for staff to engage with tenants in a relaxed and informal way.

Another Committee Member wanted to say how helpful the PCSO in Llantwit Major had been in terms of Timebanking and other related tenant engagement activities such as estate walks, where local tenants and others would come out and speak to the PCSO about local issues such as crime or anti-social behaviour. The Committee Member went on to ask about how they could provide feedback to the Tenant Newsletter. The Housing and Strategic Projects Team Leader replied that currently there was a postal newsletter for tenants but that they would be looking at how to disseminate this digitally in future, but also ensure that a paper form was kept for those tenants who did not have access to digital services. He went on to say that the newsletter looks at the whole Vale, but would seek to get coverage of the work done by the Llantwit Major PCSO in the next edition, as an example of tenant engagement that could be copied in the rest of the Vale.

A Committee Member asked if the Committee could be made aware of the next FestiVale in order for Committee Members to attend. The Head of Housing and Building Services replied that all Members of the Committee were welcome to come along and he would look into this.

A Committee Member raised a query regarding the role of the Tenant Steering Group. The Head of Housing and Building Services responded there was a need

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to ensure that we get tenant feedback and what tenants wanted to hear back from the Council via this group. This helped form supplementary or subsequent reports on how tenant engagement was progressing.

Another Committee Member asked about the status of the Aspire2Own scheme to which the Head of Housing and Building Services stated that the Council and RSLs had met regularly about the issues raised around its marketing activity. He went on to say that a new partnership agreement would be going to Council shortly including Aspire2Own which would include provision for a more professional awareness raising service for example increasing adverts in Homes4U.

A Committee Member cited an example of a person they had spoken to previously, who had been 'sofa surfing' in order to obtain a deposit to buy through Aspire2Own. The Committee Member went on to say they had referred them to the Ogmere Aspire Scheme in order to assist. The Committee Member stressed the need for awareness to be raised on what the Council could do to help people in this area.

The Chairman asked the Housing and Strategic Projects Team Leader whether tenants involved in Timebanking would also be involved in the other forms of tenant engagement and queried the cost of the Tenant Newsletter and the related survey - could these be done electronically in order to cut costs. Referring to the first part of the question, the Housing and Strategic Projects Team Leader replied that he had spoken to the Timebanking Team first and 7 people from Timebanking had got involved in tenant engagement for example with the Tenant Scrutiny Group. He would also be looking into other options for recruiting further volunteers amongst the tenants. He went on to say around the Newsletter and the survey costs that it cost several £1,000's to print the Newsletters but a significant number of tenants still did not use digital services at this time but would look at a digital strategy in order to keep costs down going forward.

Another Committee Member asked how the Tenant Panel were recruited, for example, could tenants just turn up to it, to which the Housing and Strategic Projects Team Leader replied that tenant membership of the Panel and other forms of tenant engagement/meetings were important and so tenants were more than welcome to attend these – but, if they wished to become a Chairman or member of the relevant group or body then they would need to go through the standard appointment or nomination process for the body they wished to join.

A Member of the Tenant Working Group cited an example of a sheltered housing group going to one of the housing events and who stated they were pleased that their problems were listened to there as well as enjoying the general day out. The Chairman also gave an example of attending a tenant engagement event where they had gone to FestiVale and had filled in one of the tenant surveys.

It was

No.

RECOMMENDED –

- (1) T H A T the monitoring report in relation to the Operational Delivery Plan for the Tenant Engagement Strategy be noted.
- (2) T H A T the Scrutiny Committee be notified of the next FestiVale in order to attend.

Reasons for recommendations

- (1) To ensure that the actions of the Tenant Engagement Strategy are progressed and they drive improvements in the quality of the housing service.
- (2) In order for the Committee to see how the Tenant Engagement Strategy was implemented.

300 1ST QUARTER SCRUTINY DECISION TRACKING OF
RECOMMENDATIONS AND UPDATED WORK PROGRAMME SCHEDULE
2019/20 (MD) –

The report advised Members of progress in relation to the Scrutiny Committee's recommendations and confirmed the updated Work Programme schedule for 2019/20:

- 1st Quarter – April to June 2019 (Appendix A)
- 2018/19 – Uncompleted (Appendix B)
- Updated Work Programme Schedule for 2019/20 (Appendix C).

The Democratic and Scrutiny Services Officers asked that the status of recommendations contained in Appendices A and B be approved and that Appendix C be approved and uploaded to the Council's website.

The Democratic and Scrutiny Services Officer referred to Min. No. 903 (Appendix A) regarding Customer Services Strategy (Housing) – Six Monthly Monitoring Report, that a live demonstration of the digital Homes4U bidding portal be provided to Committee when the service was operational. The officer updated the Committee to say that he had liaised with the Head of Housing and Building Services and that the portal was still not ready at this time and so it would remain ongoing.

The Democratic and Scrutiny Services Officer stated that Min No. 904 (Appendix A) concerning the Review of Services to Leaseholders including the Potential for Introducing a New Leaseholder Sinking Fund was still ongoing. He stated the reason for this was that it was still not in a position to progress at this time. The officer went on to refer to Min. No. 56 – Digital Inclusion Update (3) – that a formal thank you from the Committee to be passed on to all volunteers involved in the digital drop in sessions. The Democratic and Scrutiny Services Officer now had an update from the Operational Manager for Customer Relations who confirmed

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that he had passed on the Committee's request to thank volunteers to the co-ordinator of training activity at Digital Communities Wales to pass on to all the volunteers involved.

The Democratic and Scrutiny Services Officer also referred to Min. Nos. 277, 278 and 815 on Appendix B – these were still labelled as ongoing and were being actively monitored.

A Committee Member noted that for the Forward Work Programme for 18th September, 2019 (Appendix C) there was an item that had not been included in tonight's meeting regarding Families First. The Democratic and Scrutiny Services Officer pointed out this should not have been included on the Forward Work Programme for that date and would be reallocated accordingly.

It was

RECOMMENDED –

(1) T H A T the views of the Committee on the status of the actions listed in Appendices A and B be agreed and the following actions be deemed as completed.

19 June 2019	
Min. No. 56 – Digital Inclusion Update (MD) – Recommended	
(2) That the Committee receives six monthly updates regarding progress towards achieving the Council's Digital Inclusion Strategy.	Added to work programme schedule. Completed
(3) That a formal thank you from the Committee to be passed on to all volunteers involved in the digital drop in sessions.	The comments have been passed onto all volunteers involved. Completed
Min. No. 57 – 4th Quarter Scrutiny Decision Tracking of Recommendations and Proposed Work Programme Schedule 2019/20 (MD) – Recommended	
(2) That the proposed Work Programme Schedule for 2019/20 attached at Appendix E to the report be approved and uploaded to the Council's website.	Uploaded to the Council's website. Completed
9 January 2019	
Min. No. 648 – 3rd Quarter Scrutiny Decision Tracking of Recommendations and Updated Work Programme Schedule 2018/19 (MD) – Recommended	
(3) That a request be passed to the Head of Democratic Services for the Chairmen and Vice-Chairmen Group to consider a change to the status terminology within internal Scrutiny tracking documents.	Following consideration by the Scrutiny Committee Chairmen and Vice-Chairmen Group at its meeting on 24 th July, 2019, it was agreed that the current use of the terminology was acceptable as this ensured that actions were not held over unduly and by

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	adding the action to the Forward Work Programme, this meant that the recommendation would not be lost. It was for the Committee to determine whether the action required further attention or whether the original request had been overtaken by events. Completed
6 March 2019	
Min. No. 817 – Vale of Glamorgan Well-Being / Improvement Objectives and Improvement Plan Part 1 2019/20 (DEH) – Recommended	
That Cabinet be advised of the view of the Committee that greater consideration may be required in meeting Well-being Objective 1 and specifically in relation to social inclusion and tackling isolation and loneliness.	The Committee's views have been forwarded to the Improvement and Development Team for incorporation into an updated report to be presented to Cabinet. Cabinet, on 1 st April, 2019, noted all the Scrutiny Committees' comments. (Min No C635 refers) This recommendation was considered completed at the meeting on 19 June 2019 but was accidentally left off the list of completed actions in the minutes. Completed

(2) T H A T the proposed Work Programme Schedule for 2019/20 attached at Appendix C to the report be approved and uploaded to the Council's website subject to the item regarding Families First being reallocated to another date on the Forward Work Programme.

Reasons for recommendations

- (1) To maintain effective tracking of the Committee's recommendations.
- (2) For information.