

No.

HOMES AND SAFE COMMUNITIES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Minutes of a Remote meeting held on 12th May, 2021.

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

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

Also present: Councillor E. Williams (Cabinet Member for Legal, Regulatory and Planning Services); Ms. H. Smith (Tenant Working Group / Panel Representative) and Ms. B. Hunt (Citizens Advice Cardiff and Vale Representative).

20 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.”

21 APPOINTMENT OF VICE-CHAIRMAN –

RESOLVED – T H A T Councillor Ms. J. Aviet be appointed Vice-Chairman for the Municipal year.

22 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE –

These were received from Mrs. G. Doyle and Mr. A. Raybould (Tenant Working Group / Panel Representatives).

23 MINUTES –

RECOMMENDED – T H A T the minutes of the meeting held on 14th April, 2021 be approved as a correct record.

24 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST –

No declarations of interest were received.

25 PRESENTATION: VALE OF GLAMORGAN'S HOUSING ADVICE HUB / ONE STOP SHOP –

The Committee welcomed Ms. Lorraine Griffiths (Area Manager) and Mr. Nathan Harding (Manager) from Pobl (the commissioned provider for this service), who presented this update in conjunction with the Housing Solutions and Supporting People Team Leader. The main points were as follows:

- The One Stop Shop had been an ongoing action within the Housing Strategy;
- The Welsh Government (WG) had pushed for more 'locality-based support', with the 'One Stop Shop' model providing the most effective and innovative means of offering this with only limited resources. The service model would be highly responsive in that it provided immediate and on the spot support for when service users needed it (for example at the point of crisis) and could offer brief, limited intervention for those users who did not need long term or floating support;
- This service would be accessible to all residents within the Vale of Glamorgan from a central 'hub' (with 'outreach' services to also be provided to residents within the wider Vale of Glamorgan area). This would offer a clear alternative (but at the same time be complementary) to the traditional floating support and thereby help to eliminate waiting lists for people trying to access support as well as enhancing service provision;
- Previous trials of this model had been successful, with Pobl standing out as an effective, passionate, provider of this service;
- An open tender process was carried out and Pobl were awarded the contract;
- Pobl had been pro-active in looking at putting other statutory and non-statutory providers into the One Stop Shop in order to provide a more rounded, 'holistic' service to the public;
- The Scheme went live on 6th April, 2020; due to the pandemic the service had to be run virtually for the first year (via WhatsApp, Zoom and other digital services), as well as providing more traditional telephone support and staying 'open' until the early evenings on weekdays and Saturday mornings;
- The One Stop Shop had now physically opened, subject to social distancing and other restrictions, at a visible and accessible location and had been set up to be as friendly and accessible to the public as possible. The location included the counselling pod, digital inclusion area and tablet loan scheme;
- Pobl acted as a 'gateway' service, not just dealing with the prevention of homelessness, debts, benefits and rents directly, but also referring users to other, complementary, service providers (such as the Council's Housing Department, local foodbanks, Department of Work and Pensions (DWP), Shelter, Mind, Taith and Atal Y Fro) in order to meet service users' longer term needs;
- The One Stop Shop had already made an impact since its start in April 2020, such as assisting local foodbanks and co-ordinating the delivery of food parcels, as well as providing support to learning centres and the DWP by offering their users other forms of help and support;
- Since April 2020, 976 individuals had accessed the One Stop Shop service for various issues, with 76% of users accessing the service having never used such services previously;

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- In terms of next steps for the One Stop Shop, a Strategy Group would be set up including mental health and substance misuse services, employability, criminal justice and others in order to identify issues, trends and feedback from services users and the 'Get Involved' programme was now starting, which helped to get service users integrated back into the community.

Following the presentation, a number of Members raised the following comments and questions:

- Councillor Ms. Brooks was pleased to see this essential service now up and running after a long process. She asked how the service was linking in with the Probation Service, such as with new prison leavers. Mr. Harding and the Housing Solutions and Supporting People Team Leader replied that Pobl/One Stop Shop had a good relationship with the Probation Service, who referred to them directly and also liaised with the Council Housing Services around prisoner leavers in order to house them due to COVID-19 or to deal with prison leavers whose accommodation had fallen through due to a relationship breakdown or similar. This had been largely successful, although some individual cases still slipped through.
- Councillor Mrs. Nugent-Finn felt it would be really useful to have an official launch of the service in order to raise awareness. As part of this, it would be useful to share the contact details for the service with all Elected Members. She also asked if there were any specific support for military veterans and whether One Stop Shop staff were trained around safeguarding and disclosure issues. Ms. Griffiths confirmed that all staff were Level 2 Safeguarding trained and had good links with Local Authority Safeguarding Teams. A physical launch of the One Stop Shop was intended for July in conjunction with COVID-19 restrictions. Support was offered to veterans but not in a specific, tailored way, as other bespoke providers existed but the service would look to link in with such providers going forward.
- The Head of Housing and Building Services wished to add that the One Stop Shop was a service offered outside of the Council remit and so gave service users the opportunity to access services and support outside a formal environment where traditionally they would be less likely to engage with. The Supporting People team also ensured that third sector providers adhered to safeguarding protocols, although the majority of providers went above and beyond with safeguarding measures already. Housing also maintained strong links with the Armed Forces and referred any relevant issues to third sector providers. He asked that Pobl signpost any referrals from an armed forces / veterans' background to the Council / Housing Services directly.
- Councillor Perkes asked if the One Stop Shop service was also being provided away from the Barry 'Hub' and within the rest of the Vale, to which Mr. Harding replied that the majority of services were being provided virtually due to COVID-19, but going forward it was intended to open up similar hubs within Penarth and Llantwit Major Town centres. There was also the possibility of having occasional 'drop-in' centres within the rural Vale as had been done previously in Cowbridge.
- The Chairman also asked about the statistics around support needs and successful outcomes concerning mental health referrals and whether these had been received via other agencies or self-referred. Mr. Harding explained

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that these had been picked up via other providers such as MIND and the Community Mental Health Team as well informal conversations with users. Such persons were referred to not only doctors and specialists but also to peer groups and even encouraged to undertake 'therapeutic' activities such as gardening.

- The Chairman and the Committee wanted to give their thanks to Pobl for their work in getting the One Stop Shop up and running during the pandemic.
- The Chairman also wished to echo comments made by other Members about visiting the One Stop Shop individually (contact details for Pobl would be provided to the Committee shortly in order to arrange this), for a formal launch of this service to go ahead in the near future and that further updates be brought to the Committee in due course.

There being no further questions, the Scrutiny Committee, having considered the presentation, subsequently

RECOMMENDED – T H A T the presentation on the Vale of Glamorgan's Housing Advice Hub / One Stop Shop be noted.

Reason for recommendation

Having regard to the contents of the presentation and discussions at the meeting.

26 ANTI-SOCIAL BEHAVIOUR (ASB) AND SOCIAL COHESION – JOINT WORKING BETWEEN SOCIAL LANDLORDS AND COMMUNITY SAFETY (DEH) –

The report was outlined by the Principal Community Safety Officer regarding the progress made on joint working between the Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB) team within Community Safety and the registered social landlords (RSLs) with properties in the Vale of Glamorgan. Also set out was the challenges and disruption faced by the Community Safety Team during the Covid-19 pandemic as well as the key achievements that had come out of this period when working with the wider Safer Vale Partnership (such as RSLs, South Wales Police, Fire and Rescue Services, Social Services and Youth Services), and through bodies such as the Problem Solving Group (PSG).

Key takeaways from the report were as follows:

- There was a massive increase in ASB Incidents last year compared to the year before which had demonstrated the need for close cooperation between Community Safety and RSLs in order to address ASB effectively and to provide a better response to the communities affected such as joint letters being sent, joint visits (wherever feasible and safe to do so during the Pandemic) to residents involved in ASB as well as the use of skips and deployable CCTV at locations such as Caerleon Road, Dinas Powys in order to deal with ASB and fly tipping (also featured as a case study within the report). This also included identifying activity that did not fall under ASB, such as children playing football on grass verges and explaining to residents why these were not classed as ASB;

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- Due to the pandemic and lockdown, there had been an increase in noise issues and instances of people smoking cannabis being reported by concerned residents. There had been a concerted effort By the Community Safety Team and partners to respond to such issues, to improve the processes around the support given to residents affected by these behaviours and to manage their expectations on what could and could not be done with regard to such incidents as well;
- A key issue that had been identified was the need to move away from relying on information sharing with specific individual RSLs and to transition to a more formalised process as the pandemic had shown that such informal information sharing could be easily disrupted;
- The last year had been particularly challenging for the Community Safety Team and partners and this would continue, due to ongoing COVID-19 restrictions resulting in more people being at home at the start of the Summer period. Work continued to review and allocate resources in order to address these issues on a weekly basis and in collaboration with partners.

Following the presentation, a number of Members raised the following comments and questions:

- Councillor Ms. Brooks referred to the issue concerning not having a central, formal pool of knowledge and an over reliance on specific individuals, asking if this had been acknowledged by the wider Council. The Principal Community Safety Officer replied that this had been flagged within the Safer Vale Strategic Plan as a top priority in order to improve the exchange of information throughout the partnership, although this would take time to implement due to the operational pressures caused by the pandemic.
- Councillor Ms. Aviet asked if the public could directly contact the Safer Vale Partnership or would they need to be referred by them contacting the 101-telephone number or via Councillors. The Officer replied that residents and communities could contact Safer Vale for general help and advice around ASB and other issues directly and she would share the Partnership's telephone number with Members. However, if residents wished to report incidents of ASB, graffiti or noise, then they would need to call 101 (or email 101 if non-urgent) or contact the Council for assistance. The Officer added that Community Safety also went out and did letter drops to local communities in order to inform residents on how to report ASB and other incidents.
- The Head of Housing and Building Services wished to clarify that Community Safety acted as the coordinator for the partners that made up the wider Safer Vale Partnership. Due to the pandemic, raising public awareness of what Safer Vale Partnership / Community Safety were and what they did (such as through events held at Barry Fire station and the Civic Offices) had stopped. This issue would be addressed within the Community Safety Strategy Action Plan in order to raise greater awareness and improve messaging.
- Councillor Mrs. Hanks asked how much the static and mobile CCTV were being used. The Principal Community Safety Officer replied that mobile CCTV had been extremely successful within the Vale in managing ASB. The majority of static cameras used by the Council were installed in 1998 and things had moved on in terms of technology, with both the Council and Police considering the use of mobile cameras to be more up to date, cost effective

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and were able to respond to instances of ASB more quickly. This would mean that the perpetrators and incidents of ASB could also be identified and dealt with far more quickly too.

- Councillor Bird felt that mobile CCTV was the way forward and asked how many deployable CCTV cameras were currently being used by the Council, if there were plans to obtain more and what their running costs were. The Officer replied that there were 9 deployable cameras employed by the Council. These were coordinated by Community Safety and allocated throughout the Vale based upon the needs identified by Community Safety, South Wales Police and in conjunction with the local community and Elected Members. The cost of each mobile camera was £5,000, with another £5,000 revenue cost for each camera which amounted to £10,000 per camera over a 5-year period. The mobile cameras were first deployed in October 2020 and at this time were being piloted and benchmarked so that the final costs and efficiencies could be properly assessed. The image quality of the mobile CCTV units was far better than their static equivalent.
- Councillor Mrs. Perkes raised the issue of the recent and very upsetting case of ASB at Pencoedtre, where the 'Little Forest' was set alight by youths and asked if the Safer Vale were notified of this incident and asked if there was any update on the investigation on this. The Officer responded that they had been informed of this incident, but the investigation was still ongoing, and they were awaiting further updates. Community Safety had been working closely with the Council's Visible Services, Parks and Enforcement Teams in order to tackle rising cases of ASB (including graffiti) in parks and other areas. Key to tackling this issue was to improve intelligence sharing with partners which was a work in progress, with Community Safety regularly liaising with Police and the Council's Visible Services.
- The Head of Housing and Building Services explained that a two pronged approach was needed in order to address youth related ASB, using both the 'stick' of identifying responsible individuals and enforcement, with the 'carrot' or preventative approach, such as using Youth Services to educate, motivate and steer youths away from ASB and related behaviours. He added that such groups had also been impacted by the pandemic adversely, stopping much of the activities that would have diverted youths away from ASB.
- The Chairman referred to the graffiti database held by Community Safety, that kept photographs of graffiti found throughout the Vale, including 'tags' which could help identify those responsible and asked how much it cost for the Council to clean up such graffiti. The Principal Community Safety Officer replied that they unfortunately did not have the figure for this as this sat with the Council's Cleansing Team but believed that such costs would have increased over the last six months. This (and fly-tipping) put pressures on Council services due to the need to ensure that Vale residents continued to live in a safe, clean environment and the Council could only clean on property owned by them.
- Councillor Mrs. Nugent-Finn also wished to add that mobile CCTV was the way forward in terms of tackling ASB and fly tipping (which the Chairman and Councillor Bird also referred to as an issue within the Vale) and felt that this could pay for itself if used in conjunction with penalties or fines. She cited the examples of several English Councils that had successfully used such cameras. The Head of Housing and Building Services replied that one of the

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mobile cameras had been loaned to the Council's Cleansing team in order to identify fly tipping and in relation to other 'covert' type activity.

Having considered the report, the Scrutiny Committee subsequently

RECOMMENDED –

(1) T H A T the developments in joint working between the Community Safety team and social landlords be noted.

(2) T H A T the impact on the ASB and Community Cohesion team caused by the effects of Covid-19 and how the team continued to support the Council's response to the pandemic be noted.

Reason for recommendations

(1&2) Having regard to the contents of the report and discussions at the meeting.

27 UPDATE ON THE COMMUNITY SAFETY STRATEGY ACTION PLAN (DEH) –

The Principal Community Safety Officer outlined the report which provided an update on the progress achieved by the partnership following the implementation of the Action Plan from September 2020 and presentation of the draft to the Committee last year.

The Officer explained that the Strategy had been in part formed by consultation with local communities, partners and Community Safety staff in order to tackle the issue of community safety within the Vale of Glamorgan. Unfortunately, the adoption of the Strategy had been delayed due to operational pressures around the pandemic. However, significant progress had still been made on key areas within the Action Plan.

The Strategy's four priority areas were as follows:

- Preventing and reducing Crime and Disorder. The Partnership was committed to being proactive by employing preventative measures in dealing with crime and disorder as well as more 'reactive' measures such as enforcement;
- Engagement, such as improving the branding of the Partnership, raising the profile of what it did and to increase people's feeling of belonging within the community;
- Safeguarding, this duty and related processes had been gradually adopted throughout the Council and partner agencies; and
- Working together in order to strengthen the Safe Vale Partnership, such as pooling budgets and having more 'joined up' problem solving.

Other key points raised by the Principal Community Safety Officer and the Head of Housing and Building Services were:

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- A Safer Vale Operational Group had been set up to look at all of the community safety issues within the Vale holistically and to ensure that the actions within the Strategy were realised and in order to drive progress on this;
- Due to the pandemic, the Safer Vale Partnership had to change how it worked in order to continue to operate effectively such as sharing information via email and templates which helped to push key actions forward as well as using virtual meetings or conference calls;
- Two delayed actions, designing and distributing new home starter packs that included community information and useful information for new tenants on understanding and dealing with any ASB issues; and the creation of a short partnership video that informs the public on who the Partnership was made up of and what the purpose and remit of the Partnership was within the Vale of Glamorgan would be restarted over the next couple of months;
- The publishing of a monthly 'Community Safety Highlight Report' since April 2020 had been a success in raising public awareness of what the Partnership did and the issues and demands it faced;
- One notable area of success had been the Partnership's work towards improving data systems which had helped to identify 'hotspot' areas for ASB and other community related issues;
- A lot had been learnt by the Partnership over the last year, with the Action Plan being kept under constant review in light of the developments resulting from the pandemic;
- Community Safety had been, as a service, under pressure in terms of resources for some time, but had continued to be supported within the Vale and there had also been a growing realisation by Welsh Government of its ongoing importance. This could be seen with the setting up of the Welsh Strategic Partnership and its review of Community Safety, which offered the Council the opportunity to lobby for further funding and resources as well as 'drawing down' resources from elsewhere.

Following the presentation, a number of Members raised the following comments and questions:

- Ms. Smith (Tenant Representative) stated that the issues around community safety were challenging, complex and there was a lot more work to be done, but, the service seemed to be going in the right direction of travel now.
- The Chairman and the Committee wished to thank the Community Safety Team and the wider Safer Vale Partnership for the work they had done during the pandemic, despite the challenging circumstances.

Having considered the report, the Scrutiny Committee subsequently

RECOMMENDED –

(1) T H A T the progress made against the Safer Vale Partnership Action Plan be noted.

(2) T H A T the partnership work being undertaken to tackle crime and disorder in the Vale of Glamorgan be noted.

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Reason for recommendations

(1&2) Having regard to the contents of the report and discussions at the meeting.

28 4th QUARTER SCRUTINY RECOMMENDATION TRACKING 2020/21 AND PROPOSED ANNUAL FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME SCHEDULE 2021/22 (MD) –

The Chairman, in conjunction with the Democratic and Scrutiny Services Officer, presented the report, which advised Members of progress in relation to the Scrutiny Committee's historical recommendations and the proposed Annual Forward Work Programme Schedule for 2021/22.

The Democratic and Scrutiny Services Officer drew the Committee's attention to the proposed Annual Forward Work Programme Schedule, and the report concerning the Youth Justice Plan for the Committee meeting in July 2021. He asked if the Committee would give its approval for the report to be pushed back to the meeting in October in order to give Officers time to validate the data within the report. If this was agreed by the Committee, he would also update the Work Programme Schedule (prior to it being uploaded) in order to reflect this change.

Councillor Hanks asked when the Digital Inclusion reports, the update on CCTV and the report on the Marcross Package Treatment Work were due to come to the Committee. The Officer replied that the Annual Digital Inclusion report would be coming to the Committee in June 2021 and he would confirm when the related reports would be coming to Committee as soon as he could get the dates from the Operational Manager for Customer Relations. The Head of Housing and Building Services stated that a report concerning the review of CCTV arrangements should be going to Cabinet before the Summer recess. Regarding Marcross, the Council was pressing Natural Resources Wales (NRW) to finish their review and to make a decision on licensing the works required but the tendering process had started anyway in order to give residents an idea on how much the work and plant required would cost subject to approval by NRW. The Officer would come back to the Committee once there was an update on these matters.

Councillor Hanks added that on the Annual Forward Work Programme Schedule, the dates for a report to come to Committee concerning Marcross Package Treatment Work were incorrect. The Democratic and Scrutiny Services Officer stated he would remove these incorrect dates prior to the Work Programme Schedule being uploaded.

Having considered the report, it was subsequently

RECOMMENDED –

(1) T H A T the status of the actions listed in Appendices A to C to the report be agreed.

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(2) T H A T the Cabinet Annual Forward Work Programme for 2021/22 attached at Appendix E to the report, in the context of the Homes and Safe Communities Scrutiny Committee Annual Forward Work Programme 2021/22 content, be noted.

(3) T H A T the 4th Quarter Forward Work Programme attached at Appendix D to the report be noted.

(4) T H A T the Committee's proposed Annual Forward Work Programme Schedule for 2021/22 attached at Appendix F to the report be approved and uploaded to the Council's website, subject to the following amendments being made:

- The Youth Offending Service : Youth Justice Plan (to incorporate Youth Offending Service (YOS) Action Plan) be moved from July to October 2021 in the Work Programme Schedule;
- That the dates given for the Marcross Package Treatment Work report referred to in the "Other Reports / Presentations / Visits requested by Committee" section of the Work Programme Schedule be removed.

Reasons for recommendations

(1) To maintain effective tracking of the Committee's recommendations.

(2&3) Having regard to the contents of the appendix and discussions at the meeting.

(4) For information.