



City and County of Swansea

Minutes of the **Scrutiny Performance Panel – Adult Services**

Multi-Location Meeting - Gloucester Room, Guildhall / MS Teams

Tuesday, 27 September 2022 at 4.00 pm

Present: Councillor S M Jones (Chair) Presided

Councillor(s)

C A Holley
A J Jeffery

Councillor(s)

P R Hood-Williams
J W Jones

Councillor(s)

Y V Jardine
E T Kirchner

Other Attendees

Louise Gibbard

Officer(s)

Amy Hawkins
David Howes
Liz Jordan
Helen St John

Head of Adult Services & Tackling Poverty
Director of Social Services
Scrutiny Officer
Head of Integrated Community Services

1 Disclosure of Personal and Prejudicial Interests

No disclosures of interests were made.

2 Prohibition of Whipped Votes and Declaration of Party Whips

No declarations were made.

3 Minutes of Previous Meeting(s)

The Panel agreed the minutes of the meeting on 2 March 2022 as an accurate record of the meeting.

4 Public Question Time

The following question was received from a member of the public. The Convener put the question to the Cabinet Member for Care Services on their behalf:

QUESTION:

I would like to ask what is being done to provide supported living accommodation for adults with learning disabilities within the Uplands ward? My son has waited 11 years

- he is hard working, polite, well mannered and very quiet, conquering a range of disabilities eg Down's syndrome, autism, communication difficulties, speech and language difficulties and has medication for anxiety and depression. The red tape we have come across is making it impossible to find accommodation in the whole of the huge Uplands ward, the area in which he has lived all his life and in which he is known and well liked, where he attends local surgeries (local GPs, dentist, opticians, podiatrist). His grandparents-were respected and prominent in the area, his parents - 1 a local lecturer and 1 a local comprehensive school teacher, his brothers and nieces all have lived/live in the area. I am now 75 and also care for my husband so the situation will soon be critical as my own health is suffering. Is there hope for something to be considered eg with the old Sancta Maria which has been bought by Coastal? However, my question, again 'what is being done to provide supported living accommodation for people with learning disabilities within the whole of the Uplands Ward?'

RESPONSE FROM CABINET MEMBER:

"In an ideal world we'd love people to have accommodation in their locality where they've got lots of links. Supported living across the County is provided through accommodation with floating support, accommodation with on-site support, shared accommodation with or without on-site support and shared living arrangements. There are currently over 280 supported living arrangements across the County and in Uplands there are 9 self-contained units and 4 properties. We are continuing to look for suitable accommodation for supported living in Uplands. We have identified accommodation that was leading to acquisition but unfortunately the vendor pulled out. Uplands is a tricky one, it doesn't have a wide availability of land to build or suitable properties but the Council and partners are continuing to look at options in this area. We work with registered social landlords like Coastal to develop existing properties and build new supported living accommodation. Specifications for properties to be developed and land is based on the needs of individuals. Where possible it will be in areas of choice but priority is on suitability of the accommodation and the support available for that individual. There are currently 8 units being built in the County and others planned pending land acquisition. In terms of Sancta Maria, obviously Coastal are independent from the Authority, I think their plans for Sancta Maria are at a very early design stage and haven't gone to planning yet, so I can't comment on what they are looking to do there."

Discussion Points:

- Panel queried if person mentioned could end up at Sancta Maria, and which partners the Council works with. Informed Sancta Maria is owned by Coastal. Plans for Sancta Maria are not known yet. Council works with a number of registered social landlords including Coastal, Pobl and others.
- Panel queried if Council has any input into their portfolios ie when plans are drawn up do they ask if certain accommodation needs to be allocated. Informed yes, Housing would be able to give full answer. In terms of Population Needs Assessments, look at market stability reports and what is needed in the market.

5 Role of the Adult Services Scrutiny Performance Panel

Members discussed the role of the Panel. The Convener raised a number of points under the section on Effective Working.

The Panel agreed to invite Tony Beddow to sit on the Panel as a co-optee for the municipal year 2022-23. (*Post meeting note: Tony Beddow has accepted this invitation.*)

6 Presentation - Overview of Adult Services in Swansea

Louise Gibbard, Cabinet Member for Care Services presented an overview of Adult Services in Swansea, including challenges and priorities.

Discussion Points:

- Panel queried if existing contracts with the private sector would need to be renegotiated as cost of living is getting worse and if there is enough flexibility in the budget for this, and to increase staff pay to retain staff. Informed Council is currently working with commissioned partners in terms of fee setting and charges for the next year. There is also work being undertaken around the real living wage and the Council's aspiration to support this.
- Council went through a major recommissioning process 4 or 5 years ago, Panel queried if it is going to go through another one, if there has been any analysis of those contracts to see if they were effective before going out to recommission again, and if any users were involved in the reviews. Officers confirmed that the Service reviews, on a cyclical basis, projects and initiatives it funds in terms of performance and quality. Users are involved in the reviews and co-production is a very important part of the Service.
- Panel queried actions being taken to tackle sickness absence in Social Services. Informed a lot of work is going on to support this. Cabinet Member will circulate a list of what is being done by the Service regarding wellbeing and supporting staff.
- Panel thanked the staff for all they have done over last few years and paid tribute to Local Area Coordinators who have supported people in the communities.
- Panel stated there is an active volunteer service in Swansea that could possibly be utilised to relieve stress of staff who have extra workload due to covering absence. Cabinet Member agreed that with respect to community-based approaches and LACs, they are fantastic at putting people in touch with local community services which are often run by volunteers.
- Panel heard the Service had been successful in recruiting more social workers but queried if this was at the detriment of other authorities, or if new potentially qualified people were coming into the industry at this time. Informed it is a bit of both and that it is a national challenge, and that something needs to be done at a Welsh Government level to attract people into the profession across the country.

Actions:

- Cabinet Member to circulate a list to the Panel of what is being done by the Service regarding wellbeing and supporting staff.

7 Draft Work Programme 2022-23

The Panel agreed the Work Programme for 2022-23.

The meeting ended at 4.40 pm