



City and County of Swansea

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

Committee Room 3A - Guildhall, Swansea

Thursday, 20 June 2019 at 4.00 pm

Present: Councillor P M Black (Chair) Presided

Councillor(s)

E T Kirchner
P K Jones

Councillor(s)

V M Evans
S M Jones

Councillor(s)

C A Holley

Co-opted Member(s)

T Beddow

Co-opted Member(s)

K Guntrip

Other Attendees

Mark Child
Andrea Lewis

Cabinet Member - Care, Health & Ageing Well
Cabinet Member - Homes & Energy

Officer(s)

David Howes
Liz Jordan
Mark Wade
Darren Williams

Director of Social Services
Scrutiny Officer
Head of Housing & Public Health
Programme Planning and Delivery Manager

Apologies for Absence

Councillor(s): J A Hale, P R Hood-Williams, Y V Jardine, J W Jones, H M Morris and G J Tanner

1 Disclosure of Personal and Prejudicial Interests.

Disclosures of interest – Chris Holley.

2 Prohibition of Whipped Votes and Declaration of Party Whips

No declarations were made.

3 Appoint/Confirm Convener of the Panel and Confirm Co-optees

Peter Black was confirmed as Convener of the Panel.
Katrina Guntrip and Tony Beddow were confirmed as co-optees on the Panel.

4 Notes of previous meeting

The Panel received the notes of the meeting on 16 April 2019 and agreed as an accurate record.

5 Public Question Time

One question was asked by a member of the public:

- *Are you aware of the latest position regarding the Council's contract with RNIB (Royal National Institute of Blind people)?*

It was agreed that this question be dealt with under item 9 on the agenda.

6 Wales Audit Office Report on Housing Adaptations

Andrea Lewis, Cabinet Member for Homes and Energy, Mark Wade, Head of Housing and Public Health and Darren Williams, Programme Planning and Delivery Manager, Housing Renewals and Adaptations attended to brief the Panel on the WAO review of Housing Adaptations. This included the background to the review, recommendations on improvement and progress made both nationally and locally in implementing the recommendations.

Discussion points:

- Very negative report nationally with the same things having been recommended in three reports over the last 10 years. Council does not think this applies to Swansea.
- Council's indicator for delivering Disabled Facilities Grants has improved from 340 days in 2015-16 to 235 days in 2018-19. The target for this year is 255 days. This is still above the national average waiting time.
- PIs are not a perfect measure of performance as Authorities look at it in different ways.
- Occupational Therapy service has been brought in house. There should be a unified assessment as duplication with Occupational Therapists from Health and Social Services.
- Difficult to do anything on unified adaptations process between Housing Associations and Council as they are funded differently. There is currently a problem of inconsistency. Welsh Government needs to sort this out and undertake a national review.
- Council has fed back to Welsh Government that there is a need to ensure All Wales Categorisation is categorised properly.
- Council made decision in last budget round not to cut housing adaptations budget in terms of leaving it at the current level, given that demand had increased. This will need to be reviewed year-on-year. If demand exceeds budget, waiting times will go up.

- 'Adapt' has been very successful. It has helped not to waste capital monies by leaving equipment in properties and matching new tenants to adapted homes.
- Panel would like to see more equitable level of waiting days for adaptations between private and council properties.
- Panel concerned whether the Council is doing the right thing by adapting certain properties that are difficult or expensive to adapt and queried whether it would be more cost effective for the Council to move tenants to more easily adapted properties. Informed there is a process for evaluating if an adaptation is value for money.
- £36,000 is the maximum that can be received for a Disabled Facilities Grant. Council currently tops this up if needed but may need to look at this in the future.
- Anyone can make an application for housing adaptations – individuals and professionals on behalf of an individual.
- Council manages a Framework of Contractors. If a contractor is employed within the framework, the Council is obliged to resolve any performance issues. If people employ contractors themselves there are limited sanctions the Council can take if any issues arise.
- There is a performance evaluation assessment for every scheme of adaptations completed using the Council's Framework of Contractors, scored under various performance headings.

Actions:

- Send letter to Andrea Lewis from Convener on behalf of the Panel.
- Andrea Lewis to provide Panel with proposals to achieve better delivery times for council tenants.

7 Panel Review of the Year 2018/19 and draft Work Programme 2019/20

Panel members reviewed their year on the Adult Services Panel and completed 4 questions:

1. What has gone well?

- The level of quality of debate has been good
- Level of support from staff has been good
- There has been real challenge to Cabinet Members and officers from Council and Health Board
- Some progress in respect of changing thinking on budget
- Update on policy commitments item was good
- Commissioning reviews and how we assess contracts. Level of commitment and debate – very good.
- Performance data – getting better understanding of this, more focus and more detailed
- Scrutiny of Health Board. Getting them in front of us managed to unblock some of the issues.

2. What has not gone so well?

- Visits – not gone too well so far as only two people turned up for first visit. This does not give a good impression.
- Scrutiny of the budget - Not happy with amount of time Panel has to do this. The Panel needs to use this process to understand what the Council is trying to do with the money. Need papers to be available sooner so have time to go through it properly before the scrutiny meeting. Also officers on the front line appear to have no link to the budget.
- Scrutiny of Western Bay did not go well. Need to rethink how we interact with them.

3. Has the Panels work programme been focussed on the right things?

- May help to look at morale of staff locally particularly sickness of staff in Adult Services
- Not talking to users of service enough. Invite some users to tell us their experiences. Third Sector organisation could arrange a round table event for some service user groups on their home ground, to get their views on a certain subject (Carers Centre, service user forums).

4. What have we learned that will help us with future Adult Services scrutiny?

- The Panel has been persistent and brought things out into the open.

Panel Members agreed the Work Programme for 2019/20.

Actions:

- Add 'Sickness of staff in Adult Services' to work programme.
- Panel Members to let Scrutiny Officer know if a topic comes up in work programme that it would be useful to hold a round table event with service users for. Could speak to them before speaking to officers at the Panel meeting.
- Scrutiny Officer to look into possibility of round table event with service users for item 'Supported Living Developments for Mental Health and Learning Disability Services' scheduled for 24 September Panel meeting.

8 Correspondence received by Convener of the Panel

Mark Child, Cabinet Member for Care, Health and Ageing Well and Dave Howes, Director of Social Services attended to brief the Panel on this issue.

Correspondence had been received by the Convener of the Panel concerning termination of the Council's contract with RNIB.

Discussion Points:

- Panel informed officers are reviewing all contracts with providers. This is Council policy based on budget.

- Regarding Council's contract with RNIB. Council's view and RNIB's view of what contract is, is different. Council has made decision to postpone the notice of termination of this contract for time being until it has been reviewed, including speaking to RNIB. They will then feed back.
- Council did not have alternative provision to put in place when it came to decision to cancel contract with RNIB as there was no intention to replace it with another service as thought it was commissioning something different, which was being provided elsewhere.

Actions:

- Cabinet Member to provide update at next meeting.
- Panel to receive list of grants awarded and now ceased.

9 Letters

Letters received and considered by the Panel.

Actions:

- Convener to write back to Cabinet Member about Local Area Coordination – Report provided with response from CM has already been seen by the Panel. Panel would like to see more on performance data and will wait until this is available to bring back to the Panel. Panel is looking for progress towards PIs.

The meeting ended at 5.45 pm



To:
Councillor Andrea Lewis
Cabinet Member for Homes and Energy

Please ask for: Scrutiny
Gofynnwch am:
Scrutiny Office 01792 637314
Line:
Llinell
Uniongyrchol:
e-Mail scrutiny@swansea.gov.uk
e-Bost:
Date 08 July 2019
Dyddiad:

Summary: This is a letter from the Adult Services Scrutiny Performance Panel to the Cabinet Member for Homes and Energy following the meeting of the Panel on 20 June 2019. It covers the Wales Audit Report on Housing Adaptations.

Dear Cllr Lewis

The Panel met on 20 June to discuss the Wales Audit Office Report on Housing Adaptations and follow up on progress with recommendations. We would like to thank you, Mark Wade and Darren Williams for attending to present the item and answer the Panel's questions. We appreciate your engagement and input.

We are writing to you to reflect on what we learnt from the discussion, share the views of the Panel, and, where necessary, raise any issues or recommendations for your consideration and response. The main issues discussed are summarised below:

Wales Audit Office Report on Housing Adaptations

The Panel felt this was a very negative report nationally with the same things having been recommended in three reports over the last 10 years, showing that progress has not been made. You informed us that you do not think this applies to Swansea.

We were pleased to hear that the Council's indicator for delivering Disabled Facilities Grants has improved from 340 days in 2015-16 to 235 days in 2018-19 and that the target for this year is 255 days. However, it is still above the national average waiting time and the Panel will be looking for further improvements.

OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY / TROSOLWG A CHRAFFU

SWANSEA COUNCIL / CYNGOR ABERTAWE

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We heard that PIs are not a perfect measure of performance as Authorities look at them in different ways.

The Panel was pleased to hear that the Occupational Therapy service has been brought in house. We feel there should be a unified assessment as there is duplication with Occupational Therapists from Health and Social Services.

We were informed that it is difficult to do anything on a unified adaptations process between Housing Associations and the Council as they are funded differently. The Panel felt there is currently a problem of inconsistency. We heard that the Welsh Government needs to sort this out and undertake a national review. Panel feels anything that can be done locally would help.

We heard that the Council has fed back to Welsh Government that there is a need to ensure that the All Wales Categorisation is categorised properly. We were pleased to hear this.

You informed us that the Council made a decision in the last budget round not to cut the housing adaptations budget, in terms of leaving it at the current level, given that demand had increased but that this will need to be reviewed year-on-year. We heard that if demand exceeds budget, waiting times will go up.

You also informed us that 'Adapt' has been very successful. It has helped not to waste capital monies by leaving equipment in properties and matching new tenants to adapted homes.

The Panel expressed its concern about whether the Council is doing the right thing by adapting certain properties that are difficult or expensive to adapt and queried whether it would be more cost effective for the Council to move tenants to more easily adapted properties. We were informed that there is a process for evaluating if an adaptation is value for money.

We heard that £36,000 is the maximum that can be received for a Disabled Facilities Grant and that the Council currently tops this up if needed but may need to look at this in the future.

We asked if anyone can make an application for housing adaptations and heard that individuals can and professionals on behalf of an individual.

We heard that the Council manages a Framework of Contractors. If a contractor is employed within the framework, the Council are obliged to resolve performance issues. However, if people employ contractors themselves there are limited sanctions the Council can take if any issues arise.

We were informed that there is a performance evaluation assessment for every scheme of adaptations completed using the Council's Framework of Contractors, scored under various performance headings. The scoring mechanism includes the possibility of a warning for a contractor for performance that needs improvement, or where there is an instance of serious poor performance or continued need to improve performance on successive jobs, there is a possible sanction of removing contractors from the framework.

Finally, we noted that the waiting time for improvements for council housing is marginally longer than that for private sector housing. As the obstacles to improving a council home are significantly fewer than a similar adaptation in the private sector, we would have expected this position to be reversed. We would like to hear proposals to achieve better delivery times for council tenants.

Your Response

We hope you find this letter useful and informative. We would welcome your comments on any of the issues raised but please provide a written response by Monday 29 July 2019 to the following:

1. We would have expected the waiting time for improvements to council housing to be less than that for private sector housing. We would like to hear proposals to achieve better delivery times for council tenants.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Peter Black', written in a cursive style.

PETER BLACK
CONVENER, ADULT SERVICES SCRUTINY PANEL
CLLR.PETER.BLACK@SWANSEA.GOV.UK



To:
Councillor Mark Child
Cabinet Member for Care, Health and
Ageing Well

Please ask for: Scrutiny
Gofynnwch am:
Scrutiny Office 01792 637314
Line:
Llinell
Uniongyrochol:
e-Mail scrutiny@swansea.gov.uk
e-Bost:
Date 08 July 2019
Dyddiad:

Summary: This is a letter from the Adult Services Scrutiny Performance Panel to the Cabinet Member for Care, Health and Ageing Well following the meeting of the Panel on 20 June 2019. It covers the Wales Audit Office Report on Housing Adaptations, Review of the year and draft Work Programme and correspondence received by Convener of the Panel.

Dear Cllr Child

The Panel met on 20 June to discuss the Wales Audit Office Report on Housing Adaptations and follow up on progress with recommendations, Panel Review of the Year 2018/19 and draft Work Programme 2019/20 and Correspondence received by the Convener of the Panel. We would like to thank you, Andrea Lewis, Dave Howes, Mark Wade and Darren Williams for attending to present the items and answer the Panel's questions. We appreciate your engagement and input.

We are writing to you to reflect on what we learnt from the discussion, share the views of the Panel, and, where necessary, raise any issues or recommendations for your consideration and response. The main issues discussed are summarised below:

Wales Audit Office Report on Housing Adaptations

A letter has been sent to Cllr Andrea Lewis on this item and is attached for your information.

Panel Review of the Year 2018/19 and draft Work Programme 2019/20

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Panel Members reviewed their year on the Adult Services Panel and completed four questions. Their thoughts are shown below for your information:

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- The level of quality of debate has been good
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4. What have we learned that will help us with future Adult Services scrutiny?

- The Panel has been persistent and brought things out into the open.

We agreed the Work Programme for 2019/20 and this is attached for your information.

Correspondence received by Convener of the Panel

Correspondence has been received by the Convener of the Panel concerning the termination of the Council's contract with RNIB. You and Dave Howes attended to brief the Panel on this issue.

We were informed that officers are reviewing all contracts with providers. This is Council policy based on budget.

We heard that with regard to the Council's contract with RNIB, the Council's view and RNIB's view of what the contract is, is different. We also heard that a decision has been made to postpone the notice of termination of this contract for the time being until it has been reviewed, including speaking to RNIB and that you will provide an update on this at the next meeting of the Panel.

We were informed that the Council did not have alternative provision to put in place when it came to the decision to cancel the contract with RNIB, as there was no intention to replace it with another service, as you thought you were commissioning something different that was being provided elsewhere.

You agreed to provide a list of grants awarded and now ceased.

Letters

Thank you for your response to the Convener's letter dated 13 May 2019 and the report on LACs attached. We have already seen this report and would like to see more on local performance data. We are happy to wait until this is available to bring back. We are looking for progress towards Performance Indicators.

Your Response

We hope you find this letter useful and informative. We would welcome your comments on any of the issues raised but please provide a written response by Monday 29 July 2019 to the following:

1. Provide a list of grants awarded and now ceased.

Yours sincerely



PETER BLACK
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CLLR.PETER.BLACK@SWANSEA.GOV.UK