

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE ECONOMY, RESIDENTS, COMMUNITIES AND GOVERNANCE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE HELD AT BY TEAMS ON MONDAY, 1 JUNE 2020

PRESENT: County Councillor M J Dorrance (Chair)
County Councillors K W Curry, D O Evans, J Gibson-Watt, G Jones, I McIntosh, J Pugh, D Selby and L Skilton

Cabinet Portfolio Holders In Attendance: County Councillors J Evans (Portfolio Holder for Economic Development, Housing and Regulatory Services), H Hulme (Portfolio Holder for Environment), G Breeze (Portfolio Holder for Corporate Governance and Engagement), A Davies (Portfolio Holder for Finance, Countryside and Transport), and R Powell (Portfolio Holder for Young People and Culture).

Officers: Dr C Turner (Chief Executive), Nigel Brinn (Corporate Director - Economy and Environment), Clive Pinney (Head of Legal and Democratic Services), Wyn Richards (Scrutiny Manager and Head of Democratic Services), Ashley Collins (Senior Manager - Waste & Recycling Services) and Dafydd Evans (Service Manager Housing Solutions)

1.	APOLOGIES
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There were no apologies for absence.

2.	DISCLOSURES OF INTEREST
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The Committee did not receive any declarations of interest from Members relating to items for consideration on the agenda.

3.	DECLARATION OF PARTY WHIPS
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The Committee did not receive any disclosures of prohibited party whips which a Member has been given in relation to the meeting in accordance with Section 78(3) of the Local Government Measure 2011.

4.	SCRUTINY OF BUSINESS CRITICAL ACTIVITIES
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4.1. Homelessness

Documents Considered:

- Extract from the Portfolio Holder Update – statistics to 20th May, 2020.

Issues Discussed:

- Updated statistics provided for 1 June 2020:

Stat	01/06/2020	Comments
No. of live homeless cases	286	
No. of homeless households in TA (excluding B&B)	97	
No. of households in B&B	18	
Number of new properties identified to boost temporary	63	54 are PCC properties, 1 Pobl, 1

accommodation provision		Grwp Cynefin, 7 MWA.
Number of (known) people still rough sleeping	5	
Number of homelessness presentations during last two weeks	22	(18/5/20 to 1/6/20) 19 for the same period last year
Number of homeless presentations since 1st March 2020	180	127 for the same period last year
Reasons for homelessness for presentations since 1st March		Top reason is still non-violent breakdown of relationship with partner, closely followed by parents no longer able or willing to accommodate. Last year it was loss of rented accommodation - this is now in third place. Violent breakups remain higher than last year. Increase with regard to rent arrears in PRS compared with last year.
Breakdown of age-bands for presentations since 1st March	See Age Bands tab	Top age band is 36-59 which is the same as last year and this age group has seen the biggest increase. More 16-17 yr olds this year

- Questions:

<p>Difference between Powys and Wales average is pronounced, over 80% of ours is single persons compared to 60% across Wales. Also this is not just finding a home for individuals but extra resources needed from social care, third sector etc. Is the Council getting enough support for these individuals and providing accommodation and support permanently which is the way forward.</p>	<p>Single person households is the main issue for Powys at present. Powys currently has only around 100 general purpose single person flats. The temporary accommodation being used is larger than needed for individuals or couples, so alternatives will be needed following the end of lockdown which are not available in the social sector. Powys last year asked Welsh Government to be involved in a private sector leasing scheme pilot, but had been unsuccessful. Powys does rely on</p>
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	<p>the private sector to house single persons.</p> <p>Welsh Government has made £20m available to all Welsh local authorities and Powys will be bidding for additional support and funding. One area identified as lacking is Assertive Outreach Support i.e. support which sticks with an individual wherever they go. Current support provision is also being reviewed with social care.</p>
What is the number of known rough sleepers?	There are currently 5 rough sleepers in Powys.
Is the aim to eliminate all rough sleepers in Powys and what is the timescale?	Offers of accommodation have been made to the individuals but they are not taking these up. The Service is engaging with these individuals and they are aware of their obligations under the Covid-19 restrictions.
Is this a seasonable effect?	Possibly.
Success of the homelessness cell is something to be celebrated, but because of that consideration was being given to standing this cell down, which has been deferred, but as there continues to be a problem is it appropriate to consider this.	<p>The Portfolio Holder had indicated that he wanted the Cell to continue not be stood down, but there was a need to look at frequency of meetings and engagement with other partners. The Council needs to make sure that it receives an appropriate share of the funding which is available. The focus of the cell now is to make temporary arrangements more permanent i.e. medium to long term basis.</p> <p>The Council is looking at the Private sector leasing scheme, acquiring more single person accommodation and converting some larger properties into flats. Due to the positive feedback from partner organisations, it is likely to continue in some form.</p>
Section 33 agreements for people who need support with drug misuse and Council and Sections 68 and 75 of the Homelessness Wales Act regarding the Council's responsibility to secure accommodation for those in priority need. Can you clarify the support provided not only substance misuse but also mental health support and ongoing well-being coaching and support.	The Service is working with Adult Services Commissioning and assessing high, medium and low needs in terms of support for people in temporary accommodation. The profile of those in temporary accommodation indicate more people in the medium to high support category. Meetings being held with Adult Services Commissioning and the provider

	Pobl to review the support provided and identify any additional support required.
Has any analysis been done to work out if there are any patterns in relation to homelessness cases and protected characteristics, and is there any analysis of the geographic distribution of homelessness cases i.e. is it more prevalent in some areas than others.	Protected characteristics and age, age bands are being monitored closely. The main age band is 36 to 59 but there has been an increase in presentations from younger people. There is information on the other protected characteristics, but there are no particular anomalies or patterns in these statistics. Geographic distribution – prior to Covid-19 North Powys had a higher level of homelessness compared to South Powys. Since Covid-19 there has been an increase across the county and no particular increases in any specific areas.

Outcomes:

Action	Action By / Completion Date
Homelessness Cell – further progress reports to the Committee	WR / DE

4.2. Household Waste Recycling Centres (HWRCs)

Documents Considered:

- None

Issues Discussed:

- Since pandemic, work being undertaken with Welsh Government and CSS Waste Wales Working Group to co-ordinate responses. Plan was to open sites up once clear guidance was available. Traffic management plans have been put in place, risk assessments on the site, and much work done on communications with the public. The use of a booking system was considered but based on the experience of other Councils it did not appear to be essential to have a booking system in place.
- When the centres were opened there were some queues, but the Council kept its information channels up to date advising the public of the current situation.
- Issues at Lower Cwmtwrch led to an adjustment to the traffic management plan which overcame the issue. Consideration is being given to allowing access to vans and permit holders on an ongoing basis.

- **Questions:**

Planning has worked as well as communications. Can we continue the communications especially about weekly waste collections and the ability to collect more from the kerbside.	Powys has collected more from the kerbside during the pandemic and the recycling rate has increased.
Need to thank the public for their co-	Communications will continue with

operation and collecting more at the kerbside should continue rather than people taking it to the HWRCs.	the public and the response from the public has been positive.
Risk assessments at the HWRCs were high, but the mitigation is disinfecting hand rails etc is done hourly. What assurance does the Council have that this is taking place.	Regular meetings being undertaken with the contractor, Powys staff are on site. It is Potters' risk assessment and they have their own Health and Safety Manager who ensures this is happening. This is being monitored closely and staff are aware of the requirements.
Is there any reporting framework to the Council from Potters to assure us that this is being done as its not only a risk to staff but also the Powys population.	Potters do report back to the Council and we do have staff on site, but there is no guarantee that this is happening.
The high risk is mitigated to medium based on the control measures. It does not seem that there are any guarantees that this is being done. There is no reporting framework. Why has this not been put in place.	It is the responsible contractor's role to put these measures in place. The Committees concerns will be raised with the contractor.
We were assured that this is the case, but this is not in place and not written into the agreement. It would be expected that the Council would have put a system in place so that there are regular reports to the Council to ensure this is being done.	The Corporate Director – Environment and Economy suggested that the Senior Manager - Waste & Recycling Services discuss with the contractor at the forthcoming meeting whether a system of recording and feeding back to the Council can be put in place.
Were security personnel deployed on site at HWRCs and what impact did that have	A security company was employed. There have been no particular issues.
Infection spread on the site, should individuals have to wear gloves and a mask and should these be provided to the public.	As part of the risk assessment, not deemed necessary for the public to wear masks as they have to maintain social distancing. Site staff have masks and visors. 2 metre distance outside the site is easy to maintain. This is why it was deemed not necessary for the public to wear masks and gloves.
What is the rationale for not wearing gloves.	Cleansing is happening on the site and the public are responsible for washing their own hands after visiting the site.
How will sites be managed with staff vacancies, if trace, track and protect identifies staff who have to self isolate. Is there any risk to service delivery and what are the contingency plans.	Staffing is an issue for the contractor. Trace, track and protect could have an issue. Agency staff would be used and they would have a bank of agency staff as would other employers.

Outcomes:

Action	Action By / Completion Date
Committee to receive an update on whether the Council is receiving cleanliness reports from the contractor on HWRCs	NB

5. SCRUTINY WORK PROGRAMME

The Committee noted that the next meetings of the Committee would be held as follows:

18/06/2020	15.00 – 16.00
02/07/2020	14.00 – 15.00
16/07/2020	14.00 – 15.00
30/07/2020	14.00 – 15.00

Potential items for consideration:

- Regulatory Services
- Support for Businesses
- Contact Tracing
- Grass Cutting
- Library Reopening
- Increase in places for people to walk safely, cycle lanes, pedestrianisation of towns. This is part of enhanced active travel arrangements.

Update Information arising from previous meeting:

- Valuation Service – valuation of new businesses – carry forward
- Emergency Childcare Transport – Supply of hand sanitiser and PPE – this has been resolved and can be closed.

At last Group Leader's Meeting it was noted that the Strategy document for the Mid Wales Growth Deal had been submitted to Welsh and UK Governments. Members have not seen a copy of this document. Therefore, could this be circulated to Members. Discussion are also ongoing with Ceredigion County Council regarding the joint scrutiny of the Mid Wales Growth Deal.

Outcomes:

Action	Action By / Completion Date
That Emergency Childcare Transport be removed from the list of updates required.	WR
That a copy of the Mid Wales Growth Deal Strategy document be circulated to the Committee	WR / NB
That the next meeting consider Library Reopening and Grass Cutting	WR

County Councillor M J Dorrance (Chair)