
CARE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

18/03/2021

Present: Councillor Dewi Roberts (Chair).
Councillor Beth Lawton (Vice-chair).

Councillors: Menna Baines, Annwen Daniels, Anwen J Davies, Alan Jones Evans, Berwyn Parry Jones, Gareth Tudor Morris Jones, Linda Ann Jones, Eryl Jones-Williams, Olaf Cai Larsen, Dafydd Owen, Peter Read,

Ex-officio Member: Councillor Edgar W Owen

Officers present: Bethan Adams (Scrutiny Advisor), Einir Rhian Davies (Democracy Services Officer), Natalie Lloyd Jones (Democracy Services Officer), Llywela Haf Owain (Senior Language and Scrutiny Advisor)

Present for item 5:

Councillor Dafydd Meurig (Cabinet Member - Adults, Health and Well-being and Relationship with the Health Board), Aled Davies (Head of Adults, Health and Well-being Department), Arwel W Owen (Assistant Head of Housing and Well-being), Councillor Craig ab Iago (Cabinet Member - Housing and Property), Dafydd Gibbard (Head of Housing and Property Department)

Present for item 6:

Councillor Craig ab Iago (Cabinet Member - Housing and Property Department), Dafydd Gibbard (Head of Housing and Property Department), Carys Fôn Williams (Senior Housing Operational Manager), Hedd Morlais Tomos (Housing Supply Manager)

1. APOLOGIES

Councillor R Medwyn Hughes and Councillor Linda Morgan

2. DECLARATION OF INTEREST

The following members declared a personal interest in item 5 on the agenda for the reasons noted:

Councillor Cai Larsen as he sat on the Board of Adra

Councillor Berwyn Parry Jones as he sat on the Board of Adra

The members were not of the opinion that they were prejudicial interests, and they did not withdraw from the meeting during the discussion on the item.

The following members declared a personal interest in item 6 on the agenda for the reasons noted:

Councillor Cai Larsen as he sat on the Board of Adra

Councillor Berwyn Parry Jones as he sat on the Board of Adra

Councillor Linda A Jones as she was a Director of Seren Ltd

The members were not of the opinion that they were prejudicial interests, and for this reason they did not withdraw from the meeting during the discussion on the item. Councillor Linda A Jones left at the start of the discussion.

3. URGENT ITEMS

None to note.

4. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

The Chair signed the minutes of the previous meeting of this committee held on 14 January 2021 as a true record.

5. EXTRA CARE AND HOUSING PROVISION ON THE PENRHOS SITE, PWLLHELI

The Cabinet Member gave an update on developments at the Penrhos site. It was confirmed that this would not be a like-for-like development, but an opportunity to look at the needs of the people of Gwynedd. He confirmed that sessions had already been held in an attempt to gain an understanding of those needs.

The Assistant Head of Housing and Well-being guided members through the report, expanding on certain matters as noted below.

It was noted that the aim of the development was to create a housing site with care elements by internal partnership between the Housing and Property department and the Adults department.

In response to a question regarding collaboration with Clwyd Alyn, it was noted that the scheme had been discussed with all Gwynedd housing associations. The other housing associations felt they had insufficient experience for a project of this scale. There had been good collaboration with Clwyd Alyn; its staff had committed to the language policy and held discussions in Welsh and Polish. It was confirmed that Clwyd Alyn had considerable experience in the care field.

A concern was noted regarding the situation in terms of the lack of nursing care and dementia care facilities in Pen Llŷn and the south of the county. An intention to move forward to prepare plans and attract funding for the site in 2021 was highlighted, with the hope of commencing with the work in 2022. It was confirmed that reflecting on the situation of rural areas was an important part of the discussion. It was also confirmed that the Council had invested in dementia beds, but that it was very difficult to attract significant investment in the field. It was noted that the situation with Penrhos Home had created an opportunity to build something special in this part of the county.

The Assistant Head of Housing and Well-being confirmed that a need analysis was underway as a number of nursing beds had been lost at Penrhos.

In response to a question regarding the cost of the development, it was expressed that this could be between £5m and £20m for such an innovative care model.

The vision for the site was noted, namely a sizeable care home, which would include nursing and residential bed, surrounded by sheltered housing, with the concept of a 'care community'. Discussions were underway regarding opportunities to co-locate services and resources.

In response to a question about the main challenges, it was highlighted that the condition of the current building was a big problem, but that the development offered a number of opportunities.

An enquiry was made as to whether contacting Mark Drakeford and Vaughan Gething should be considered, to draw their attention to the problems with staff shortages, so that they could boost the development. It was confirmed that the Penrhos site had been a huge employer of local people and that such a development would be a significant boost to the labour market.

Attention was drawn to the need to give attention to matters such as cycle paths and the public transport provision.

The Cabinet Member thanked the committee members for their observations, emphasising that he would update them regularly.

The Chair noted that the project was like a spider's web. He confirmed that care and the culture around care was changing. He noted this opportunity as one to do something that would set an example for the rest of the county, and it was promised that the community would be involved in the development.

RESOLVED: To accept the report, noting the observations made during the meeting.

6. USE OF THE HOUSING SUPPORT GRANT TO REDUCE HOMELESSNESS IN GWYNEDD

The report was submitted by the Cabinet Member, who noted that there had been an increase in homelessness in Gwynedd. He emphasised that housing individuals in bed and breakfast accommodation was unacceptable, stressing the need to support individuals rather than only offering shelter.

The Head of Department confirmed that the situation had worsened since COVID, with an increase of 71%, which corresponded to 900 individuals, in the number referred to the service during the past year. He referred to the fact that the team dealing with homelessness was a very small team, but that they had a vision to transform the service. It was reported that two new managers had been appointed, which had reduced the burden on the rest of the team, but that the pressure remained. He highlighted his desire to expand the current team in order to offer the best service.

An update was received on the current situation, as well as the intention to develop units across the county. Emphasis was placed on the need to consider possibilities within specific areas. Reference was made to the possibility of using existing buildings in some areas, and converting hostels as support units. The importance of keeping individuals within their own areas and communities as much as possible was noted. The Head of Department noted that he did not wish to use bed and breakfast

accommodation other than in cases of emergency, and that he wanted to develop accommodation across the county.

Gratitude was expressed for the report, noting that one type of service was not likely to be suitable for everyone. The importance of collaborating with agencies and local members who knew the area and its people was noted.

In response to an enquiry regarding maintaining better contact with individuals facing homelessness the Head of Department noted that currently, a single member of staff supported 60 individuals. His desire to reduce this to 25 individuals per member of staff was emphasised. The need to appoint new officers in order to realise this aim was expressed, adding that they were currently receiving applications from suitable individuals.

In response to a question regarding future funding, it was confirmed that there was no definite certainty regarding the grant funding, but the instructions highlighted the need to plan on a long-term basis. It was also confirmed that an audit would be undertaken within the year, to ensure that the grant funding was appropriately spent, and to determine whether the sum was sufficient.

The Cabinet Member made the following observations in bringing the discussion to a close –

1. Collaboration with communities was important and imperative to success.
2. There was a need to work with the funding available, setting the funding within its context
3. Gratitude was expressed for the positive response, which was very encouraging.

Everyone was thanked for the discussion, and it was agreed to share those thanks with the officers.

RESOLVED: To accept the report, noting the observations made during the meeting.

The meeting commenced at 10:30 and concluded at 12:45

CHAIR