



CABINET – 11TH NOVEMBER 2020

SUBJECT: CAERPHILLY CARES

REPORT BY: CORPORATE DIRECTOR FOR SOCIAL SERVICES AND HOUSING

--

1. PURPOSE

The attached report was considered by the Social Services Scrutiny Committee on 20th October 2020 prior to its consideration and determination at Cabinet. The report sought approval to develop the existing Buddy Scheme and Community Regeneration Legacy into the Caerphilly Cares service, which aims to ensure people receive the right support, in the right place, and right time, using a single point of contact through a triage system.

- 1.2 To establish a universal gateway model that provides a central coordination and response team that understands the different needs of individuals at risk or suffering from disadvantage. Providing advice, support and signposting through strength-based assessments to internal and external support services, to enable them to become more resilient and live as independently as possible through a strength based, community centred model and incorporate it into the Caerphilly Cares provision as part of a phased approach to developing an integrated end to end journey through internal and external services for 'at risk' customers.
- 1.3 To create the conditions for community assets to thrive and create a balance between service and community support by removing any barriers and for our services to work alongside communities in ways that are empowering, engaging and meaningful. To stimulate collaborative working within the Council and with partners and, above all, put communities at the heart of what we do.

2. SUMMARY

- 2.1 'Pandemic recovery is a complex and long running process that will involve many agencies and participants. The way processes are undertaken is critical to their success. Recovery is best achieved when the affected community is able to exercise a high degree of self-determination.' Recovering from Emergencies; UK Government 2010.
- 2.2 As cited in 'the front door' to adult social care, auditor general for wales' report, often authorities do not know where gaps in provision lie which has resulted in an inconsistent distribution and provision of services. Even where effective services

exist, poor co-ordination between services and organisations can also limit their effectiveness.

- 2.3 As a result of the pandemic our communities will suffer from economic, health and other social challenges. Well-being issues and inequalities existed in our communities before the pandemic, which has only served to exacerbate these and the coming months could prove particularly difficult after furlough ends. However, conversely, the lockdown also resulted in strengthening of resilience both individually and at community level. Local activities are vital to supporting wellbeing, with new and existing local groups picking up the mantle. Support for these groups is crucial moving forward and should be seen, very much, as part of the offer of support.
- 2.4 The current crisis has provided the Council with an opportunity to harness, support and expand the community resilience demonstrated in many communities across the borough. It provides opportunities for meaningful dialogue with vulnerable people, to assess service and support needs and coproduce services designed to promote long term independence.
- 2.5 This report outlines the reasons for establishing the proposed Caerphilly Cares model as well as the learning from the buddy scheme to date. It explains the model proposed as well as the plans for the transition of the buddy scheme within this model and it makes some recommendations for decision.

3 **SCRUTINY COMMITTEE COMMENTS**

- 3.1 The scrutiny committee were advised that this proposed service although a new initiative is something that has long been an ambition of the authority to implement. The learning achieved through the Buddy Scheme has allowed this to be accelerated into the current expanded proposal.
- 3.2 Members were provided with examples of the targeted work already carried out by the council housing staff for council tenants to help them maximise their incomes and the links established with the Community Connectors. The aim of this service is to expand and extend this type of support for all county borough residents.
- 3.3 The costs outlined in the report are for the initial start-up of the team, but Members were advised that there have been encouraging talks with Welsh Government who are very interested in this service model. It is hoped that this could result in financial support going forward.
- 3.4 The scrutiny committee asked if the funding is for one year and what would happen if additional Welsh Government funding does not come through. It was confirmed that the funding is for one year, but the council will continue to press Welsh Government on this subject. The service will be evaluated during the year and if additional funding isn't made available, it may need to be put forward as a corporate cost pressure. The evaluation will consider that this is a preventative service aiming to reduce pressures on council services. The savings may be through cost avoidance and it is hoped that the benefits can be demonstrated.
- 3.5 Members sought clarity on what success for this service would look like. They were provided with examples such as increased finances for residents of the

county borough or making residents aware of where they can make savings through discounted water rates. The service will aim to explore underlying issues that residents may have by not only dealing with the matter that they make contact about but having a wider conversation to see if they have other concerns.

- 3.6 The scrutiny committee explored the model and the one stop shop approach. Members asked about the staffing model, and it was explained that the team will be made up of existing council staff and some new staff. It is important that those working in this team have a good understanding of what services are available both inside and outside the council.
- 3.7 Members stated that it is important to have good communication, engagement, monitoring, staff training, and support will also be vital to ensure the success of this service. Feedback from residents and follow up were highlighted by Members and it was agreed that it is important for the council to be flexible and respond to changing needs, it is difficult to predict how many demands will be made upon the council going forward but it is likely to be challenging.
- 3.8 The scrutiny committee sought reassurance regarding the views of Unison and if there are likely to be any redundancies as a result. Members were assured that there will be no redundancies and some of the staff are already doing similar work.
- 3.9 Members asked why a regional model hasn't been considered, through working with neighbouring local authorities. Members were advised that it is important to get this working in Caerphilly first there may be opportunities further down the line if the service works.
- 3.10 The scrutiny committee sought clarification on how any overspends are dealt with and were advised that when departments have underspends 50% is then retained by the service area as a service reserve. Then in subsequent years any overspends are in the first instance met from those service reserves. Corporate reserves would only be called upon if there were no service reserves. Alternatively, the service would seek to make spend savings during the financial year.

4 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 4.1 Therefore, the Social Services Scrutiny Committee noted the information contained in the report and unanimously recommend that Cabinet approve the following recommendations as detailed in the attached officers report and for the reasons contained therein: -
- 4.1.1 Endorse the establishment of a Caerphilly Cares service.
- 4.1.2 The allocation of £130k of funding as outlined in the financial implications in the attached report at 10.1 to develop a Caerphilly Cares Central team.
- 4.1.3 The allocation of £155k of funding to enhance the Caerphilly Housing Tenancy Support team to provide financial advice to all residents.

Author: Catherine Forbes-Thompson, Scrutiny Manager – forbec1@caerphilly.gov.uk

Appendices: Report to Social Services Scrutiny Committee 20th October 2020 – Agenda Item 7.