



## **POLICY AND RESOURCES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE – 10TH NOVEMBER 2015**

**SUBJECT: THE USE OF BED AND BREAKFAST ACCOMMODATION FOR  
EMERGENCY HOUSING**

**REPORT BY: ACTING DIRECTOR OF CORPORATE SERVICES AND SECTION 151  
OFFICER**

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- 1.1 The attached report was considered at a Special Policy and Resources Scrutiny Committee meeting on 22nd October 2015, having been prepared in response to a presentation made at Council on 21st April 2015 by members of the Argoed Residents for a Safer Community. At that meeting, the residents outlined their concerns in respect of the use of bed and breakfast (B&B) accommodation for homeless persons and called upon the Authority to support the Residents' Group in bringing about changes to legislation by ceasing its use of B&B accommodation for the housing of vulnerable persons in the county borough. The Interim Chief Executive responded by advising Council that the use of B&Bs for temporary accommodation would be examined at a future meeting of the Policy and Resources Committee.
  - 1.2 The report provided a comprehensive overview in respect of the use of bed and breakfast accommodation within the county borough for households presenting to the Authority as homeless. It detailed the Authority's activities prior to and following the implementation of the Housing (Wales) Act 2014, which has introduced major changes to the way in which homelessness clients must be assisted and housed. It outlined the statutory obligations placed on Local Authorities when discharging their homelessness functions and the procedures operated by Council Officers when dealing with persons presenting as homeless, together with the various options available to the Authority in respect of where homeless persons are accommodated.
  - 1.3 The report outlined the legislative requirements applicable to bed and breakfast accommodation and the manner in which these are inspected by the Authority. It also referenced revised obligations to prison leavers and progress in respect of the development of the recently introduced Prison Leavers Pathway.
  - 1.4 During the course of the meeting, and in addition to the presentation of the Officer's report, the Scrutiny Committee received presentations from Cornerstone Support Services and Argoed Residents for a Safer Community in respect of the use of bed and breakfast accommodation for emergency housing.
  - 1.5 Having given due regard to the Officer's report, the representations made by all parties and the comments received from Members, the Chair summarised the three main points and comments arising from the discussion and expressed the need for these to be conveyed to the appropriate agencies:-
    1. It is of key importance that relevant agencies/partners and local authorities collaborate in respect of the provision of emergency and supported accommodation in cases of homelessness.

As an aside, Officers were tasked with investigating further how other local authorities have successfully ceased the use of B&B accommodation.

2. With regard to the support for homeless clients whilst in B&B accommodation that is provided on a floating basis (as outlined in Section 4.11 of the Officer's report), it was proposed that a further report on this matter be presented to the Health, Social Care and Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee.
  3. The importance of the Welsh Government Transitional funding and Supporting People funding was emphasised, with it proposed that the views of the Scrutiny Committee on this matter be forwarded to the Welsh Government Ministers for consideration.
- 1.6 It was moved and seconded that these findings be endorsed as an accurate record of proceedings, and that they be appended to the Officer's report and presented to the next meeting of the Policy and Resources Scrutiny Committee for ratification. By a show of hands, this was unanimously agreed. As such, it was unanimously agreed that subject to the inclusion of this additional information, the Officer's report be noted.
- 1.7 It was confirmed that the matter of B&B accommodation as emergency accommodation would be brought back to a future meeting of the Policy and Resources Scrutiny Committee for further review. An invitation to this meeting was extended to the representatives from Cornerstone Support Services Ltd and Argoed Residents for a Safer Community.
- 1.8 Members are asked to note for information purposes the findings arising from the meeting (as summarised within this covering report).

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Appendices:

Appendix 1 Report to Special Policy and Resources Scrutiny Committee on 22nd October 2015 – Agenda Item 5