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Fy Nghyf / My Ref : **CM 38102**

Eich Cyf / Your Ref : **Scrutiny/Correspondence/MJH**

Dyddiad / Date: **27th July 2017**

Councillor Mary McGarry
Chair – Joint Children & Young People and Community & Adult Services
Scrutiny Committee

Annwyl / Dear Councillor McGarry

**Re: Joint Children & Young People and Community & Adult Services Scrutiny
Committee Meeting – 19th July 2017**

Thank you for your letter of 20th July following Cllr Hinchey's attendance with the Director at the Joint Scrutiny Committee on 19th July to consider the Annual Report of the Director of Social Services.

In reply to your comments, observations and recommendations we have consulted with the Director and agreed the following joint responses to each issue in the order in which you set them out in your letter.

- A draft copy of the Director of Social Services protocol with the Head of Paid Service be presented to the Committee, before consideration by Cabinet.

Noted and agreed.

- The Challenges facing Social Services be clearly highlighted in future Annual reports.

Noted and agreed.

The Director wishes however, to confirm his understanding of your recommendation. Namely that he does not believe that members were saying that the report does not already identify the challenges appropriately, merely that members welcomed his further verbal articulation of the wider social pressures that are challenging the delivery of social services both overall and nationally.

The Director also wishes to emphasise that the report is a formal document for citizens, regulators and other stakeholders, and is designed

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Cyflawni ein gweledigaeth o ddod y brifddinas orau i fyw ynddi yn Ewrop

Mae'r Cyngor yn croesawu gohebiaeth yn Gymraeg a Saesneg a byddwn yn sicrhau ein bod yn cyfathrebu â chi yn eich dewis iaith boed yn Gymraeg, yn Saesneg neu'n ddwyieithog dim ond i chi roi gwybod i ni pa un sydd well gennych. Ni fydd gohebu yn Gymraeg yn creu unrhyw oedi.

to serve a specific purpose. Namely, to demonstrate the specific delivery challenges facing the Director in relation to his statutory duties under the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014. In this regard, he understood that the Committee accepted that the report fully addresses these as listed on pages 14 and 15. Members will recall nevertheless, that at the meeting, the Director also welcomed the committee's suggestion that his additional verbal articulation of the wider social pressures affecting social services, should be considered for incorporation into future reports.

- A public and young person's version be produced.

Noted and agreed.

As advised at the meeting, an Executive Summary is currently being prepared and will be translated into an "easy read" version before it is published.

- That stakeholders involved in early years preventative work should be referenced in the report.

Noted. It is part of the Director's accountabilities to facilitate and stimulate wider partnership working in order to enhance prevention and early intervention. In order to demonstrate how the Director responded during 2016/17, relevant partnership initiatives are highlighted with some specific examples being identified on pages 24 and 30. The Director accepts nevertheless, that this should be strengthened in the 2017/18 report not least because of the Directorate's overall strategy to substantially shift the balance of effort and resource increasingly in favour of effective prevention and the promotion of independence over the next 5 years.

- That consultation with the third sector needs to be more creative to ensure greater engagement.

Noted and agreed.

The Director would wish to clarify that well timed and flexible arrangements were put in place to enable full third sector engagement and, through the third sector, engagement with citizens directly. The Director was very disappointed by the poor response and as he advised at the meeting, the Directorate is currently considering how to utilise new platforms for direct dialogue with citizens including social media and other forms of communication. Further consideration will therefore, be given to our approach to consultation in relation to the 2017/18 report.

- That the rolling advert for social workers need to be reviewed, to encourage more Welsh speakers to apply.

Noted and agreed.

The Directorate is currently working on an advert that specifically targets Welsh speaking social workers to encourage an increase in applications from Welsh speakers.

- Review the section numbering format of the Annual Report.

Noted. The report has now been amended in this respect, prior to submission to Cabinet.

- Include more comparative information to show progress.

Noted and agreed but there are some unavoidable impediments to achieving this as fully as we would wish.

2016/17 was a unique, transitional year in terms of performance management and measurement due to the introduction of new performance reporting requirements and the new National Outcomes Framework following implementation of the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014. The new reporting requirements created a number of completely new performance indicators (PIs), for which no comparator data is available.

Whilst there will be some potential in the 2017/18 report (i.e. the second full year of the new Act) to enable consideration of an all Wales comparative performance, we should advise that national annual data for a given financial year is not available or published until the following September. This means that by the time of finalising the 2017/18 report, Social Services Directorates across Wales will only be able to draw on comparative data for the 2016/17 year. Whilst this will not prevent us from drawing some tentative comparative conclusions in relation to 2017/18 performance, it is clear that in effect, data is unlikely to become fully robust for comparative purposes until the report for the 2018/19 financial year; thereafter we would expect comparator positions to be much clearer.

Yn gywir / Yours sincerely



**Councillor / Cynghorydd Graham
Hincey
Cabinet Member for Children & Families
Aelod Cabinet dros Blant a Theuluoedd**



**Cllr Susan Elsmore
Aelod Cabinet dros Ofal Cymdeithasol,
Iechyd a Lles / Cabinet Member for
Social Care, Health and Well-being**

