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CHILDREN'S SERVICES DIRECTORATE DELIVERY PLAN 2015/17

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**Reason for the Report**

1. To enable Members to gain an overview of Children's Services, whose work falls within the responsibilities of this Committee, and to scrutinise the Directorate's key achievements during the previous year, their contributions to the Council's Corporate Plan 2015/17, and the future challenges facing Children's Services.

**Issues**

2. This report has been provided to assist Members to gain an overview of the responsibilities vested in Children's Services. An extract from their 2015/17 Delivery Plan has been attached at **Appendix A** and covers:

- Introduction, including contribution to the Corporate Plan 2015/17– Page 3;
- Children's Services' Core Business Overview – Page 5;
- Children's Services' Achievements in 2014/15 – Pages 5 to 6;
- Children's Service Key Aspirations for 2015 – 16 – Page 7;
- Children's Services' Resources – Pages 8 & 9;
- Context and Key Challenges – Page 9;
- Children's Services' Action Plan - Pages 10 to 33. The Action Plan contains the following actions:
  - a. Establish a multi-agency methodology for gathering data and intelligence concerning child sexual exploitation by March 2016.
  - b. Implement the Accelerated Improvement Agenda for Children's Service, including – Improving the system for protecting children from significant

harm by implementing new interagency arrangements for managing referrals by March 2016.

- c. Commence implementation of a new Children and Families Preventative Strategy by October 2015, that enables earlier access to help for families, prevents the need for children being removed from their homes and alleviates the need for costly interventions.
- d. Prepare a Joint Looked After Children Education Delivery Plan, by July 2015.
- e. Improve the effectiveness of transitional support for disabled and vulnerable children approaching adulthood.
- f. Improving the recruitment and retention of Children's Social Workers, and achieves a vacancy rate below 15%.
- g. Expand the range of supported accommodation options for vulnerable young adults.

3. The Directorate's Service Priorities for 2015/16, Part 2 – Core Business priorities: (Page 21 to 32) are stated to be:

- Develop a programme of work to engage effectively with schools and other agencies to ensure referrals are appropriate and of high quality.
- Develop an effective suite of monitoring reports regarding key safeguarding requirements to ensure that compliance is monitored and recorded.
- Progress the remodelling of services for disabled children across Cardiff to improve effectiveness and efficiencies of services.
- Review legal surgery pilot and implement lessons learning to avoid drift and delay in care planning.
- Develop and conclude a proposed model for the delivery of children's social services and social work intervention to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of services.
- Explore the potential for further cohesion between the Early Intervention and Prevention Strategy and the Youth Offending Service.

- Prepare a Looked After Children Strategy that aims to make the experience of being looked after or leaving care the best that it can be within resources, promotes stability.
- Enable children to form secure and permanent attachments, and in collaboration with Education and others, improve, their life chances and outcomes.
- Contribute to joint development of proposals with Health and other partners to support and improve the health of looked after children and care leavers.
- Re-commissioning the supervised contact service to better meet the level and range of need.
- Implement the Enhanced Fostering Scheme to increase the range of services for looked after children with challenging behaviour.
- Improve the effectiveness of pathway planning to ensure that young people are supported in their transition to adulthood.
- Rationalise the social care workforce development partnership on the basis of regional footprint and in collaboration with Cardiff Academy.
- Sustain reduced caseload averages for the duration of the plan.
- Assess capacity to deliver a Welsh bilingual Service.
- Realise 2015-16 savings proposals and refine and develop the medium term financial plan.
- Optimise opportunities for working collaboratively across the region and more widely where there is potential to deliver more effective services.
- Develop a Quality Assurance Framework for Children's Services.
- Assess the potential and identify the key requirements that would enable social work services to be more effectively mobilised.
- Benchmark services performance with core cities, or relevant organisations, in order to drive better outcomes for citizens, businesses and visitors.

4. The Directorate's service priorities for 2015/16, Part 3 – Planning for the future: (Page 33) are stated to be:

- Reduction in support to vulnerable children and their families.

- Increase in safeguarding concerns and growth in number of children on the child protection register.
- Uncontrolled growth in the number of children entering the looked after system.

### **Scope of Scrutiny**

6. This report will provide the Committee with an opportunity to gain an understanding of the operations of Children's Services and its objectives for this year. It will also enable Members to enquire as to:
  - i. How these objectives were identified and what criteria were used?
  - ii. How was it judged that the associated actions will help either improve or make more effective, services for young people?

### **Way Forward**

7. At the meeting, Councillor Sue Lent, Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Early Years, Children & Families may wish to make a statement. Tony Young (Director of Children's Services), and Angela Bourge (Operational Manager, Children's Services Resources) will be in attendance to brief the Committee on the work undertaken by the service and the key challenges facing the Directorate during the coming year.
8. Members are invited to note the information set out in the report, extracts from the Directorate business plan, and presentations from the officers.

### **Legal Implications**

9. The Scrutiny Committee is empowered to enquire, consider, review and recommend but not to make policy decisions. As the recommendations in this report are to consider and review matters there are no direct legal implications. However, legal implications may arise if and when the matters under review are implemented with or without any modifications. Any report with recommendations for decision that goes to Cabinet/Council will set out any legal implications arising from those

recommendations. All decisions taken by or on behalf of the Council must (a) be within the legal powers of the Council; (b) comply with any procedural requirement imposed by law; (c) be within the powers of the body or person exercising powers on behalf of the Council; (d) be undertaken in accordance with the procedural requirements imposed by the Council e.g. Scrutiny Procedure Rules; (e) be fully and properly informed; (f) be properly motivated; (g) be taken having regard to the Council's fiduciary duty to its taxpayers; and (h) be reasonable and proper in all the circumstances.

## **Financial Implications**

10. The Scrutiny Committee is empowered to enquire, consider, review and recommend but not to make policy decisions. As the recommendations in this report are to consider and review matters there are no direct financial implications at this stage in relation to any of the work programme. However, financial implications may arise if and when the matters under review are implemented with or without any modifications. Any report with recommendations for decision that goes to Cabinet/Council will set out any financial implications arising from those recommendations.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

The Committee is recommended to:

- (i) review the information contained in this report;
- (ii) consider whether they have any observations, comments or recommendations they wish to make; and
- (iii) consider if any issues should be considered for inclusion on the Committee's 2015/16 work programme.

**MARIE ROSENTHAL**

**County Clerk and Monitoring Officer**

**1 June 2015**