

**CHILDREN'S SERVICES ELEMENT OF THE DRAFT SOCIAL SERVICES  
DIRECTORATE DELIVERY PLAN 2016/18**

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**Reason for the Report**

1. This report should enable the Members to gain an overview of Children's Services portion of the Social Services Directorate Delivery Plan 2016/18, 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 2016/18, and the future challenges facing Children's Services.

**Context**

2. As part of the Council's response to the Wales Audit Office's January 2016 Corporate Assessment Follow On report, a commitment was made in Cardiff's Statement of Action to ensure Directorate Delivery Plans are 'SMART' by the end of April. As such, the Council will be undertaking a peer review involving colleagues from across the Council's directorates to build on the Central Performance Team's own quality assurance process, ensuring this commitment is met. Although it would have been ideal for this work to have been completed ahead of consideration of Directorate Delivery Plans by the scrutiny committees, this was not possible due to timing of the scrutiny cycle. However, it should be noted that the focus of the peer review work will not be to make substantive changes to the commitments within plans, but to ensure they fully meets SMART criteria.
3. In addition a comprehensive review of the Operational Development Programme (ODP) is being undertaken with a view to ensuring that key projects and initiatives

re-inforce the need to achieve a step change in delivering improved outcomes for citizens. Specifically, the review will:

- Provide an update on the Programme and map out the next steps for key projects and initiatives that are essential to improving the Council's financial resilience and service delivery performance in the medium term;
- Ensure all projects within the ODP have effective financial and performance management plans and measures in place; and
- Ensure that saving plans included in the medium term financial plan are directly linked to the ODP.

## Issues

4. This report has been provided to assist Members to gain an overview of the responsibilities vested in Children's Services. A copy of the Delivery Plan for Social Services has been attached at **Appendix A** with the relevant sections relating to Children's Services being identified below:

- Introduction, including contribution to the Corporate Plan 2016/18– Page 3;
- Core Business Overview – Page 5;
- Children's Services Performance Achievements in 2015/16 – Page 5;
- Children's Services Improvement Achievements in 2015/16 – Page 6;
- Children's Services Key Aspirations for 2016/17 – Page 9;
- Total Social Services Resources – Pages 11 & 12;
- Context and Key Challenges – Page 13 & 14;
- Social Services Directorate Actions – Page 15 - 17
- Children's Services Action Plan - Pages 18 to 21.

The Action Plan contains the following actions:

- a. Implement key elements of the Cardiff Child Sexual Exploitation Strategy in collaboration with partners by March 2017.
- b. Improve the system for protecting children from significant harm by implementing new Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) arrangements for managing referrals by June 2016.

- c. Improve the recruitment and retention of children's social workers, ensuring the Council achieves and maintains a vacancy rate below 18% by March 2017.
  - d. Embed key elements of the Corporate Parenting Strategy in collaboration with partners by March 2017.
5. The Directorate's 'Service Priorities for 2016/18, Part 2 – Core Business priorities' are set out in the section covering pages 26 to 32 of the delivery plan.

### **Children's Services Priorities (Pages 35 to 41)**

- Implement and embed the Early Help Strategy with schools and other agencies to ensure that:
  - Referrals are directed to the appropriate agency
  - Children are supported at the earliest opportunity
  - The number of looked after children and the overall rate of looked after admissions begin to reduce.
- Develop systems and processes to support the effective use of a chronology to safeguard children and young people by March 2017.
- Plan and implement a new model for the delivery of children's social services and social work intervention by March 2017 to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of services by implementing an agreed, accredited and evidenced based practice methodology based on:
  - Signs of safety
  - Restorative Practice.
- Reduce the rate of re-offending by improving the effectiveness of Youth Offending Service prevention and intervention work alongside an enhanced commitment from partner agencies.
- Develop a multi-disciplinary specialist service by September 2016 to prevent teenagers becoming looked after.
- Develop a joint working protocol between the Health Service and Children's Services by March 2017 that meets the health needs of looked after children

- Implement and embed the When I Am Ready Scheme in transitions from fostering to independence by March 2017.
6. The Directorate's 'Service Priorities for 2016/18, Part 3 – Planning for the future for Children's Services' (Page 46) are stated to be:
- Reduction in support to vulnerable children and their families.
  - Increase in safeguarding concerns and growth in numbers of children on the Child Protection Register.
  - Uncontrolled growth in the number of children entering the looked after system.

### **Scope of Scrutiny**

7. This report provides 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?
  - iii. What the impact of the actions are on vulnerable Children & Young People.

### **Way Forward**

8. 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 Social Services) will be in attendance to brief the Committee on the work undertaken by the service and the key challenges facing Children's Services during the coming year.
9. 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**

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 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**

11. 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) Identify any issues which should be considered for inclusion on the Committee's 2016/17 work programme.

**DAVID MARR**  
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**13 April 2016**