

My Ref: Scrutiny/Correspondence/Cllr Groves

31 July 2015

Councillor Susan Elsmore & Councillor Sue Lent
Cabinet Members
c/o Room 520
County Hall
Cardiff
CF10 4UW



Dear Colleague

Joint Children & Young People and Community & Adult Services Scrutiny Committee Meeting – 29 July 2015

Many thanks to you and officers for attending the above meeting for the scrutiny of the draft Director of Social Services Annual Report 2014-15. This letter captures the agreed comments, observations and recommendations of Committee Members which we trust will assist preparation of the final Report. In line with our questions at the meeting, these are split into three sections: overarching points; those that relate solely to Children's Services; and those that relate solely to Adults Services.

Overarching issues:

Overall, Members recognise the picture presented in the Report, in terms of:

- Improving performance in Children's Services, declining performance in Adult Services and the need to significantly improve performance in both areas;
- The areas identified as Future Challenges and areas for development;
- The gathering strategic momentum that underpins the reshaping of Children's Services and Adults Services with a greater emphasis on preventative services; and
- The alignment of Children's Services and Adults Services into one Directorate, with the anticipated benefits that this will bring for service users, their families and the Council.

Members are pleased to hear that the section on the Social Services and Well Being (Wales) Act 2014 will be strengthened before the report is submitted to Cabinet.

Members note that next year's report will be more outcome-focused and that the new performance framework being developed as part of the Social Services and Well Being (Wales) Act 2014 will support this. In the meantime, Members recommend that the report be amended to include a statement about how the areas for development

will lead to improved performance and how many performance indicators it is expected will be improved in 2015-16 as a result of the work undertaken. This will manifest the link between this report identifying areas for improvement and improvements being made.

With regard to the processes in place to monitor the implementation of the areas for development, Members note the answers given explaining the Corporate Performance Management processes, including Star Chamber, Challenge Forum etc. However, Members believe that these will not cover all the areas for development that are detailed in this report and wish to understand how progress in delivering these will be regularly monitored; please detail these processes in the response to this letter.

With regard to the need for the report to include the following: '*Corporate and political support and scrutiny*'. Members refer to our letter from last year, (attached at Appendix D to this meeting's papers), where we noted that Tony Young committed to '*articulating more clearly the close working with Cabinet Members and the support he feels comes from the whole Council for Social Services.*' We feel that this point is still valid. The Statutory Guidance explicitly states that the report should cover '*Corporate and political support and scrutiny*' and our view is that this report does not sufficiently reflect the scrutiny that happens in Cardiff. Members feel that the report will be strengthened by acknowledging the role scrutiny committees are playing and recommend that this is done; there are ample examples of scrutiny providing support to drive improvement in Social Services and across the Corporate body and one cited at the meeting, but not alluded to in the report, is our joint Inquiry into tackling human trafficking.

Finally, in order to make the Report more robust and accessible, in terms of grammar and syntax changes required, Members recommend:

- Page 7 – correcting the use of English in the first and fourth bullet points
- Use of percentages – to also include actual numbers in brackets, so that readers can understand the scale of performance change e.g. page 23 references changes in performance for housing looked after children and it would be clearer for a reader if actual numbers were also provided.
- Graphs/ Tables – amend to include target lines, so that readers can easily see whether performance is on track or adrift from performance targets.

Children's Services:

Members note that, when asked to identify the significant challenges facing Children's Services, Tony Young listed the following:

- Performance in relation to Initial Assessments
- Performance in relation to Children being seen by Social Workers
- The need to increase preventative work
- The need to strengthen governance arrangements.

Members asked several questions regarding Safeguarding. Members were pleased to hear officers recognise the need to improve performance in this area, especially given the new legislation in place on these matters, but were concerned that little progress seems to have been made on this (in Social Services) over the year, with regard to Female Genital Mutilation, Honour-Based Violence, Forced Marriage, Human Trafficking and Radicalisation. Members were disappointed that officers appeared unaware of which Cabinet Member and senior officer are leading work on these issues. As clarified at the meeting by ourselves, the Cabinet Member is Cllr De'Ath and the senior officer is Martin Hamilton. Members note the commitment of officers to attend Cllr De'Ath's recently established working group re Human Trafficking.

Members were also keen to understand the processes in place to hear from children that receive social services and are pleased to hear the intention to hold a Listening Event, in recognition of the success of the one previously held by the Children & Young People Scrutiny Committee. Members were also pleased to hear the commitment to use complaints as a learning opportunity and to report complaints via the Corporate Parenting Advisory Committee. Members would like to receive details of the changes to policy and/ or practice that have happened as a consequence of using complaints as a learning opportunity and request that examples be provided in the response to this letter if possible or in future performance reports to the Children & Young People Scrutiny Committee if more time is needed to furnish the information.

Members were pleased to hear Tony Young acknowledge that the wording for the area for development, 'Ensure no further growth in the number of children entering the looked after system' (listed on p40) is too strong and recommend that the wording will be amended prior to the report being taken to Cabinet.

Adult Services:

Members note that, when asked to identify the significant challenges facing Adults Services, Tony Young listed the following:

- The need for effective budgetary control
- The need to increase preventative services
- The need to improve performance re: Carer's Assessments; Delayed Transfer of Care; and Direct Payments.

Members recommend that the Future Challenges for Adults Services be amended to include the need to improve performance in the care planning pathway, given that there has been underperformance in this area for 2014/15, and note Tony Young's commitment to do this.

Members welcome Tony Young's commitment to bring the Annual Report of the Cardiff and Vale Safeguarding Adults Board 2014/15 to the Community & Adult Services Scrutiny Committee and ask that he liaise with scrutiny services to ensure that this is programmed appropriately.

Members were pleased to hear Tony Young agree to expand the area for development 'improve collaborative working with partners' (listed on page 38) to make it clearer which partners are covered by this and with what intent. Members believe that a similar approach is needed for other Adult Services areas for development, as currently three or four areas for development are repeated across several sections and they are very general in nature. Members therefore recommend that the Adult Services areas for development are amended to articulate the specific improvements that are proposed for each area they relate to.

Members asked several questions relating to the number of people receiving Adult Services and have the following points to make in relation to this:

- Please provide a breakdown to show the services received by the 7,626 people cited as receiving support (second paragraph, page 31) and, subsequently, improve the wording of this section of the report.
- Note Councillor Elsmore's statement that referrals to day centres are taking place and the referral process has not been closed
- Note Councillor Elsmore's commitment to liaise with officers to ensure that G.P. surgeries are aware that the referral process has not been closed, given Councillor Murphy's point that surgeries in his ward are not referring as they believe the referral process has stopped.
- Note the answers from officers that, where a client has been reabled to the point of no longer requiring social services, the route back to social services if their condition deteriorates relies on them being referred by their G.P., a community group or family member.

Members will explore the issues relating to day centres when carrying out pre-decision scrutiny of the proposed day opportunity strategy, currently scheduled for October 2015.

With regard to the questions asked about whether carer's views are sought on mental health services, Members wish to highlight the recent scrutiny research report (re mental health service users and carers) that has been sent to Councillor Elsmore and officers; we hope that this is of use to you.

Finally, Members plan to scrutinise several of the areas detailed in the Report during 2015-16 and we look forward to seeing the improvements detailed in this report, including those flowing from establishing one social services directorate. On a separate note, Members are pleased to note Irfan Alam has accepted the role of Assistant Director, Children' Services and wish him well in this post.

This letter requires a response as it contains the following recommendations and requests:

- Recommend that the report be amended to include a statement about how the areas for development will lead to improved performance and how many performance indicators it is expected will be improved in 2015-16 as a result of the work undertaken.
- Recommend that the Future Challenges for Adults Services be amended to include the need to improve performance in the care planning pathway, given that there has been underperformance in this area for 2014/15, and note Tony Young's commitment to do this.
- Recommend that the role scrutiny committees are playing in supporting improvement in social services is acknowledged and detailed in the report.
- Recommend that the Adult Services areas for development are amended to articulate the specific improvements that are proposed for each area they relate to.
- Use of percentages – recommend that also include actual numbers in brackets, so that readers can understand the scale of performance change
- Graphs/ Tables – recommend amend to include target lines, so that readers can easily see whether performance is on track or adrift from performance targets.
- Page 7 – recommend that correct the use of English in the first and fourth bullet points.
- P31 –recommend that the wording of the second paragraph be improved to make it clearer what support is provided to the 7,626 people cited in this paragraph.
- P38 – recommend that expand the area for development 'Improve collaborative working with partners'.
- P40 - recommend that the wording will be amended regarding 'Ensure no further growth in the number of children entering the looked after system'
- Request details of how progress in delivering the areas for development will be regularly monitored.
- Request a breakdown to show the services received by the 7,626 people cited as receiving support (second paragraph, page 31)
- Request details of the changes to policy and/ or practice that have happened as a consequence of using complaints as a learning opportunity.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Richard Cook', with a long horizontal flourish underneath.

COUNTY COUNCILLOR RICHARD COOK
Chair – Joint Children and Young People and Community & Adult Services
Scrutiny Committee

Cc: Tony Young Irfan Alam Sarah McGill Stuart Young
Kim Brown Amanda Stokes Melanie Jackson Claire Deguara
Jo Watkins

Bernard McDonald – Area Manager Cardiff, CSSIW