

JOINT SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

29 JULY 2015

Present: County Councillor (Chairperson)
County Councillors

1 : CHAIRPERSON

Councillor Richard Cook was nominated as Chairperson for the Joint Committee meeting.

2: APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Boyle, Chaundy, Davis, Hudson and Morgan

3 : DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Declarations of interest were received from:

Councillor Sanders – Personal – arranges domiciliary care for a family member

Councillor Lomax – Personal – lives in sheltered accommodation

Councillor Gordon – Personal – Trustee of Riverside community centre.

4 : DRAFT DIRECTOR OF SOCIAL SERVICES ANNUAL REPORT 2014-15

The Chairperson welcomed Councillor Sue Lent, Cabinet Member, Children's Services & Deputy Leader, Councillor Susan Elsmore, Cabinet Member, Health, Housing and Wellbeing, and Tony Young (Director for Social Services) to the meeting.

The Chairperson invited the Cabinet Members to make statements. Councillor Lent made a statement in which she drew Members attention to last years areas of improvement and made particular reference to reviews and performance and retention of social workers; she also noted the achievements such as timing of initial assessments, reduction in social workers case loads and successful recruitment of social workers. Going forward it was noted that progress on MASH and the strategy for disabled children was being made.

Councillor Elsmore made a statement in which she noted that there was a job to do internally with savings and efficiency; there was a balanced position on operational budgets in Adult Services. There was now a need for external focus regarding the alignment of services geographically.

The Director of Social Services introduced Members to the new Assistant Director of Social Services – Irfan Alam.

The Director provided Members with an overview of the report and explained that this was his second Annual Report and he had built in changes from the previous years report. He added that the Executive Report would be drafted after the committee meeting to include any comments from Members. It was noted that with the amount

of data from his directorate it was difficult to strike a balance between enough data in the report to show the full picture and data overload.

He added that delivery of services continues to improve in a position of increasing demand and resources, but this needed to accelerate. The performance picture was mixed and performance was not where it should be with some persistent concerns with particular performance indicators. It was noted that last year was a better year with a stronger focus on building strategic momentum; the Corporate Safeguarding Board had been established as had MASH, Preventative Strategy, Preventing Child Sexual Exploitation, Gateway Arrangements and Tendering although this list was not exhaustive.

A decision had been taken to establish a single Directorate in order to help implement the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014 more effectively and to improve outcomes in relation to transitions.

The challenges were self explanatory, the first four listed in the report were the same as last year, with the top challenge becoming the overwhelming focus of the directorates work with the Act coming in in April 2016.

The report sets out the organisational context showing that finance is the key area showing an unsettled position; however he stated that he was confident there were clear and transparent plans in place now.

Lots of positive work was going on with regards to the workforce, there was still work to do on planning strategically for the future. He added that he is now Regional Director looking at skilling up the workforce for the future. Complaints were stable, although it was noted that they needed to be more coherent.

With regards to Corporate and Political Leadership and Support, the Director talked about strengthening the Corporate Parenting Advisory Committee and Corporate Safeguarding arrangements.

The Chairperson thanked everyone for their contribution and invited questions and comments from Members on the overall report:

- Members were concerned that the report outlined outcomes but did not explain what was hoped to be achieved by them; Members noted that they had asked for this during last years meeting. The Director explained that measuring outcomes in social services was incredibly difficult, they also have more performance indicators than other directorates, they are regarded as proxy's for outcomes, although he added that he didn't think it was adequate. He stated that the Act will develop a framework for outcomes, it wouldn't be appropriate to develop measures of outcomes of our own without being able to compare across Wales, the framework in the Act will do this though. He also added that he will try next year to show aspirations of what is and isn't achieved, although he stated that the report was not a review of the business plan.
- Members discussed key challenges and areas for improvement. The Director noted the example of Initial Assessments and Internal Services where there had been a reassuring rise, attention was still needed to sustain this though. He also noted that there was more work to be done on Prevention and Governance.

- Members asked how Cardiff compares to other local Authorities; the Director explained that he hadn't included the data set of other local Authorities as it would be too weighty, instead he had used National Performance Indicators. The Cabinet Member Health, Housing and Wellbeing added that there was a need for firm control on budget spend, there is a slow and steady pace of improvement on budget spend which needed to continue; realignment of services for services such as Prevent are starting; progress is being made on key performance indicators, direct payments and assessments but the pace of improvement needed to step up.
- Members discussed savings and asked whether officers were confident that they could be made. The Cabinet Member Health, Housing and Wellbeing stated that a balanced spend was needed, it should be looked at month on month; she stated that they are committed to achieving savings that have been identified or work going on to identify the savings in year.
- Members asked how the report addresses the areas for improvement that CSSIW put in their Annual Report 2013/14 especially with regards to adults with mental health needs. Officers stated that any recommendations were taken on board and they were happy that the report gave enough information on the CSSIW's recommendations.
- Members noted that sometimes the use of the '%' did not provide a clear picture as it would depend on how large the numbers being analysed were. Members asked that in future the figures are also provided for context.
- Members asked about the monitoring procedures for systems and processes in place dealing with areas of improvement. The Director stated that monitoring is undertaken by Scrutiny, Improvement Board, Challenge Forum, Star Chamber and Corporate Plan, so it is a multi faceted, coherent system and Scrutiny checks it is robust. Members further asked whether this was undertaken in a timely manner, Officers stated that it was a whole team effort which needed good communication, audits, examination of performance indicators and discussions within management team meetings. The Cabinet Member Health, Housing and Wellbeing added that she had recently met with Officers and Members and it was important that if things do go wrong then you apologise and ask for a review to be undertaken.
- Members asked for clarification on how the Star Chamber/Challenge Forum etc. connect together, and whether if something goes wrong, there are resources available to put things right. Members were assured that they were not just talking shops and that when issues are identified, resources are made available to address them, with the example given of the Challenge Forum through an external advisor identifying a lack of capacity to deliver change and the result being, budget made available to appoint an Assistant Director.
- Members welcomed the presentation of the report and the data being in tabular format, and asked if data had been provided where it was appropriate to provide an example, where the information was easily accessible or where Members had previously asked for it to be provided. The Director stated it was all three and hoped that it was informative and transparent. Data sets had been used that were available and were a genuine attempt to meet the aspirations of Members from last years joint scrutiny meeting, all the information was valid.

- Members considered it would be useful to include the targets that the Council delivers services against, as it would enable a trend analysis year on year. Officers agreed and said that in next years report they would try to illustrate the movement in relation to targets and performance.
- Members discussed Political Leadership and whether it was captured enough in the report; Members considered that there was no mention of Cabinet and Scrutiny in the report. The Director stated that it was the report of the Director of Social Services and that he is giving a top level review in terms of values and financial commitment, it was not a report of the Council as a whole. Members considered that the subtitle within the report could be Corporate Support instead. The Chairperson noted that the heading was provided in the statutory guidance.
- Members enquired about readiness for the Act, as they considered that the report did not capture any work being done towards this or any concerns about it. The Director considered this was a fair comment to make, he added that he was somewhat compromised by the regulations and guidance, which had been fairly late coming, but conceded that he could have enhanced the section on what was being done in readiness for the Act.

The Chairperson invited questions and comments from Members specifically in relation to Childrens Services.

- Members sought further information on the section referencing Safeguarding Children, trafficking and radicalisation. The Director stated that there were a whole range of concerns, these issues do not sit in one directorate currently, work needed to be done on the Governance of this too. The Assistant Director added that it was an area of concern and that there was a gap of knowledge for example with female genital mutilation figures, he assured Members that it would be a priority, but it's a very recent issue and currently sits across directorates.

Members added in reference to Governance arrangements, that the Corporate plan identifies it as an issue, and that Councillor De'Ath and Martin Hamilton are responsible for the issue and Councillor De'Ath holds quarterly meetings. The Cabinet Member stated that this issue had been discussed at Community and Adult Services Scrutiny Committee recently and that it needs to sit with a named officer and Cabinet Member.

- Members considered that there were not many Childrens Services service users views included in the report. Officers advised that there had been a Dragons Den Style event with NYAS which had involved young people and also that the Corporate Parenting Advisory Committee had discussed young persons engagement. The Director added that it was quite difficult to engage young people, they are the most vulnerable people and find it hard to engage. Work was being done with Youth Council's etc., but Looked After Children (LAC) was a more difficult issue to deal with.
- Members asked about complaints that young people make and how they are addressed. Officers advised that they are spoken to and also they have independent reviewing officers if they are LAC; it was noted that complaints were reported to the Corporate Parenting Advisory Committee and that thematic issues would be looked at.

- Members enquired about LAC being able to have regular contact with their families. Officers explained that each case was different and sometimes information cannot be shared with the children or parents cannot be contacted.

The Chairperson invited questions and comments from Members specifically in relation to Adults Services.

- Members noted that the areas for development in Adult Services seemed to be very overarching and should have more detail and substance. The Director stated that he would address this in the report for Cabinet and for next years report.
- Members considered there should be more mention of carers and support for carers in the report. Officers explained that the section being referred to related to a customer satisfaction survey and that carers get a lot of questionnaires throughout the year, this was specifically for assessment and reviews of service users.
- Members were concerned that many of the performance indicators had declined or were below where they should be, and wondered if this was a cause for concern. The Cabinet Member stated that there was a need to speed up the pace of change and improvement, and provided her commitment that they would be in a better place next year.
- Members enquired who was in the benchmarking group. Members were advised that it was the same benchmarking group as Adults Services.
- Members were surprised that care planning was not included in the challenges listed in the report as it seemed evident from the performance information that it should be. Officers agreed that it should be referenced, regarding performance information it was noted that quarter one assessments were still not in green but were improving quarter on quarter.
- Members discussed further about outcomes and what was being done to achieve them, and linking that to information provided in tabular format.
- Members discussed remodelling of day services and the data around the issue. Members were assured that referral lists to day centre were not closed but there was a move to transitioning to new arrangements. Members were concerned that some GP's were no longer referring and asked that this be looked into.
- With reference to reablement, Members asked how people's progress was monitored when they were back to health. Officers advised that each case was very different; there was a myriad of options from requiring no further service to an ongoing care package.
- Members asked how well service users views were established. Officers advised that it was as described in the report, it was early days and not yet fully integrated; it was a critical issue and would be addressed as a priority.
- Members asked how the Joint Adult Safeguarding Board would report and whether scrutiny would be involved. The Director stated that he was new to the

Board, but he saw no reason why it couldn't go to Community and Adult Services Scrutiny Committee on an annual basis.

The Chairperson thanked the Cabinet Members and Officers for attending the meeting, giving their presentations/views and for answering Members questions.

AGREED – That the Chairperson writes on the Committee's behalf to the Cabinet Members to convey their comments and observations.

5 : WAY FORWARD

The meeting terminated at Time Not Specified