

My Ref: Scrutiny/Correspondence/MJH

11 June 2015

Councillor Sarah Merry  
Cabinet Member - Education and Skills  
County Hall  
Atlantic Wharf  
CARDIFF  
CF10 4UW



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CF10 4UW  
Tel: (029) 2087 2087

Neuadd y Sir  
Caerdydd,  
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Dear Sarah

Thank you for attending your first meeting of the Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee on 9<sup>th</sup> June 2015 to help introduce the **Education Delivery Plan 2015-17 and Consortium Business plan 2015-16**, as well as the **Progress Report on Neets**. I would also like to thank Nick Batchelar, and his officers for their presentations and contribution to the two agenda items. During the consideration of the reports and answers to Members' questions, the Committee identified a number of comments concerns and recommendations detailed below.

#### **Education Delivery Plan 2015-17 and Consortium Business plan 2015-16**

The Committee welcomed the opportunity to be presented with the Departments Delivery Plan 2015-17 and its linkage with the Consortiums Business Plan 2015-16, Members were reassured by the officers that both plans provided the necessary actions to deliver the improvements in outcomes for Cardiff's pupils that the Council and Estyn requires. The Committee also welcomed the robust challenge and dialogue that Education and the Consortium are having; to ensure that the appropriate level of support is provided by the Consortium to Cardiff's Schools.

Members did however highlight that many of the actions in the delivery plan were programmed to be delivered over 4 quarters. Members felt that it would be more effective if actions were prioritised so that the most important and achievable actions were implemented in a much shorter timescale, and that future delivery plans should reflect this approach.

In reviewing the details in the Plan the Members highlighted their concern about the categorisation of pupils. Members felt that ethnicity was not the issue for educational attainment but pupil's first language. Members therefore suggested that the pupil's first language should be used for pupil categorisation. Members noted the Officers agreement and requested that this be looked at for future data analysis.

Members inquired about the implementation of the School Organisation Plan, suggesting that a standardised approach to building new schools could be developed. Members were please to be informed that a standardised approach was to be used in future, enabling schools to built quicker and cheaper.

Members expressed concern that the Education Delivery Plan did not clearly detail the development of a long term strategy for school improvement. The need for this strategy had been highlighted by the Estyn inspector at the Committee's May meeting and was needed to enable Education to be ultimately assessed as excellent. Members noted the Director's comments that schools were taking on more responsibility for the improvement agenda, but Members felt that the delivery plan needed to clearly evidence the development of a long term strategy to ensure that education moved to a judgment of excellent by Estyn. Members recommended that this must be included in the delivery plan as soon as possible.

The Committee commented on the level of training for Governors, and suggested that bespoke training to individual, or groups of schools, would be more useful in addressing real issues in particular schools. Head teachers should also be reminded to share all relevant performance documentation with their governing body to ensure that Governors are fully aware of all necessary information. The Committee therefore suggested that future Education Delivery plans should say something about training of school governing bodies.

## **Neets**

Members welcomed the work that was being done to reduce the numbers of Neets in the City. The Committee suggested that the Council's Traineeship Scheme for looked after children and care leavers could also be used to help Neets gain work experience. Members would like a future report on Neets to investigate how this can be done.

The Committee noted that schools were expected to address the level of Neets from their schools, in partnership with the Council and Consortium. Members therefore requested a progress report on the Cardiff Partnership Board's work stream - Engagement and Progression - 'Reduce the number of young people who are not in education, employment or training', be presented to Committee after the summer break.

I hope that these comments, advice and recommendations, detailed above will be of use and support in improving outcomes for Cardiff's pupils. The Committee looks forward to receiving the requested additional information listed above together with a positive response to this letter within the next month.

To recap, this letter requests several actions, requests for information and recommendations, as follows and requires a response:

- To amend the Delivery plan to :
  - Clearly identify the development of a long term strategy for school improvement, both as an aspiration for 2015-17 as well as specific actions;
  - Reprioritise the actions so that those that can be completed quickly are show as such;
- To investigate the possibility of reviewing the categorisation of pupils to reflect their first language and not ethnicity;
- In future to include an action on training of school governing bodies;

- Provide reports to a future meeting on the Committee on:
  - the development of the Council's traineeship to help Neets and
  - a progress report on the Cardiff Partnership work stream – Engagement and Progression;

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'R Cook', with a long horizontal line underneath it.

**COUNTY COUNCILLOR RICHARD COOK**  
**Chair – Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee**

CC: Nick Batchelar – Director of Education and Lifelong learning  
CC: Carol Jones– Assistant Director of Education and Lifelong learning  
CC: Suzanne Scarlett – Performance Manager  
CC: Cheryl Cornelius – Cabinet Support Manger



**CABINET SUPPORT OFFICE  
SWYDDFA CYMORTH Y CABINET**

My Ref / Fy Ref: CM31210

Your Ref / Eich Ref :

Date / Dyddiad: 5 October 2015



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Cllr Richard Cook  
Chair of Children and Young people Scrutiny Committee  
County Hall  
Atlantic Wharf  
Cardiff  
CF104UW

Dear / Annwyl Richard,

Thank you for your letter of the 11 June 2015 following the meeting of the Children and Young Peoples Scrutiny Committee on 9 June 2015.

**Education Delivery Plan 2015-17 and Consortium Business Plan 2015-16**

The Committee noted the reference made by Estyn in the March 2014 monitoring visit to the longer term strategy for improvement. Work is under way with Headteachers to develop the strategy for the next phase of school improvement in Cardiff. The Committee will appreciate the immediate need to maintain a clear focus on the current plans which are designed to deliver improvement in the timespan of the Estyn monitoring period 2014 - 2016.

I can assure Committee members that the implementation of the Business Plan is prioritised with timescales reflecting those actions which are most important.

With regard to ethnicity, I would like to reassure the Committee that both ethnicity and English as an additional language (EAL) are used at a national and local level in tracking and reporting pupil attainment. Action to strengthen training for school governors is being taken forward.

**NEETS**

I note the Committees work plan includes a report on NEETS and the Youth Service to be discussed at Scrutiny in May 2016; this will include an update on Cardiff partnerships and their work in this area.

Yours sincerely  
Yn gwyir

**Cllr /Y Cyng Sarah Merry  
Cabinet Member for Education/  
Yr Aelod Cabinet Dros Addysg  
Member for Cathays /  
Aelod Dros Cathays**







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Date 12 June 2015

My Ref SS/CYP/MJH

Your Ref:

Councillor Sue Lent  
Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Families, Children and Early Years  
County Hall  
Atlantic Wharf  
CARDIFF  
CF10 4UW

Dear Sue

Thank you for attending Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee on 9 June 2015 to help introduce the **Children's Services Delivery Plan 2015/17** and **Briefing on the Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub and Managed Team**. I would also like to thank Tony Young and Irfan Alam for their full and honest answers that were provided at the meeting. During the consideration of the reports and answers to Members' questions, the Committee identified a number of comments concerns and recommendations which they asked me to write to you.

### **CHILDREN'S SERVICES DELIVERY PLAN 2015 - 17**

The Committee welcomed the opportunity to be briefed on the Department's Delivery Plan for the next two years. Members did however question why the plans actions were always split over four quarters. Members noted that some major changes in service provision did take up to a year to develop, consult and implement. However the Members still considered that the actions should be prioritised so that those that could be implemented quickly were identified as such.

Members discussed the future sustainability of the caseload averages they understood that demand can be unpredictable; however the Committee recommended that the Department makes every effort to sustain the current caseload average.

Members discussed at some length the impact of the forthcoming budget settlements and the resourcing decisions to be made. The Committee requested that it is kept informed, as early as possible, as to the identification and development of any alternative service provision for Children's Services.

### **MULTI-AGENCY SAFEGUARDING HUB (MASH) and MANAGED TEAM**

#### **MASH**

The Committee appreciated the update and details of the progress being made in developing the MASH, Members noted that a project manager would be appointed soon. As a result the Members requested a further report prior to the Mash becoming operational.

## Managed Team

Members wished to thank the officers for the detailed briefing on the operation of the Managed Team. Members were pleased to hear that only 45 cases out of the original 313 cases were being handed back to the mainstream teams. Officers reassured the Committee that the transfer of these cases would not have a major impact on the Social Workers caseloads, but this did not leave much flexibility for future changes in demand. Members agreed that they would continue to monitor average case loads to assess the impact of any changes in demand.

I hope that these comments, advice and recommendations, detailed above will be of use and support in improving outcomes for Children in need. The Committee looks forward to receiving the requested additional information listed above together with a positive response to this letter within the next month.

To recap, this letter requests several actions, requests for information and recommendations, as follows and requires a response:

- Reprioritise the actions, in future delivery plans, so that those that can be completed quickly are shown as such;
- To make every effort to sustain the current caseload average;
- To involve the Committee in the identification and development of any alternative service provision for children's service as early as possible.
- Provide a further progress report on the MASH prior to it becoming operational.

Yours sincerely



**COUNTY COUNCILLOR RICHARD COOK**  
**Chairperson – Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee**

CC: Tony Young, Director of Children's Services  
Irfan Alam, Interim Assistant Director of Children's Service  
Kim Brown, Service Manager, Policy and Performance  
Melanie Jackson - Personal Assistant to Deputy Leader

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page 2 10:10



**SWYDDFA'R DIRPRWY ARWEINYDD  
DEPUTY LEADER'S OFFICE**



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Fy Nghyf / My Ref: CM31211

Eich Nghyf / Your Ref: SS/CYP/MJH

Dyddiad / Date: 23rd July 2015

Councillor Richard Cook  
Chairperson  
Children and Young people Scrutiny Committee  
Cardiff Council  
County Hall  
Cardiff  
CF10 4UW

Annwyl / Dear Cllr Richard Cook

**Re:- Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee 9 June 2015**

Thank you for your letters of 12<sup>th</sup> June and 20<sup>th</sup> July following my attendance at the C&YP Scrutiny Committee on 9<sup>th</sup> June and 14<sup>th</sup> July respectively and for member's kind comments regarding officers' contributions.

In relation to the issues committee identified in these two meetings and the requests arising from debate I am able to respond as follows:-

**Meeting on 12<sup>th</sup> June**

- *Reprioritise actions in future delivery plans to highlight those than be completed quickly* - Officers will consider how best this could be achieved when preparing the 2016/7 Business Plan within the parameters of the corporate template.
- *Make every effort to sustain the current caseload average* – This is accepted and is already a clear priority for the Directorate. I am pleased to be able to advise you that at the time of writing caseloads remained at an average of 18.9 as at 30 June.
- *Involve the committee in the identification of alternative service provision as early as possible.* – Officers will ensure that the committee has an appropriate early opportunity to consider any new proposals or thinking about the development of the service.

**ATEBWCH I / PLEASE REPLY TO:**

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Deputy Leader's Office, Room 525, County Hall, Atlantic Wharf, Cardiff CF10 4UW  
Tel (029) 2087 2501

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- *Progress reports on the MASH* – These will be scheduled into the committee's calendar at appropriate stages, in liaison with Martyn Hutchings.

### **Meeting on 14<sup>th</sup> July**

#### ***Social Services & Well Being Act***

- *Disaggregated self-assessment data; that resource implications are more clearly identified.* As advised by officers, the self assessment tool is thought to be of very limited value in assessing readiness for the Act. Although the completion of the assessment had some benefit in terms of raising awareness it was a very onerous task. Given these factors it would not be sensible or an appropriate use of scarce management capacity to undertake a wholly separate exercise to enable data disaggregation. It remains very important to enable members to assess readiness and progress in relation to the Act and the Director will ensure that regular reports are provided to committee with a view to developing a more manageable format that facilitates a better degree of measurability and where possible links this to resource implications more clearly.
- *Reporting back to Welsh Government concerning scrutiny.* I am not very clear what is meant by this or how it relates to the in-committee debate but would advise that there is nothing to prevent full and robust public scrutiny in the context of Cardiff Council and its partners, in relation to the Act; indeed the significance of the Act is such that I would encourage it. The development of an approach as set out in the previous paragraph will take into account the need to enhance scrutiny accordingly.

#### ***Corporate Parenting Advisory Committee CPAC***

- *The presentation of the CPAC report to be presented to Council* – This will be arranged
- *CPAC Agendas for all future meetings to be sent to C&YP Scrutiny Members* This is agreed and will be implemented.

Yn gywir / Yours sincerely

*Susan J. Lent*

**Councillor / Cynghorydd Sue Lent**  
**Deputy Leader / Dirprwy Arweinydd**  
**Cabinet Member for Early Years, Children & Families**  
**Aelod Cabinet Dros Y Blynyddoedd Cynnar, Plant a Theuluoedd**

Date 20 July 2015

My Ref SS/CYP/MJH  
Your Ref:



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Councillor Sue Lent  
Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Families, Children and Early Years  
County Hall  
Atlantic Wharf  
CARDIFF  
CF10 4UW

Dear Sue

Thank you for attending Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee on 14 July 2015 to help introduce the **Social Services and Well Being Act (Wales) 2014 progress report** and **Corporate Parenting Advisor Committee report**. I would also like to thank Tony Young and Nichola Poole for their full and honest answers that were provided at the meeting. During the consideration of the reports and answers to Members' questions, the Committee identified a number of comments concerns and recommendations which they asked me to write to you.

### **Social Services and Well Being Act – Progress Report**

The Committee welcomed the opportunity to be briefed on the work being undertaken in implementing the regulations and guidance issued by the Welsh Government. Members fully appreciated the vast amount of work that has been undertaken to complete the self assessment tool kit across Cardiff Council, the Vale of Glamorgan, and Cardiff & Vale University Health Board. Members were also pleased to note that it has become apparent that the Welsh Government was allowing some flexibility in the timescales included in the Guidance.

The Members did however question, why, in the completed form, there was some insufficient or poor evidence available to make an assessment. Members noted that these were composite assessments; however the Committee requested that, for Children's Services data, the data should be disaggregated across the three organisations, so that the Committee can assess Cardiff Council's input and seek to investigate further.

Members also expressed some concern that the Governance arrangements indicated in the Act and Guidance which did not include the Scrutiny of the Integrated Health and Social Care Partnership Governance Board. Members felt that this was a clear deficiency in the Governance arrangements, and Members recommended that this must be reported back to the Welsh Government as part of the consultation exercise.

Finally Members expressed some concern that the Welsh Government were indicating that the implementation of the Act's regulations would be cost neutral. The Committee requested that the resource implications must be included as part of the regular monitoring reports, presented to this Committee.

## **CORPORATE PARENTING ADVISORY COMMITTEE**

The Committee welcomed the presentation of the work of the Committee, noted the overview of the work undertaken from October 2014 to April 2015 and that its first full Annual Report will be produced in April or May 2016.

The Members commented that the Committee had not been embedded into the Council's normal democratic processes, in particular, the publication of committee meetings and their agendas, however the Committee was pleased to hear that the Director was addressing this with the Director Governance and Legal Services. The Committee considered that the timely publication of Committee agendas and papers was crucial to highlighting the Council's corporate parenting responsibilities. The Members also suggested that the report should be presented to Council in order to continue to raise the profile of corporate parenting and to enable all Council members to be made aware of the work that has been undertaken by the Committee.

The Committee also requested that the agenda for all future Corporate Parenting Advisory Committee meetings should be sent to Martyn Hutchings, Scrutiny Services, so that he can ensure that the members are aware of each meeting.

I hope that these comments, advice and recommendations, detailed above will be of use and support in improving outcomes for children in need and corporate parenting. The Committee looks forward to receiving the requested information listed above together with a positive response to this letter within the next month.

To recap, this letter requests several actions, requests for information and recommendations, as follows and requires a response:

- Disaggregated the self assessment data, across the three organisations, so that the Committee can assess Cardiff Council's input and seek to investigate further;
- Members recommended that the lack of scrutiny arrangements of the Partnership Board must be reported back to the Welsh Government;
- that the resource implications of the Social Services and Well Being Act (Wales) 2014 t on Children's Service, must be included as part of the regular monitoring reports, presented to this Committee;
- that the Corporate Parenting Advisory Committee report should be presented to Council.
- That the agenda for all future Corporate Parenting Advisory Committee meetings should be sent to members of the Children & Young People Scrutiny Committee.

Yours sincerely



**COUNTY COUNCILLOR RICHARD COOK**

**Chairperson – Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee**

CC: Tony Young, Director of Children's Services  
CC: Nichola Poole, Regional Lead, Sustainable Social Services  
CC: Cheryl Cornelius – Cabinet Support Manger  
CC: Melanie Jackson - Personal Assistant to Deputy Leader

My Ref: Scrutiny/Correspondence/MJH

20 July 2015

Councillor Sarah Merry  
Cabinet Member - Education and Skills  
County Hall  
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Dear Sarah

Thank you for attending the Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee on 14<sup>th</sup> July 2015 to help introduce the **Youth Guarantee – Implementation Report** and the **Estyn recommendations 2 and 4 - update**. I would also like to thank Carol Jones, and her officers for their presentations and contribution to the two agenda items. During the consideration of the reports and answers to Members' questions, the Committee identified a number of comments concerns and recommendations detailed below.

### **Youth Guarantee – Implementation Report**

The Committee welcomed the opportunity to be briefed on the Welsh Government's Youth Engagement and Progression Framework key elements, which includes the Youth Guarantee offer. Members also noted progress being made in implementing the scheme so that the Guarantee will be introduced to Year 11 pupils in September 2015 with the expectation that young people will sign on in September 2016.

The Committee discussed at length Cardiff's approach to the implementation and requested a further update this time next year. Members were however surprised to hear that Careers Wales were not now providing one to one careers advice to pupils, but were expecting schools to provide the advice. Members agreed with the officers that this was a detrimental step and requested that you monitor the situation, to ensure that pupils are not disadvantaged.

The Committee were also informed that Careers Wales were not now vetting businesses for work placements but expecting Schools to ensure that businesses undertook the vetting. In addition Careers Wales had also withdrawn its work placement data base. Members considered that both these tasks were fundamental to the work of Career Wales and helped ensure that pupils are able to identify the most appropriate career. The Committee recommended that as Cabinet Member you make representation to Careers Wales to continue both tasks or investigate alternative provision to ensure pupils are not disadvantaged.

### **Estyn Recommendations 2 & 4**

Members welcomed the report on the progress being made to address these two recommendations together with the honest and open answers to the Members

questions. As the Committee had scrutinised Neets at its last meeting the Members focused of the Exclusions element of Recommendation 2.

### **Recommendation 2 - Exclusions**

Members noted the progress being made in addressing the level of fixed term exclusions across Cardiff's schools, however, following the Committee's consideration of the report, officer advice, and answers to member's questions, the Committee asked me to write with the following comments, advice and recommendations.

The Committee questioned at some length the level of exclusions in schools, particular those which were causing concern. Members requested that future reports must include the data for each school. Members also commented on the responsibility of the Governing Body on managing the level of exclusions in their school. The Committee recommended that the Governors of schools with high levels of fixed term exclusions must have specific advice on managing exclusions and on alternatives to exclusion.

The Committee was informed that the Challenge Advisors were directed to help support schools in reducing exclusions however members felt that Challenge Advisors do not necessarily have the correct skill set to have a positive impact. The Committee recommended that the joint support with education officers should be reviewed to ensure that effective support is provided.

Given the figures presented to the Committee Members expressed grave concern, that this element of the Estyn recommendation 2 may not be adequately achieved. The Committee therefore recommended that urgent action is taken to ensure that the Council satisfies Estyn in respect of this recommendation.

Finally the Committee noted that fixed term exclusions are not always the most appropriate action and alternative actions would be more appropriate. Member requested that a report be provide to Members via the Scrutiny Officer, explaining what alternatives could be used by schools.

### **Recommendation 4**

The Committee welcomed this update and noted the detailed partnership work being undertaken. Member did however request a more detailed report on the "Prevent Strategy" to be presented to Committee later in the year.

I hope that these comments, advice and recommendations, detailed above will be of use and support in improving outcomes for Cardiff's pupils. The Committee looks forward to receiving the requested additional information listed above together with a positive response to this letter within the next month.

To recap, this letter requests several actions, requests for information and recommendations, as follows and requires a response:

- To receive a further update on the Youth Guarantee this time next year;
- Recommends that the Cabinet makes representation to Careers Wales to continue to undertake the vetting process and data base for work placements, as well as the careers advice to pupils or investigate alternative provision to ensure pupils are not disadvantaged;
- Future exclusion reports must include the data for each school.
- Recommends that the Governors of schools with high levels of fixed term exclusions, must have specific training on alternatives to exclusions;
- Recommends that the joint support provided by Challenge Advisors and Education Officers in schools with high exclusions, should be reviewed to ensure that effective support is provided;
- Recommends that urgent action is taken to ensure that the Council satisfies Estyn in reducing exclusions across all Cardiff's schools.
- Members requested a more detailed report on the "Prevent Strategy" to be presented to Committee later in the year.

Yours sincerely

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

**COUNTY COUNCILLOR RICHARD COOK**  
**Chair – Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee**

CC: Nick Batchelar – Director of Education and Lifelong learning  
CC: Carol Jones – Assistant Director of Education and Lifelong learning  
CC: John Fabes, Achievement Leader 14 – 19  
CC: Phillip Norton, Achievement Leader Targeted Support  
CC: Cheryl Cornelius – Cabinet Support Manger







My Ref / Fy Ref: CM31767

Your Ref / Eich Ref :

Date / Dyddiad: 5 October 2015

Cllr Richard Cook  
Chair of Children and Young people Scrutiny Committee  
County Hall  
Atlantic Wharf  
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Dear / Annwyl Richard,

Thank you for your letter of the 20 July 2015 following the meeting of the Children and Young Peoples Scrutiny Committee on 14 July 2015, addressed to Councillor Sarah Merry as Cabinet Member for Education and Skills.

### **Youth Guarantee – Implementation Report**

I note the Committee requested they receive a further update on the implementation of the Youth Guarantee during next year and I will ensure officers provide the Committee with an update in July 2016.

You recommend that Cabinet make representation to Careers Wales to continue to undertake the vetting process and data base for work based placements as well as providing careers advice to pupils. I attach for information a copy of a letter distributed to Head teachers across Wales from the Deputy Minister for Skills and Technology, Julie James, outlining the changes in the remit of the work undertaken by Careers Wales and the reasons for these changes. I will ensure the committee are kept informed of any further the developments.

### **Recommendation 2- Exclusions**

Members requested that future reports include individual school data on the level of exclusions.

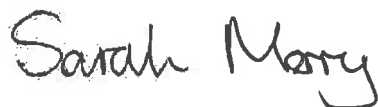
I am able to confirm that school level data is available and updated every half term and will be made available to the Committee in future reports. The Committee recommended that training be provided to Governing Bodies of schools with high level fixed term exclusions. A targeted training programme for Governors has now been put in place for schools with high levels of exclusions. In addition Challenge Advisers from the Central South Consortium now have formal meetings with officers of the local authority regarding exclusions to ensure that they are able to address this in their work with schools.



As you will be aware Estyn will be monitoring progress in reducing exclusions in October and their views will be reported to the Committee.

I note your request for further information on the Prevent Strategy and will ensure a report is presented to the Committee later this year.

Yours sincerely  
Yn gwyir

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Sarah Merry". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

**Cllr / Y Cyng Sarah Merry**  
**Cabinet Member for Education /**  
**Yr Aelod Cabinet Dros Addysg**  
**Member for Cathays /**  
**Aelod Dros Cathays**

My Ref: Scrutiny/Correspondence/Cllr Groves

31 July 2015

Councillor Susan Elsmore & Councillor Sue Lent  
Cabinet Members  
c/o Room 520  
County Hall  
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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



My Ref: Scrutiny/Correspondence/MJH

18 September 2015

Councillor Sarah Merry  
Cabinet Member - Education and Skills  
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Dear Sarah

Thank you for attending the Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee on 15<sup>th</sup> September 2015 to provide an opening statement and answer questions on the agenda item **Quarter one performance and Provisional School Results 2014/15**. I would also like to thank Nick Batchelar for his introduction of the report and answers to Members questions. During the way forward section of the meeting the Members' considered the information in the report and answers to their questions, and identified a number of comments, concerns and recommendations for your consideration, as detailed below.

### **Quarter 1 performance**

The Committee welcomed the opportunity to be presented with the Directorates Quarter 1 performance report. Members were pleased to read about the progress being made to improve the performance of all areas of Education. In particular Member commented on the improved performance in respect of Neets, which had been in decline. Members noted that many of the problems were now being addressed and performance had improved. The Committee also considered that the new data sharing protocol, across organisations, should further help reduce the number of Neets.

Members did however question the primary schools admissions procedure, as some Members were aware of a cohort of pupils who were still not attending school as places had not been found. Members noted the Directors comments that all pupils had been offered a school place, however a number of appeals were still being processed and they will all be completed within the statutory time scale. The Committee requested a further update on the outcome of the appeals, to Members, following the 30 days statutory time scale. Furthermore Members would like a breakdown of the numbers of Primary and Secondary school children who as of 16<sup>th</sup> September 2015 had not yet attended school because of appeals, or that they had not yet accepted an offered place.

A Member expressed concern that in the Q1 performance reports, corporate risk section, the School Organisation Programme (SOP) was shown as "red/amber". The Director stated that the "red/amber" risk was due to capacity issues in achieving the ambitious timescales for project delivery. The Committee requested assurance that

additional management actions would be put in place to ensure that the SOP programme would be fully implemented.

Members, when questioning the poor performance of certain school causing concern, were informed by the Director that Estyn had recently sent a letter about Eastern High, stating that improvements had been made. The Committee requested that they receive a copy of this and any other similar letters that Estyn send in respect of their monitoring visit to any schools causing concern.

### **Provisional School Results**

Members welcomed the continued and sustained improvements in the overall results, however, Members did express their wish for further improvements, across all performance measures, to ensure that every Cardiff school is a good school where learners achieve well.

The Committee did however express considerable concern that the performance of pupils, in Mathematics, was the most significant area that needed improvement, particularly in certain schools. The Committee recommended that you and the Director of Education ensures that the Central South Consortium immediately implements appropriate measure to bring about significant improvements in results in Mathematics across all key stages, and in all schools.

The Committee also expressed its concern that teacher assessments were inconsistent across schools. The Committee requested details of the actions being proposed by you, the Director of Education and the Central South Consortium to address this issue.

Finally the Committee wished to inform you that they approved their work programme for the year, as required by the Constitution, and I have attached, for your information, a copy of the work programme calendar so that you and your officers are aware of the issues that the Committee will be seeking to scrutinise at each meeting.

I hope that these comments, advice and recommendations, detailed above will be of use and support in improving outcomes for Cardiff's pupils. The Committee looks forward to receiving the requested additional information listed above together with a positive response to this letter within the next month.

To recap, this letter requests several actions, requests for information and recommendations, as follows and requires a response:

- A further update on the outcome of the admission appeals, following the completion of the 30 day statutory timescale for an appeal hearing, and the numbers of pupils who have not yet attended school because of appeals or pressure on the admissions process;

- Assurance that additional management actions would be put in place to ensure that the SOP programme would be fully implemented;
- A copy of the recent Eastern High Estyn letter;
- Details of the measures being implemented to bring about significant improvements in results in mathematics across all key stages; and
- Details of the actions being implemented to address the inconsistencies in teacher assessments.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'R Cook', with a horizontal line underneath it.

**COUNTY COUNCILLOR RICHARD COOK**  
**Chair – Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee**

CC: Nick Batchelar – Director of Education and Lifelong learning  
CC: Cheryl Cornelius – Cabinet Support Manger  
CC Nichola Hayward – Resources Manager  
CC Paul Burke – Committee Clerk





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Date 18 September 2015

My Ref SS/CYP/MJH  
Your Ref:

Councillor Sue Lent  
Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Families, Children and Early Years  
County Hall  
Atlantic Wharf  
CARDIFF  
CF10 4UW

Dear Sue

Thank you for attending Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee on 15 September 2015 to help introduce the Child Health and Disability progress report, Families First Annual Review and Quarter 1 Performance Information. I would also like to thank Tony Young and his officers, as well as Rachel Jones, Sara Payne (Barnardo's) and Eve Williams (Action for Children) for their full and honest answers that were provided at the meeting. During the consideration of the reports and answers to Members' questions, the Committee identified a number of comments, concerns and recommendations which they asked me to write to you.

### **Child Health and Disability progress report**

The Committee were pleased to receive the update on the Department's progress in implementing its development plan and addressing the Committee's inquiry recommendations. Member noted that the disability team was now more stable and that the take up of direct payments had improved.

Members were however concerned that there was still a lot of partnership work to be undertaken and that the eligibility criteria had still not been developed. Members recommended that the department consult on and implement the new criteria as soon as possible.

Finally the Committee were disappointed that regular consultation meetings with children and their families or carers were not occurring. The committee recommends that these should be started straight away, so that Children's Services can ensure that the service and support provided is appropriate and effective.

### **Families First Annual Review**

The Committee were extremely impressed with the work that the Annual Review report highlighted. Specifically impressive is the partnership working, the clear monitoring of the packages and presentation of outcomes achieved, the willingness to take difficult decisions to change providers when outcomes are not achieved and the flexibility that

enables gaps in the delivery being identified and then funding re-allocated to fill the gaps. Members noted the clear positive impact of the packages and felt that they might also be having an impact on school attendance (anti bullying and "connect" courses) and Children's Services referrals (Disability Focus).

Finally the Committee recommended that you and Officers must lobby the Welsh Government to try to ensure that the funding and packages continue to be provided after the present funding programme ends in 2017.

### **Quarter 1 Performance Information**

The Committee welcomed the number of key improvements shown in the report's performance indicators.

The committee noted that the PI "recording decisions on referrals" performance was reported as having improved from 85.8% in Q4 to 89.8% in Q1, however the number of referrals had reduced by 16%, which should have enabled the staff to deal with considerably more cases. Therefore Members were concerned that this PI had not improved more rapidly, and would expect to see an improvement at Q2, if the number of referrals continues to fall.

Members also questioned why the indicators used by the Wales Data Unit had not been included in the corporate monitoring report as these PI's were being publically report by the Welsh Government. The Committee recommended that future corporate performance reports must include those indicators published by the Wales Data Unit, to enable them to be closely monitored.

Members also questioned the number of cases that social workers currently had, as they had been informed that some had over 25 cases whereas the average was 18.9 as reported in the corporate performance report. The Director informed the Committee that an analysis had been undertaken and some social workers did have case loads of 25 however those cases were appropriate for the social workers and he was satisfied with the level of caseloads across all social workers. Members noted that social worker case loads were now more manageable and also welcomed the development of a pool of social workers, to help reduce the need for agency workers and help to eliminate the establishment gaps, which inevitably occurs during the recruitment process.

Members also discussed the current and forecasted budget position for Children's Services for this year and requested clarification of whether the contingency budget had already been fully used in Q1.

Finally the Committee wished to inform you that they approved their work programme for the year, as required by the constitution, and I have attached, for your information, a copy of the work programme calendar so that you and your officers are aware of the issues that the Committee will be seeking to scrutinise at each meeting.

I hope that these comments, advice and recommendations, detailed above will be of use and support in improving outcomes for children. The Committee looks forward to receiving the requested information listed above together with a positive response to this letter within the next month.

To recap, this letter requests several actions, requests for information and recommendations, as follows, and requires a response:

- Recommended that you consult and implement the new Child Health and Disability eligibility criteria as soon as possible;
- Recommends that regular consultation meetings are undertaken with children and their carers who use the Child Health and Disability service;
- That you and officers lobby the Welsh Government to ensure that the Families First funding and packages continue to be provided post 2017;
- That future corporate performance quarterly reports include the relevant performance indicators published by the Wales Data Unit and publicised by the Welsh Government; and
- Provide details of the use of the contingency budget for Children's Services.

Yours sincerely

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

**COUNTY COUNCILLOR RICHARD COOK**  
**Chairperson – Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee**

CC: Tony Young, Director of Children's Services  
Rachel Jones, Operational Manager - Partnerships & Citizen Focus  
Melanie Jackson - Personal Assistant to Deputy Leader  
Irfan Alam – Assistant Director of Social Services

