
HEALTH, HOUSING & WELLBEING STATEMENT

Significant Overall Improvement in Performance in Social Services

Along with my colleague Councillor Sue Lent, I am very pleased to advise Members that as measured by a basket of national indicators, the City of Cardiff Council's Social Services was the most improved in Wales during 2015-16. This follows the release this month of the all Wales performance data for 2015-16. This picture endorses the overall direction we have embarked upon in creating a new single Social Services Directorate during 2015-16 and in establishing a more effectively unified structure at Director and Assistant Director level. The results of both political leadership and more effective senior management grip are clearly beginning to bite; albeit we recognise that there remains much more to do, and there will be challenges in sustaining this step-change in performance going forward.

Encouraging Signs of a Shift in the Balance of Care for Older People

There are major challenges ahead as we face the pressure of meeting the complexity of needs that come with a population that is both increasing and growing older. Despite this we can see the signs of a strategic shift in the balance of care in relation to older people across the city. The number of older people with care and support needs that are being supported in the community is increasing whilst there are early signs of a declining trend of older people going into residential care. This is encouraging because, as we know, most people prefer to stay in their own homes, most do better when they remain at home, and support in the community is simply more cost-effective.

Collaborative Partnerships

Our relationship with regional partners, and with health in particular continues to strengthen, bringing with it a much stronger focus on prevention and the development of more effective community based approaches to mitigating care needs that are driven by health conditions.

This improved partnership with health has been underpinned by the establishment (under Part 9, Social Services and Well Being Act), in the final quarter of 2015/16, of a new Regional Partnership Board, with Councillor Sue Lent and the Director of Social Services as members and which I chair.

This partnership approach includes a joint commitment to deliver a Localities Pilot. The Localities initiative envisages a new model for meeting needs on the basis of discrete localities of the city; the pilot will test this concept in Llanishen. It will bring together day care, community groups, GP clusters and primary care services, housing and social services around a joined-up model of local

delivery. We have every reason to be excited that this new development will enable us to reshape health and social care delivery across the city over the longer term and improve outcomes for citizens.

Delivering a Dementia Friendly City

I am pleased to report that, as part of the wider multi-agency Cardiff and Vale Dementia Plan, a City Wide Dementia Delivery Plan has now been finalised. This will set out the specific actions, timescales and accountabilities for ensuring that the broader regional plan supports Cardiff in achieving Dementia Friendly City status, and more importantly that it improves the lives of those who suffer dementia and their carers.

A particularly interesting development in supporting those suffering Dementia is the use of “RemPods”. These pods in effect simulate a physical space from a previous era whether this be a home interior, pub, shop or street scene. Installing these pods in local centres or similar has proved highly effective in working with people suffering with dementia. Arrangements are being finalised for an event with day centre users at Fairwater Day Centre in October. This will be delivered in partnership with both library and day centre staff working together to engage in this ‘reminiscence’ work. We are also jointly planning an event for professionals to be held at the Central Library in early November to discuss and demonstrate the value of this style of work with people with dementia.

Housing

You will be pleased to know that good progress is being made on the Housing Partnership Programme following the appointment of Wates Living Space Homes as our partner Developer earlier this year.

The development of the first 11 sites forming ‘phase 1’ of the programme is well advanced with 5 sites are now in the planning process. We aim to achieve a start on site before December 2016 with the first completions following in late 2017. The remainder of the phase 1 sites will follow with the aim that the first 11 sites (almost 490 homes) will be completed within the next 3 years. Ward Councillor and resident consultation has taken place for every phase 1 site.

The need for new homes is never more apparent than when looking at the families and individuals we help through our homelessness support and prevention service. Since 1st April 2016 the Housing Options services have worked with 454 individuals to help prevent homelessness, of whom 224 were prevented from being homeless. The prevention methods included help to pay rent arrears and support to move into private rented sector, including the Housing Solutions Package that gives an all-round service of support to landlords who work with clients facing homelessness. I have seen the positive outcomes that this preventative approach can deliver and would encourage all members to visit the Housing Options Centre to arrange to see the service in action.

Welfare reform

Though impact of Welfare Reform continues to be an area of significant concern, the multi-agency response we have developed in Cardiff is extremely

well regarded, with effective results and a genuinely innovative approach. Since 1st March 2013 Cardiff Council and the Registered Social Landlords have made over 3000 offers of accommodation, with 818 tenants moving to smaller properties through the priority downsizing list or by way of an exchange.

Further changes to the benefits system will soon take effect. These can be expected to have a disproportionate impact some of our most vulnerable individuals and families. I therefore intend to run a workshop to ensure all-members are updated on this issue in the near future.

Member visits to the Smart House

Following an invite to all Members many have taken the opportunity over the last 12 months to visit the Smart House, based in Llanishen. Feedback on the facility and plans for its development have been very positive, with some Members very willing to try out the equipment.

Members also gave positive feedback on the work of the Preventative Services team. Case studies have now been developed by Independent Living Services to demonstrate the positive outcomes that Preventative Services deliver, ensuring people can remain at home independently for longer and reducing dependency on domiciliary support. The main themes emerging in the case studies include Income maximisation, assisting with mobility and social isolation which are issues that are very often inter-connected.

Syrian refugees

Over the past few months the Council has been able to make a significant difference a number of vulnerable refugees who arrived through the Syrian Resettlement Programme. Through careful planning and strong partnership working, we made sure that resources and robust systems were in place, before arrival, to identify and respond to the complex needs of this vulnerable group of displaced people.

The primary focus has been on integration, and I'm pleased to say that each family appears to have settled extremely well into their new community. In the past few weeks the children have started to attend school, and shown a real appetite for learning. Despite challenges caused by gaps in formal education and language barriers, the children have shown incredible resilience and are thriving with the strong support of the schools. Taff Housing, the contracted support provider, has continued to work intensively with each family to design bespoke support plans designed to increase independence. All adults are now receiving English language tuition, which will enable them to find work and improve their social and economic opportunities.

I am grateful to all public and third sector partners for their excellent work, and for the warmth and generosity of the people of Cardiff for their incredible support, donations and offers of help.

Councillor Susan Elsmore
Cabinet Member (Health, Housing & Wellbeing)

29 September 2016