

**COUNCIL: 23 MARCH 2017**

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## **HEALTH, HOUSING & WELLBEING STATEMENT**

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I am pleased and privileged to make this statement at the conclusion of the administration in relation to my Cabinet responsibilities, not least because it is a diverse portfolio responsible for some of the Council's most highly valued services. I am also particularly pleased that, at the end of 2016-17, Adult Social Services is now much better placed after a period of clear and demonstrable improvement, whilst the Council's housing and wellbeing service has responded effectively to a number of critical challenges.

### **Adult Social Services**

Social Services in Cardiff were diagnosed previously as being in poor health, and an external independent assessment in relation to Adult Services found that:

1. *“Professional leadership arrangements have been under-powered.*
2. *Adult Social Care lacks a clear and compelling narrative for its current and future purpose and outcomes.*
3. *There is no clear approach to measuring performance in the service.*
4. *You do not compare well with rest of Wales in a number of key areas.*
5. *Partnerships are good but appear passive.*
6. *Common issues across social services need attention.*
7. *A more systematic approach to improvement is required in Adult Social Care.”*

The transformation is significant. Supported by the professional leadership of a single Statutory Director, the performance of Cardiff Social Services is now the most improved in Wales, with measures of progress now either good or very good in comparative terms. For Adult Social Services specifically, Cardiff has:

- Additional investment of over £9 million - through the Council's 2017/18 budget - to enable change and improvement going forward
- A highly effective and close working relationship with the Communities and Housing directorate to ensure collaboration across critical areas
- Highly positive inspection outcomes for Learning Disability services, Domiciliary Care and Community Rehabilitation Teams
- A coherent and strong partnership with Health, recognised by the Wales Audit Office, which has resulted in a significantly improved Delayed Transfer of Care position

- Broken new ground in locality working in terms of reaching out to those living with dementia, through the implementation of our new Day Opportunities Strategy. The capital investment allocated for 2017/18 will enable our day centre facilities to be reshaped to meet high level needs much more effectively.

In addition, the Council has led on key regional developments to support the effective implementation of the Social Services and Well Being Act 2014. This has included:

- Establishing the Regional Partnership Board, which I am pleased to chair;
- Establishing the Regional Workforce Board for Social Care, chaired by Cardiff's Director of Social Services;
- A newly focused Safeguarding Adults Regional Board, chaired by Cardiff's Director of Social Services;
- Establishing the Regional Locality Pilot, led by Cardiff's Director of Communities and Housing;
- The development of the Regional Disability Futures Programme, led by Cardiff and
- Adopting the new National Autism Service.

The stark reality, however, is that the transformation is dwarfed by the continued financial challenges, which will grow beyond the scope of any single Council, or partner organisation, to address without major government investment and policy change. In that regard, Cardiff has played a full part in shaping the national social services agenda. As the WLGA Deputy Spokesperson for Social Services, I have also been promoting the need to address key funding deficits across a range of key areas, especially in relation to domiciliary care.

Despite the major challenges facing social care across the UK, I am confident that Cardiff is as well positioned as it can be at the conclusion of this administration, to meet these challenges effectively and to play the role that a Capital City should play in shaping the agenda upon which our citizens depend.

## **Communities and Housing**

### **Welfare Reform**

The Council's housing and benefits services plays an invaluable role assisting people in the city who are in need of support, and never was this more apparent than in responding to Welfare Reform.

The City of Cardiff Council has worked closely with a wide range of partners to manage and mitigate the impact of the UK Government's welfare reform agenda on Cardiff residents, particularly in relation to the under occupancy charge. The Council took a proactive approach, identifying those people in the

city who might be affected, to help target support to those who would experience the greatest hardship. Some of the interventions we have undertaken include:

- Using Discretionary Housing Payments to support foster carers and disabled people who need an extra room, tenants who want to move, and individuals affected engaged with the Into Work Advice Service
- Making 3,208 offers of social housing to those affected
- Transferring or exchanging 850 housing occupants who have been affected by the charge
- Co-ordinating the multi-agency advice service delivered across Cardiff through the Hubs, and additional outreach service

Since 2014 the Council has provided advice to almost 350,000 people; helped residents claim an additional £25.7 million in weekly benefits; whilst the money advice team helped citizens save over £1 million through single person's Council tax discount, back-dated benefits, or energy schemes such as the Warm Home and Welsh Water discounts.

### **Supporting Refugees**

We took the decision in September 2015 that we would work regionally to provide support through the Syrian Resettlement programme. That decision led to the establishment of the multi-agency leadership group, which I am delighted to chair. This board has made great progress, and our initial regional target for resettlement in the first 12 months has been achieved, with excellent support services in place that will serve the region well for the term of the programme.

### **Housing**

As housing is at the heart of well-being, I am pleased that the Council has committed to delivering high quality, sustainable and affordable homes, particularly for those in most need. This has involved increasing the number of homes available for Council tenants, whilst achieving and maintaining 100% compliance with the Welsh Housing Quality Standard.

Key developments and achievements include:

- Supporting the buy out from the HRA Subsidy System which facilitated the Council housing building programme
- The appointment of Wates to deliver 1,500 mixed tenure homes across Cardiff, with 600 (40%) being affordable housing through our Council house building programme
- Creating a second programme of council housing development, whereby a further 150 new council homes will be delivered across 8 sites
- Reviewing the Common Housing Waiting List to ensure that those in most need are given priority. All prospective applicants now meet with the Housing Solutions Team in order that individual circumstances and

housing options are discussed. This has reduced the number of people on the waiting list from over 11,000 to 8,000

- Improving the time taken to turnaround vacant stock. At the end of January 2017, only 134 properties were vacant, which is less than 1% of our total stock
- Suspending the Right to Buy to retain our valuable resource of council homes
- For the tenth year running maintaining the no-use of B&B accommodation, against a backdrop of increasing pressures
- Improving tenant participation by employing 5 dedicated members of staff; undertaking an Annual Tenants Bus Tour; hosting tenants' conferences, and tenants voice meetings, as well as Estate Action Days
- Creating the Category 1 Alarm Receiving Centre in Willcox House to improve the security at high-rise accommodation, and to challenge anti-social behaviour. In addition, the service has been commercialised to achieve additional income targets for 2016/17 totalling £550,000
- Creating a young person's gateway, assisting young people facing homelessness
- Finally, the Rough Sleepers Strategy for 2017/20 was approved at Cabinet last week. This is our vision to end rough sleeping in Cardiff by extending the excellent partnership arrangements already in place.

## **Supporting Independent Living**

We have also made significant strides in helping people to live independently. This has allowed a number of potentially vulnerable people to develop the skills they need to live on their own, either by supporting reasonable home adaptations or by providing more preventative services before levels of need become critical.

Key to this has been the Council's Telecare care offer, which now has 4,394 users. Since April 2014, the service has received over 500,000 calls, with 14,000 callers receiving mobile warden assistance. In January 2017, the percentage of these calls requiring an ambulance was down to 6%.

The creation of the Independent Living Service has also been crucial in supporting the Preventative Agenda. As part of this approach the First Point of Contact was launched in October 2015, which has seen Independent Living Officers make 1,636 holistic visits resulting in:

- 904 customers having incomes maximised, equivalent to an additional £4.9 million in welfare benefits
- 476 customers being referred for a preventative intervention to reduce slips, trips and falls

- 358 people referred for Assistive Technology
- 302 people assisted with social isolation.

The Housing Resettlement Officers also directly assisted the discharge of 248 patients from hospital into step down accommodation that we have been created. This has resulted in 1,369 bed days being saved since April 2015; 53 people assisted, 37 of which were delayed transfers of care.

### **Transforming Service Delivery**

The Council has also invested in new technology to drive down costs and improve the level of service available to residents. Mobile working and scheduling, implemented within Housing Repairs, combined with a workforce strategy including the apprentice scheme, has enabled more work to be delivered in-house. This has reduced costs and improved the service to our tenants, which is clearly demonstrated by a significantly reduced number of complaints, and better performance.

Equally, the implementation of a new Day Opportunities Strategy, which involved investment to modernise buildings, has also helped meet individual needs. Alongside the retention, and planned expansion, of the Meals on Wheels service, the Council has invested in, transformed and repurposed key services to ensure that they remain sustainable and accessible to some of the neediest residents in Cardiff.

**Councillor Susan Elsmore**  
**Cabinet Member (Health, Housing & Wellbeing)**  
23 March 2017