

JOINT SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

19 JULY 2017

Present: County Councillor (Chairperson)

County Councillors Ahmed, Asghar Ali, Bridgeman, De'Ath, ,
Philippa Hill-John, Jenkins, Joyce, Kelloway, McGarry, Murphy,
Singh and Taylor

Co-Optees: Patricia Arlotte, Carol Cobert, Karen Dell'Armi

1 : CHAIRPERSON

The Principal Scrutiny Officer opened the meeting and asked for nominations for Chairperson for the Joint Committee.

Councillor Jim Murphy nominated Councillor Mary McGarry as Chairperson for the meeting; Councillor Ali seconded this.

Councillor Mary McGarry was appointed as Chairperson for the Joint Committee and took the Chair.

2 : APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Carter, Goddard, Lent, Morgan and Phillips.

The Chairperson advised that Councillor Susan Elsmore had also sent apologies.

3 : DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No declarations of interest were received.

4 : DRAFT DIRECTOR OF SOCIAL SERVICES ANNUAL REPORT 2016-17

The Chairperson welcomed Councillor Graham Hinchey, Cabinet Member, Children and Families; Tony Young, Director for Social Services; Irfan Alam; Assistant Director Children's Services and Amanda Phillips, Assistant Director Adult Services to the meeting.

The Chairperson advised Members that the meeting was being held to enable Members to scrutinise the draft Annual Report of the Director of Social Services, which should give a clear view of the effectiveness of the Council's Social Care Services. The report had been prepared by the Director, following an assessment of effectiveness. As such, the Director, Tony Young, had to ensure honest and sound judgements were made whilst at the same time protecting the Council's reputation and not undermining the efforts and hard work of staff.

The Chairperson invited the Cabinet Member to make a statement in which he wanted to congratulate new Members on their appointment to the Committee and he was looking forward to working with them. He noted that there was an ageing population and also that children are in all of our care as Corporate Parents; with

depleting budgets, this means increasing pressures. He did note however, there are positives in the report and that Cardiff was most improved social services department in Wales last year, which, compared to four years ago was a much better position to be in.

Members were provided with a presentation on the Annual Director's Report on the Effectiveness of Social Services 2016/17, after which the Chairperson invited questions and comments from Members;

- Members requested an update on the Dementia Centre in Ely and were advised that this was at Grand Avenue, it was already open and the refurbishment had started.
- Members asked how young carers are defined and were advised that young carers were under 18 with caring responsibilities either for a sibling or an adult. Officers added that there was more work to be done with young carers and officers were concentrating efforts to ensure assessments are carried out efficiently and effectively. It was noted however that sometimes there is some resistance to assessment for fear of stigma and interventions, so officers are trying to use partners to increase awareness of assessments and that following assessment care and support needs can be met.
- Members asked for more information on Signs of Safety as it was already in the skill set of the social worker, Members wanted to know how it was transformational. Officers explained that Signs of Safety was transformational in that it takes things back to social practice and holistic framework, mapping risks, looking at protective factors, working with families and trying to enhance the situation and identify strengths within the family and wider family rather than focussing on the risks. Primarily it was to improve the service outcomes, but it was also cost effective when a child is kept at home safe. The Assistant Director added that it was also important to recognise the read across to Adults where the same thing needs to be done, give confidence back and not be so risk averse.
- Members asked if there were regular meetings with the Chief Executive officer and were advised that the protocol had constructed the Head of Paid Service's role and highlights the obligation on the Council as a whole. Reports would be through Cabinet and Council, officers had received very good support from the Chief Executive, Section 151 Officer and colleagues.
- Members asked which challenges officers were most concerned about. The Cabinet Members stated that challenges such as having the right leadership, the money to retain and recruit social workers in the fastest growing City in the UK; all these things bring pressures. He added that Social Services need to be funded adequately but also giving value for money as the same time. The Director added that these are common issues; demand, complexity, finances and sustainability; issues common across the whole of the UK. He added that with regards to Children, more were entering care through the courts, all with very different needs which takes time and resource. With Adults, the ageing population and dementia meant there was a need for new services and approaches especially for people who were isolated. Mental Health also provided challenges. With regards to workforce, this provided significant

challenges in relation to having the right staff at the right time especially in the domiciliary sector where the council is competing in the low pay sector. All of these challenges have to be faced with partners.

- Members asked if there was any work being done to determine why there is such an increase in demand. Officers explained that some needs are becoming more noticeable, such as trafficking, child sexual exploitation, FGM, dementia, sexual abuse etc. Society is more aware of these needs now and there is more to deal with. Members were advised that there is research being done into Children in the Care System and Poverty, which was being undertaken by Cardiff University.
- Members asked who are the partners that the Council will be working with and were advised that with regards to Children, the Council work with Schools, Youth Clubs, Community Centres, everyone that could help with surfacing issues early so that things don't deteriorate. With Adults the partners are very many and various, with key relations with Health and Education.
- Members noted that external expertise was important to take the pressure from social workers having to be all things to all people; and that early intervention can influence shape and encourage as much as possible.
- Members noted that with regards to the format of the report, it would be good to have had these issues and challenges identified in the report. The Director stated that he would look at that for the next report, the report is primarily about the performance of the Director of Social Services and his discharge of duties.
- Members considered the report very informative if not quite long and complex and asked if there would be a summary version available for the public and were advised that there would be. They added that next year there would also be an abridged version that was more easy reading for young people.
- Members commented on some structuring of chapters and numbering for officers information. Officers thanked them for this feedback and stated that they would revisit for next year.
- Members asked why the consultation take up had been so poor with stakeholders. Officers advised that there had been various forums, stakeholder groups set up and the take up from providers had not been there, some sessions had been cancelled. It was determined that the sessions needed to be more dynamic and more creative thinking was needed.
- Members asked what steps had been taken to recruit more welsh speaking social workers into the service. The Director stated that this was something that they were struggling with, but they were loathed to make posts welsh essential as they couldn't afford to exclude people from applying whilst they were struggling to fill posts. He advised that there was a rolling advert which was bilingual but not specifically targeted towards welsh speakers.
- Members asked if officers knew the proportion of people who required Welsh Services. Officers advised that there was a specific officer in the directorate

who aligns resources to needs; figures are recorded in the Well Being assessment and in Care First so a report could be run to establish this. The Cabinet Members added that lots was being done to promote Welsh language courses in order that the service is more accessible and convenient.

- Members asked that if there were parents with mental health problems and the children were suffering and don't identify themselves, how would this be picked up. Officers stated that this was the importance of having a single Adults/Children directorate, working jointly and sharing information. Officers added that the statutory responsibility would be to support the parents, with an obligation to keep the child at home safely.

AGREED – That the Chairperson on behalf of the Committee writes to the Cabinet Member conveying the observations of the Committee when discussing the way forward.