

COUNCIL: 28 SEPTEMBER 2017

CABINET PROPOSAL

ANNUAL COUNCIL REPORTING FRAMEWORK - DIRECTOR OF SOCIAL SERVICES REPORT 2016/17

Reason for this Report

1. The purpose of this report is for the Cabinet to receive the 8th Annual Report of the Director of Social Services (Appendix 1) as required by the Welsh Government. The requirement is outlined in the document 'Part 8 Code of Practice on the Role of the Director of Social Services (Social Services Functions)' issued under Part 8 of the Social Services and Well-Being (Wales) Act 2014 (SSWB Act).

Background

2. From 2009/10, the Statutory Director of Social Services in each council in Wales has been required to produce and publish an Annual Report as part of an Annual Council Reporting Framework (ACRF) for social services.
3. Although this is the 8th Annual Report of the Director of Social Services, it is the first such report since the implementation in April 2016, of the SSWB Act. The Report and the systems and processes established to inform its production have been refined and developed in 2016/17 to take account of new guidance, a national template and learning from previous years. Feedback and comments received on the report this year will be taken into consideration during the preparation of future reports. This year, the focus has been on re-framing the report in response to the SSWB Act.
4. The Report was prepared following an in-depth analysis of the effectiveness of social care services. The resulting judgements and identification of improvement priorities are supported by performance information.
5. The report will be submitted to the Care & Social Services Inspectorate, Wales (CSSIW). The Regulation and Inspection of Social Care (Wales) Act places the annual Director of Social Services' report on a statutory footing and, in preparation for these new arrangements, CSSIW no longer produce an individual performance evaluation report for each council. Verbal feedback will be provided at a Performance Review

Meeting in September between CSSIW, the Director of Social Services and relevant (invited) elected member portfolio holders.

6. The priorities for action identified in the Annual Report are reflected in the Directorate Delivery Plan for Social Services for 2017/18.

Issues

7. The Report was finalised as a result of engaging managers and staff in a structured challenge process.
8. In previous years, the need to improve the opportunity for citizens who use or are eligible for social services to engage in some level of challenge prior to finalising the report and lessons learned has been noted. In recent years, the Director and senior managers, alongside members of the Corporate Parenting Advisory Committee have engaged in a face to face challenge session with young people based upon their own analysis of the report. This has been a positive and mutually beneficial experience and a similar event with young people was held on 17th June 2017. Feedback from the event is included in the report.
9. Social Services approached a number of stakeholder organisations via C3SC regarding the challenge process and they responded positively, being keen to engage and provide feedback. A draft version of the report was issued to these organisations and their feedback resulted in amendments to the report.

Scrutiny Consideration

10. The draft Director's Report was considered at a joint meeting of the Children & Young People and Community & Adult Services Scrutiny Committees on 19 July 2017. The letter from the Chair of the Joint Committee is attached at Appendix 2.

Reasons for Recommendations

11. To receive the Annual Report of the Director of Social Services for 2016/17 in order to fulfil the responsibilities required by the Welsh Government in the document entitled 'Part 8 Code of Practice on the Role of the Director of Social Services (Social Services Functions)'.

Legal Implications

12. Statutory Guidance (on the Role and Accountabilities of the Director of Social Services, issued in June 2009 under Section 7 of the Local Authority Social Services Act 1970) states that the Director of Social Services must report annually to their Council on the delivery, performance and risk as well as plans for improvement of the whole range of Social Services functions. The Statutory Guidance provides guidance on the content and process for formulating the annual report (Guidance paragraphs 6.8 to 6.13 inclusive). These reporting requirements are being placed on a statutory footing by the Social

Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014 (SSWB Act) and Regulations and Codes issued thereunder, but the new legal provisions are not yet fully in force.

13. Recent guidance issued jointly by the Welsh Government and the Association of Directors of Social Services Cymru (The Local Authority Annual Social Services Reports Guidance) indicates that the new reporting requirements are to begin next year, in the reporting year of 2017/18. However, local authorities are encouraged to follow the template provided by Regulations made under the SSWB Act for the current (transitional) reporting year 2016/17 as a way of testing their systems and in readiness for the new reporting requirements (Guidance paragraphs 1.4 and 3.0).
14. Legal Services is instructed that the Annual Report of the Director of Social Services for 2016/17 meets the requirements set out in the Statutory Guidance 2009, as well as the new reporting requirements being introduced under Part 8 of the SSWB Act.
15. Under executive arrangements, Social Services functions are the responsibility of the Cabinet (pursuant to section 13(2) of the Local Government Act 2000 and Regulations made thereunder, SI 2007/399). However, the Guidance (both statutory and non-statutory guidance referred to above) confirms that the report must also be presented to full Council to ensure effective accountability and support improvement in respect of the performance of the local authority's social services functions.

Financial Implications

16. There are no direct financial implications arising from this report.

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Council is recommended to receive the Annual Report of the Director of Social Services for 2016/17 and agree that it be presented to full Council.

THE CABINET

28 July 2017

The following Appendix is attached:

Appendix 1: Director of Social Services Annual Report 2016/17

Appendix 2: Letter from the Chair of the Joint Children & Young People and Community & Adult Services Scrutiny Committees dated 20 July 2017

The following Background Papers have been taken into account:

Part 8 Code of Practice on the Role of the Director of Social Services (Social Services Functions)
The Local Authority Annual Social Services Reports - Guidance