

My Ref: Scrutiny/Correspondence/MJH

20th July 2017

Councillors Graham Hinchey and Susan Elsmore
Cabinet Members
c/o Room 520
County Hall
Cardiff
CF10 4UW



Dear Graham and Susan

Joint Children & Young People and Community & Adult Services Scrutiny Committee – 19 July 2019

On behalf of the Members of both Committees, I would like to thank Graham and the officers for attending the joint meeting on 19 July 2017. The Committee was sorry to hear that Councillor Elsmore was unable to attend and I hope you returned home safely after the delay.

The Committee welcomed the opportunity to review the Draft Cabinet report prior to its consideration at Cabinet on 27 July 2017. During the way forward section of the meeting the Members considered the information in the report, comments made during the consideration of the briefing, together with answers to their questions, and agreed to provide you both and Officers with the following advice, comments and recommendations for consideration prior to Cabinet approving the report.

Responsibilities of the Director of Social Services

As this was a meeting of the Joint Committee meeting, the Members took the opportunity to assess the effectiveness of the Directors responsibilities. The Members were happy with Directors explanation of his responsibilities, however they did express some surprise that the protocol with the Head of Paid Service (Chief Executive) had not yet been agreed, the Committee requested that it be presented to Committee prior to it being approved by Cabinet.

Annual Report Content

The Joint Committee noted that this was a new format for the Annual Report and felt that it was too long and technical. The Committee supported the Director's concerns on the format and looked forward to hearing the outcome of his discussions around

an amended format for the future. The Committee agreed a number of comments and concerns for consideration for future reports:

- The Committee felt that the report did not clearly reference the challenges that had been so eloquently highlighted by the Director, and asked that next year's version should reference them.
- The Committee also felt that this version would not be easy for the Public or Young People to read and understand. The Committee suggested that an executive summary should be produced, that is more readable for the Public and Young people.
- The Committee stated that the preventative agenda, needs to start as early as possible, before social services becomes involved, as a result the report must reflect the work of other agencies in supporting the preventative actions.
- The Committee was disappointed to hear about the lack of engagement by the third sector in the consultation process, the Members noted the actions that had been taken and suggested that maybe it would help if future engagement could be more creative.
- The Committee expressed some concern around the provision of bilingual services. They noted the difficulties in recruiting Welsh speakers and agreed that the Social Worker advert must be reviewed. The Members requested an analysis of the demand for services across all languages, so that they can further assess the situation.
- The Committee considered that the section numbering was not clear and that sections 5 to 10 and sections 12 to 14 were actually subsections of 4 and 11 and should be listed as such.

Finally the Committee recommended that the report must, in future, include more comparative data so that it clearly highlights progress being made to improve services and support.

Children's Services and Adult Services

The Joint Committees welcomed the opportunity to be briefed on the operation of the Directorate and gain an understanding of the challenges that it faces. The Members also used this information to help identify issues for consideration during the development of their work programme.

The Committee appreciated the Directors analysis of the key challenges faced by the Directorate, being: Demand, Sustainability, Complexity, Workforce, Partnerships and new models of working. This the Members felt would help focus their work programme items.

The Committee also welcomed the Directors explanation of the Signs of Safety model, and noted that the model was already being used by other Local Authorities. The Members recommended that officers should contact those Authorities using the model to learn from their experiences. The Committees also asked for a further briefing on this model in the near future at both Committees.

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

To summarise, this letter requires a response as it contains the following recommendations, suggestions and requests for information.

The Committee recommends that:

- A draft copy of the Director of Social Services protocol with the Head of Paid Service be present to Committee, before consideration by Cabinet;
- The Challenges facing the Social Service be clearly highlighted in future Annual reports;
- A public and young person's version be produced;
- That stakeholders involved early year preventative work should be referenced in the report
- That consultation with the third sector needs to be more creative to ensure greater engagement;
- That the rolling advert for social workers need to be reviewed to encourage more welsh speakers to apply;
- Review the section numbering format of the Annual Report; and
- Include more comparative information to show progress.

The Committee also requested the provision of additional briefing papers to the Committees namely:

- An analysis of the demand for services by language; and
- A briefing paper on the Signs of Safety model, together with details of how Cardiff has learnt from other Authorities.

Finally the Committees wished to inform you of the following issues that will be included in their work programmes for this year:

