
CARDIFF CHILDREN'S SERVICES STRATEGY 2019-2022

Purpose of the Report

1. As part of the Children & Young People Scrutiny Committee 2018-19 Work Programme, the Committee agreed to receive a copy of the draft cabinet report entitled "Strategic Plan to Deliver Excellent Outcomes for all our Children" (attached at **Appendix A**) for scrutiny and review prior to its consideration by Cabinet.
2. The Council's Cabinet are due to consider a draft strategy at its meeting on 11th July and this report provides the Committee with the opportunity to consider and review the draft strategy and provide any comments or concerns to Cabinet prior to its meeting.

Background

3. This report enables the Committee to consider the 3-year strategic plan to deliver excellent outcomes in Children's Services. It sets out how the Council and partners will develop prevention, improve practice, support and develop the workforce, improve the range of service offers and achieve improved performance.
4. Cardiff Council's Capital Ambition: Corporate Plan 2019 – 22 sets out how the Administration's priorities for Cardiff will be achieved, providing clarity on what will be delivered, and by when. One of the key well-being objectives is "Cardiff is a great place to grow up" and critical to the success of this is ensuring excellent outcomes for vulnerable children, and particularly for those who enter the care system. In addition, for the council to deliver on its other well-being objective "Safe, Confident and Empowered communities", this strategy enables the delivery of that in respect of safeguarding children and ensures that they are protected from harm or abuse, especially in relation to exploitation

Issues

5. The outcomes for children who have been looked after are worse than those of the general population. These children have often had multiple Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs). A national study in Wales found that children who had 4 or more ACEs were:
 - a) 3.7 times more likely to currently be receiving treatment for mental illness,
 - b) 9.5 times more likely to have ever felt suicidal or self-harmed,
 - c) 16 times more likely to have used crack cocaine or heroin,
 - d) 20 times more likely to have been incarcerated in their life.

6. In line with these increasing demands, there is increasing budget pressures. Children's Services has a net budget of £58,454,000, with a further £2,000,000 held in contingency for possible growth in the number of looked after children. This budget has increased year-on-year substantially and whilst the increased spend demonstrates the Council's commitment to meet the rising demand for Children's Social Services, this is becoming unsustainable. The majority of this budget £32,957,000, is currently being spent on placements.. The aim for the strategy will be to shift investment overtime from placements to more support services for children and their families.

Addressing the challenges

7. The Cardiff Children's Services Strategy 2019 – 2022 attached in Appendix 1 brings together a range of service improvement projects under the creation of one 'delivering excellent outcomes in Childrens Services' programme. It draws on other well-established plans including; the Corporate Parenting Plan, the Council's Capital Ambition Plan, the Child-Friendly City Plan and the pre-existing Improving Outcomes Programme.

8. This Strategy is a Cardiff Council document and has been created to inform officers, elected members, partners and communities of the direction of travel and our high ambitions for Children's Services in Cardiff. An associated practice manual is being developed to support social work staff and their managers to deliver a high quality service for the people of Cardiff.

Becoming a Child Friendly City

9. Cardiff Children's Services place the child at the centre of everything we do. It is essential that children's voices are heard and their rights respected. Hearing the views of children and young people will be an integral part of driving forward our Delivering Excellence Agenda. As part of the development of this strategy a listening event was organised and the report is attached in Appendix 2.

Scope of Scrutiny

10. This report will enable the Committee to review, assess and comment on the proposed draft Cardiff Children's Services Strategy 2019 - 2022. Members may also wish to review whether the strategy enables Cardiff Council to meet the challenges it is facing and ensure that the right support is available at the right time for children and young people through the implementation of this Children's Services Strategy.

Way Forward

11. Councillor Graham Hinchey (Cabinet Member for Children & Families), Claire Marchant (Director of Social Services) and Deborah Driffield (Interim Assistant Director – Children's Services) will present the report, copy attached at **Appendix A**, to the Committee and be available to answer member's questions.
12. Members may wish to consider draft Strategic Plan to Deliver Excellent Outcomes for all our Children, together with any additional information presented at the meeting and provide Councillor Graham Hinchey Cabinet Member for Children & Families, and Director of Social Services with any comments, concerns or recommendations for consideration prior to the Cabinet meeting on 11 July 2019.

Legal Implications

13. The Scrutiny Committee is empowered to enquire, consider, review and recommend but not to make policy decisions. As the recommendations in this report are to consider and review matters there are no direct legal implications. However, legal implications may arise if and when the matters under review are

implemented with or without any modifications. Any report with recommendations for decision that goes to Cabinet will set out any legal implications arising from those recommendations. All decisions taken by or on behalf of the Council must (a) be within the legal powers of the Council; (b) comply with any procedural requirement imposed by law; (c) be within the powers of the body or person exercising powers on behalf of the Council; (d) be undertaken in accordance with the procedural requirements imposed by the Council e.g. Scrutiny Procedure Rules; (e) be fully and properly informed; (f) be properly motivated; (g) be taken having regard to the Council's fiduciary duty to its taxpayers; and (h) be reasonable and proper in all the circumstances.

Financial Implications

14. The Scrutiny Committee is empowered to enquire, consider, review and recommend but not to make policy decisions. As the recommendations in this report are to consider and review matters there are no direct financial implications at this stage in relation to any of the work programme. However, financial implications may arise if and when the matters under review are implemented with or without any modifications. Any report with recommendations for decision that goes to Cabinet will set out any financial implications arising from those recommendations.

RECOMMENDATION

- That Committee reviews draft strategy at **Appendix A** together with the information presented at the meeting and provide any recommendations, comments or advice to the Councillor Graham Hinchey Cabinet Member for Children & Families, and Director of Social Service with any comments, concerns or recommendations for consideration prior to the Cabinet Meeting on 11 July 2019.
- Identify any areas for consideration in the development of the Committee's work programme for 2019-2020

Davina Fiore

Director of Governance and Legal Services

2 July 2019