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My Ref: Scrutiny/Correspondence/Cllr Jenkins
16 Sep 2020

Councillor Susan Elsmore
Cabinet Member Social Care, Health & Wellbeing
County Hall
Cardiff
CF10 4UW

Dear Cllr Elsmore,

COMMUNITY & ADULT SERVICES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE – 14 SEP 2020

As Chairman of the Community and Adult Services Scrutiny Committee, I wish to thank you and officers for attending Committee, providing Members with an opportunity to consider the Extra Care and Supported Living Services for Older People and Adults with Disabilities Cabinet Report and the Local Authority Social Services Annual Report 2019-20. Members of the Committee have requested that I feedback the following comments and observations to you.

Extra Care & Supported Living Services for Older People and Adults with Disabilities

During Committee, Members sought to establish their levels of confidence in the proposed approach in order to ensure high levels of care are in place. As you will be aware, detailed discussions were held surrounding contingency plans along with the proposed length of time for the tendering process. Although Members understand the reasoning provided for the short extension of provider contracts, Members do hold concerns that the proposed period for procurement is not a substantial amount of time. As such, if viable under the recent Welsh Government regulation changes to contract and procurement rules, Members would recommend seeking to extend current contracts for a longer period of time to facilitate a more lengthy procurement process. If such extension is not possible, Members would recommend a review being put in place in order to determine lessons learnt from procurement within such timescales. Although Members heard assurances that arrangements will be in place by April 2021; Members are concerned that it appears no contingency plan have yet been agreed. As such, Members would recommend a clear contingency plan drafted in order to mitigate any unforeseen circumstances.

Members note the ratio between determining costs and quality of care provided at the meeting and were pleased to hear that in regards to the application of TUPE (the Transfer of Undertakings (Protection of Employment)) there would be no liabilities for the Council.

Local Social Services Annual Report 2019-20

With regard to the Local Social Services Annual Report 2019-20, Members wish to commend the openness and transparency displayed within the report. In terms of challenges, and as mentioned at Committee, it does appear that areas where further work is required appear to be long standing issues for the directorate such as locality working and sickness absence and Members hold concerns that these areas of work may again run over into the next financial year. Members therefore expect significant progress to be made in the coming months.

In terms of implementing the recommendations of the Community Services Review and constructing an action plan for community based mental health services in partnership with the Health Board, Members were disappointed to see lack of progress as this is an area which Committee have previously raised concerns about and would have expected it taken forward as a priority. Given the current context and its potential impact on a greater number of peoples' mental health, Members wish to stress the urgency in this action plan being developed. In addition, Members wish to recommend that the implementation of an action plan in partnership with the Health Board is prioritised in the upcoming year. Members also note and welcome your comments regarding Scrutiny involvement in this work and will take this offer forward within our work programming discussions.

In light of the upcoming change of senior leadership and its potential to present a new direction and priorities to the service area, Members do wish to stress the need to ensure any potential disruption is mitigated and welcome your comments on acknowledging such matters. Members also believe this change poses an opportunity for a 'lessons learnt' approach and would recommend a thorough exit interview be conducted with the current position holder in order to fully understand the nature of the job and any potential areas which may require addressing ahead of the new position holder taking up post. Additionally in terms of the potential new direction of travel this change in management may bring, as a Committee we do feel this could have been better acknowledged and addressed within the report

Although it is not within this Committee remit, when considering the Care Inspectorate Wales (CIW) letter, attached within our papers at Appendix B, Members did hold concerns that the CIW were still yet to receive information from Children Services regarding the effectiveness and frequency of end of placement reviews and wish to highlight this with Cllr Bridgeman for the Children and Young Peoples Scrutiny consideration. I have also cc'd in the Cabinet Member for Children and Families into this letter for his awareness.

Thank you once again to you and your officers for attending Committee and we ask that Cabinet take into account this Committee's comments and recommendations found within this letter. Our thanks also go to the Director of Social Services ahead of her departure for her openness and approach to Scrutiny during her time with the authority.

For ease of reference our recommendations captured within this letter, which we would welcome your response on are as follows:

Extra Care & Supported Living Services for Older People and Adults with Disabilities

- Under recent Welsh Government regulation changes to contract and procurement rules, seek to extend current contracts for a longer period of time to allow greater time for the procurement process.
- If such extension is not possible Members would recommend a review being put in place in order to determine lessons learnt from procurement within this timeframe.
- A clear contingency plan be drafted and implemented in order to mitigate any unforeseen circumstances which may hinder the ability to secure providers for April 2021.

Local Social Services Annual Report 2019-20

- In partnership with the Health Board, prioritise develop and implement an action plan for community based mental health services within the upcoming financial year
- A thorough exit interview be conducted with the current Director of Social Services in order to fully understand the nature of the job and any potential areas which may require addressing ahead or during the new position holder taking up post.

Yours,



COUNCILLOR SHAUN JENKINS

Chairman - Community & Adult Services Scrutiny Committee

cc. Claire Marchant, Director Social Services

Louise Barry, Assistant Director, Adult Social Services

Cllr Hinchey, Cabinet Member Children and Families

Cllr Lee Bridgeman, Chairman, Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee

Denise Moriarty, Strategic Lead Planning Officer

Cabinet Office