

COMMUNITY & ADULT SERVICES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

14 SEPTEMBER 2020

Present: Councillor Jenkins(Chairperson)
Councillors Ahmed, Carter, Gibson, Philippa Hill-John, Lent,
Lister and McGarry

82 : APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

None received.

83 : DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None received.

84 : MINUTES

The minutes of the meetings held on 17 February 2020 and 4 March 2020 were agreed as a correct record.

85 : LOCAL AUTHORITY SOCIAL SERVICES ANNUAL REPORT 2019/20

The Chairperson advised that this item enabled Members to carry out pre-decision scrutiny on the Local Authority's Social Services Annual Report 2019-20. In line with the Committee's terms of reference, the Chairperson reminded Members that they shall only be considering areas which fall into the remit of Adult Social Care.

The Chairperson welcomed Cllr Susan Elsmore, Cabinet Member Social Care, Health & Well-being; Claire Marchant, Director for Social Services and Louise Barry - Assistant Director Adult Services.

The Chairperson invited Cllr Elsmore to make a statement in which she said that she was happy to present the report and stressed that it was a retrospective report up until 31 March 2020. The report highlights the positive work and achievements delivered before and throughout the pandemic. The Cabinet Member wished to place on record her gratitude for the considerable work undertaken and the central role that social care has played in the public service response to the pandemic. She added that the report reflects that people who need care and support are the Council's priority.

Members were provided with a presentation after which the Chairperson invited questions and comments from Members.

Members noted that the challenges are very different to a year ago and asked if the challenges were considered greater. Officers stated that the challenges that society are facing are so much greater than a year ago and are unprecedented. The challenges impact on the most vulnerable people in society. The Council has statutory duties to provide the right care and support and there is a need to also include wellbeing and connection. Economic downturn will always impact on social services too.

Members considered that the report feels transparent but wanted to touch on the senior management changes asking when the impact of the changes would be seen and if there was risk to so much change at the top of social services could bring more challenges. The Cabinet Member was pleased that report was considered as transparent as this was what she had wanted. With regard to senior management changes, there had been considerable top senior management changes since 2014 in social care; there were now Assistant Directors and Operational Managers coming on stream which were having a positive impact. The Cabinet Member was sad to see Claire Marchant leave the authority. Officers explained the restructure that had been brought forward with the OM's had been fully recruited and excellent appointments had been made. Officers are gelling as a team and focussing on big issues. Officers were confident in the team approach under the Assistant Directors leadership and Cardiff was well placed to deliver social services. It was added that there were regular joint social services meetings across senior leadership.

Members discussed challenges facing social services and noted that sickness absence was up by 3 days. Members wondered whether these challenges were now engrained. The Cabinet Member stated that it was important to show the real position in social services; this was a retrospective report and the challenges are outlined. It was also added that not all Local Authority Directors have produced a report but Cardiff felt it was better to be open and upfront about the challenges. Currently Cardiff is doing well, staff retention is good, engagement with the public and service users is good, work with Health Board and partners is good, so there is lots to commend. It was agreed that there are challenges and it was important to recognise the continual improvement journey. Officers added that the workforce was in a good place, there has been progress with regard to strength based practice, which was a huge piece of work which will continue to embed. The Social care market in Cardiff was well developed and safeguarding has improved significantly. Officers added that it is right to be transparent in the challenges and that CIW analysis aligned with the report.

Members asked about a timeline/plan for services for Community Mental Health Services. The Cabinet Member explained they were still in the midst of the changes and that no doubt the pandemic will increase demand for the service. Officers added that they work closely with mental health colleagues and are tracking demand rates as people are being impacted by the pandemic. It was agreed that as a partnership they needed to firm up a timeline that is deliverable and a future report on this would be brought back to Committee.

Members asked if the document was appropriate in its current form as the current Director for Social Services was leaving and this in essence was her blueprint. Members considered if a slimmed down retrospective version rather than a future looking version would have been more appropriate. The Cabinet Member explained that it follows a prescribed format by Welsh Government. The Cabinet Member added that she takes a strong leadership role in any changes that may come as does Cabinet. Officers added that the statutory requirement to produce a report was never stood down so they felt it was important to produce it. The priorities flow from Capital Ambition. At this time of year staff are having their priorities set and it was important to continue these things with the team.

Members asked if the current Director of Social Services, who had been at Cardiff for just over two years, had found it the challenges greater than she had expected. The Director stated that they were probably different challenges than anticipated but you deliver in the context of the Local Authority; there are always things thrown up that are unexpected or weren't evident. The Director thanked the Chair and Committee for the challenges that have helped drive things forward.

Members asked when the new Director would be in place and were advised that the consultation Cabinet report was published last Friday; they are proposals that are going to consultation, if accepted then the process moves on. The Cabinet Member thanked Claire Marchant and her staff for all their work.

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.

86 : ANNUAL REPORT 2019/20

The Chairperson advised Committee that the Council's Constitution requires all Scrutiny Committees to 'report annually to the Council on their workings and make recommendations for future work programmes'. Members had received the Committee's draft Annual Report 2019 – 2020 for their consideration.

RESOLVED: to approve the report.

87 : WORK PROGRAMMING 2020/21

Members discussed the approach Committee would like to take to determine the work programme going forward. Members were asked to consider any items they would like to scrutinise and which partners could be invited as witnesses.

Members considered a remote work programming meeting to discuss and prioritise items would be the best option. Members could also submit their suggestions by email if they wished.

The principal scrutiny officer would circulate dates for the work programming meeting.

Members considered committee meetings going forward should start at 4.30 as previously.

88 : URGENT ITEMS (IF ANY)

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

The Chairperson advised that this item enabled Members to undertake pre-decision scrutiny. This item was added to the agenda under urgent items however the Chairperson requested for it to be considered at the start of the meeting.

The Chairperson welcomed Cllr Susan Elsmore, Cabinet Member Social Care, Health & Well-being; Claire Marchant, Director for Social Services and Louise Barry - Assistant Director Adult Services.

The Chairperson invited Cllr Elsmore to make a statement in which she said that she was pleased to introduce the report that would be going to Cabinet on Thursday. The report seeks delegated authority to secure domiciliary care for extra care and supported living schemes. It would be a long term contract based on price and importantly quality.

The Director advised Members that it was a technical report but also provided an opportunity to highlight the excellent work across the City in supporting people to be as independent as possible with support. Details of the tender were outlined to Members and it was noted that the new contracts needed to be in place by 1 April 2021.

The Chairperson invited questions and comments from Members.

Members noted that the current contracts were being extended due to Covid-19 and there was an anticipation of a limited response. Members asked what would happen if these pressures were still around in March and if there was a contingency plan. Officers explained that there was active engagement with potential providers and the market. There is an active market of providers and although there is a risk, Officers are confident that that there will be a lot of interest in the contracts. As far as a contingency is concerned, Officers explained that the responsibility would always default to the Local Authority.

Members asked if it was usual practice to pass the responsibility to the Assistant Director for the procurement process. Officers advised that it was, it was in line with the scheme of delegations.

Members asked if three months was enough to satisfy the tender process and put practice in place. Officers advised that the timetable ensures there is a transition period; there will be TUPE arrangements and there would be a very clear handover plan to the organisation.

Members were concerned that the process seemed rushed and that it was a large contract to delegate to the Assistant Director rather than going back to Cabinet for decision. Members asked why this was the best option rather than a longer extension. The Cabinet Member explained that the contract needs to be in place by 1 April 2021. Officers further explained that it was important to secure these important services. They felt there was enough interest from the market and that providers were very positive about the working relationships in place.

Members sought reassurance that the decisions would be made on quality more than cost and Officers advised that it was a 60/40 split; research shows that this ratio gets the best applicants.

With regard to TUPE, Members asked if the Council acts as a conduit. Officers explained that as part of the tender documents issued, there is an agreed template and the organisation that is exiting will populate the template. The document is

circulated to all organisations who submit a tender. That is the Councils duty and responsibility.

Members asked why the current provider did not want to extend the contract. Officers explained that the provider was based in Gwent and going forward only wants to deliver services where they are landlords, so it was a strategic decision.

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.

89 : DATE OF NEXT MEETING - TBC

The meeting terminated at 3.50 pm

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