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My Ref: Scrutiny/Correspondence/Cllr Jenkins  
13 July 2021

Councillor Susan Elsmore  
Cabinet Member Social Care, Health & Wellbeing  
Councillor Lynda Thorne  
Cabinet Member Housing & Communities  
Sent via e-mail

Dear Cllr Elsmore & Cllr Thorne,

**COMMUNITY & ADULT SERVICES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE – 7 JULY 2021 – LOCAL  
AUTHORITY SOCIAL SERVICES ANNUAL REPORT 2020-21 & DIRECTORATE  
DELIVERY PLAN 2021-22**

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 Local Authority Social Services Annual Report 2020-21 and Adults, Housing & Communities Directorate Delivery Plan 2021-22. Following our consideration, Members of the Committee have requested that I feedback the following comments and observations to you.

**Local Authority Social Services Annual Report 2020-21**

Members firstly wish to place on record their appreciation for the way in which staff have adapted to new ways of working in response to the Covid-19 pandemic. It was also interesting to note that the speed of delivery in establishing and deploying a 'whole-system response' with partners to emerging issues, was an area of work which can be adapted and deployed into other areas of the directorates work over the coming years. For clarity purposes, our understanding of the term 'whole-system response' relates to the service area working more closely with partners and we would appreciate your confirmation that our understanding of this term is correct.

In terms of staff vacancies and sickness, Members note detail of this was captured in the Children Service Overview section of the report but was not included in the Adult Services Overview. Members note the majority of issues are within Children Services however as detailed within the meetings papers, Adults Services does have a notable level of vacancies

and staff sickness and so wish to request that if this issue remains, narrative on Adults Services sickness and absence also be included in future reports.

At the meeting, the absence of an introductory analysis and assessment by the Director, which was included in previous Annual Reports was raised. During Committee's previous consideration of the 2019-20 Annual Report this introductory analysis from a senior perspective was recognised and commended by the Committee as a key contributor toward the report's openness and transparency; with such introductory framing serving as a useful tool for readers.

Further to this, comments were also made regarding the need for the report to include more detail around priorities and next steps in order to make the report more accessible. Members note the comments made that the Annual Report serves as a strategic assessment of the past year which highlights the forthcoming priorities, with the Directorate Delivery Plan setting out those priorities in more detail.

Members also note the comments made regarding the need to remain mindful to the documents length and avoidance of information being duplicated. However, it is felt that a frank, yet succinct, introductory analysis by the Director capturing the past years successes and challenges at the start of the report is worthwhile. As such, Members **recommend** that the Director provides a balanced analysis of the year's performance, highlighting both the successes and challenges of the directorate in future Annual Reports. In addition, consideration should also be given to including more detail on the delivery of priorities, or as an alternative, stronger signposting to the Directorate Delivery Plan in order for the reader to obtain such detail.

### **Adults, Housing & Communities Directorate Delivery Plan 2021-22**

Members welcomed the assurance provided by yourself and officers that all of the service areas 2021-22 priorities are included within the Plan. Although the priorities seem to align between both the Social Services Annual Report and the Directorate Delivery Plan, it was felt that the ease of evaluating such alignment was not easy and Members would appreciate consideration be given to this in future years.

The demand on the service area following the unification of Adult Services and Housing & Communities was also questioned and Members welcomed the comments made that this amalgamation has been an important move which will stimulate a strong, positive impact on service delivery.

During the meeting, members queried whether by combining Adult Services and Housing & Communities a "super directorate" has in-effect been created, and if so, if there is a risk of

losing clarity on priorities. Members welcomed the candour about the importance of being suitably resourced to deal with the new scope of the directorate, and note the comments about the remaining recruitment still left to do to complete the leadership team of the directorate.

It was also pleasing to note the confidence levels in terms of managing the transition of services into a blended virtual and face to face approach, and Members welcomed the recognition made over the importance of offering Cardiff residents services either online or in person. Members also note the comments made that there are challenges going forward in terms of increased workload along with a tired workforce.

Lastly, in terms of void management Members welcome the confirmation that reserves have been allocated within the budget and note that challenges remain around recruitment and cost of materials along with the identified solutions presented by officers in addressing this matter.

Thank you once again to you and officers for attending Committee. For ease of reference our recommendation captured within this letter, which we would welcome your response on is as follows:

#### **Local Social Services Annual Report 2020-21**

- Members **recommend** that the Director provides a balanced analysis of the year's performance, highlighting both the successes and challenges of the directorate in future Annual Reports. In addition, consideration should also be given to including more detail on the delivery of priorities, or as an alternative, stronger signposting to the Directorate Delivery Plan in order for the reader to obtain such detail.

Yours,



**COUNCILLOR SHAUN JENKINS**

**Chairman - Community & Adult Services Scrutiny Committee**

cc. Sarah McGill, Corporate Director People & Communities

Jane Thomas, Director, Adults, Housing & Communities

Tim Gordon, Head of Communications

Cabinet Office

Date: 14 July 2021

My Ref: SS/CYP/LASSAR\_Q4



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Councillor Graham Hinchey  
Cabinet Member for Children & Families  
County Hall  
Atlantic Wharf  
CARDIFF  
CF10 4UW

Dear Graham,

**CHILDREN & YOUNG PEOPLE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE – 13 JULY 2021 –  
LOCAL AUTHORITY SOCIAL SERVICES ANNUAL REPORT 2020/21 AND  
Q4/YEAR END PERFORMANCE**

Please accept my thanks for attending the Children & Young People Scrutiny Committee to discuss the Local Authority Social Services Annual Report (LASSAR) 2020/21 and Q4/Year end performance for Children's Services. Please also pass on our thanks to Sarah McGill and Deborah Driffield. The comments, observations and recommendations below were captured during the Committee's discussion at the Way Forward. Please note that a separate letter on the Youth Justice Service will follow.

We commend the LASSAR 2020/21 to Cabinet for approval.

Firstly, we would like to commend and thank you and officers for the open and honest evidence you are providing to the Committee. We very much welcome this approach and the trust you have in the Committee to inform us of not only progress you are making, but also the challenges and problems you face. We look forward to continue working closely with you and supporting you going forward.

**Demand on Services/Capacity**

Throughout the session, we asked you and officers ("the panel") a number of questions relating to the demand on services and capacity to deliver.

We understand the panel's concerns across the Service in relation to this and are mindful that in certain areas, (e.g. child protection) the Service is having some significant difficulties in dealing with the demand. We wish to support you to address this, and would welcome suggestions on how we could do this.

We very much welcomed the updates the panel gave in relation to looking at ways to alleviate some of the pressure on staff, and continuing work to assist them. Daily management team meetings and regular reviews indicate that the Service has a handle on current issues. In addition, the development of a Training and Workforce Academy can only be a positive step in recognising the social work profession and opportunities for progression and development

We support the requirement for the Service to review processes; drives towards a strengths based practice approach; and we advocate the two pilots with Children's Services meeting with Education, working around the family

However, we are very mindful that demand on services will get more intense; and we are also aware of the need to firm up medium – long term challenges. There is a role for this Committee to monitor these issues on a regular basis and make necessary recommendations as required.

Therefore, we would request that you provide us with an indicative timetable of appropriate times until April 2021 when the panel could provide updates on this. This could link with a financial monitoring report (further details below).

We would also welcome more information on the two pilots with education, to enable us to review progress.

### **Financial Resources**

Members are very aware that financial resources are required to deliver not only the aspirations for improvements to the Service but also deal with immediate and growing demands.

We acknowledge the collaborative budget build work with finance is a positive step, but we feel that we need to monitor resources more closely in relation to ensuring that resources are sufficient to meet the demand and for this to be sustainable.

Therefore, linked to the previous request, we would require that financial monitoring be included in regular briefings to committee.

As we suggested at the meeting, the Committee will write to Welsh Government in relation to the following:

- The growing pressure on Children's Services in Cardiff; and
- Seek assurances and clarity on funding and other support available from Welsh Government, and for how long this will be in place

We would appreciate the panel's input into this letter, particularly a narrative on the picture in Cardiff, and would therefore request that this be provided as a matter of urgency.

### **Whole System Approach**

Members support the desire to develop and implement a "whole system approach" in the Service and aspirations for the service to be moving to a community based model with statutory partners, third sector and other providers levering in services that work around the whole family and engage the community.

The panel stated that there is data from the Cardiff Family Advice and Support Services that would give us an insight into the successes of work in that area. Members would welcome this data, and a briefing session sometime in the future – we will factor this into our work programme, but would welcome an indicated time for us to consider this.

Members were informed of the two track parallel reunification processes in place in relation to changing practice. The Committee would request that it receives further information into progress the service is making in changing its practice alongside dealing with the immediate challenges.

### **Care Leavers**

Members asked questions relating to how the Service maintains contact with care leavers and for how long; and partnership working in relation to supporting care leavers. Members noted the response that current performance results do not reflect where the panel want it to be. We welcome the number of programmes the Service has introduced – personal advisors; Into Work etc and we support aspirations to offer a wide range of possibilities/options for care leavers in terms of work and training; and for wider corporate mentoring. We also welcomed the case study you highlighted in terms of wraparound support for care leavers and would request that further case studies are provided at future meetings.

Members asked for information in relation to young people that had been supported via the Cardiff Commitment. Deborah responded that there was data on this, and she could supply this. We would therefore request this data.

## **Child Protection**

Members requested details of which categories within Child Protection are increasing most and what sits within the term exploitation. We also raised the issue of capacity and demand in this area, which is addressed more widely above. The panel responded that as well as CSE, criminal exploitation remains a significant issue; and forced marriage and trafficking an emerging theme. We were also informed of increasing concerns such as neglect; domestic abuse; physical abuse /injuries to young children. Sexual abuse was highlighted a particular concern.

Members raised the issue of school exclusions and the impact this will have in increasing the vulnerability of the young person excluded, those on reduced timetables or not engaged at all. We will shortly be considering topics for our work programme, and it is likely that this issue will feature in our work.

Members asked you and officers about partnership working with education around influencing the new curriculum on providing advice, support and classroom material in relation to child protection. Deborah offered to discuss this with education, and we would welcome an update once this has been done.

## **Engagement with young people**

Members were pleased to be updated in terms of progress in this area, particularly the impending launch of the “Mind My Own” App. As suggested, engagement with young people themselves in the development of services is crucial, and we appreciate the aspirations to connect with young people to not only do this, but gain an insight to their lives via lived experiences. We will continue to monitor progress in this area.

## **Assessment Centre**

Members welcomed the opening of the Centre and feedback on the facility from myself. You offered visits to CYPSC Members, and our Scrutiny Officer will link with Kate Hustler to arrange.

To recap, the Committee **is requesting**:

1. Agreement to provide regular updates to CYPSC on demand and capacity of services and financial monitoring; and provide us with an indicative timetable of appropriate times until April 2021 when the panel could provide updates on this.
2. In addition to the above, provide any further suggestions you may have on how CYPSC can assist you.
3. More information on the two pilots with education, to enable us to review progress.
4. Input into our letter to Welsh Government, particularly a narrative on the picture in Cardiff, and this be provided as a matter of urgency.
5. Data from the Cardiff Family Advice and Support Services that would give us an insight into the successes of work in that area, plus an appropriate time when we could hold a briefing session on the Services.
6. Further information into progress the Service is making in changing its practice alongside dealing with the immediate challenges in relation to the two track parallel reunification processes.
7. Data on young people that had been supported via the Cardiff Commitment.
8. Output from discussions between Children's Services and Education in ensuring that the new curriculum can provide advice, support and classroom material in relation to child protection.

There are no formal recommendations arising from this letter.

Once again, on behalf of the Committee, please pass my sincere thanks to all who attended Children & Young People Scrutiny Committee. I look forward to a response.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'L. BRIDGEMAN', written over a light grey rectangular background.

**COUNCILLOR LEE BRIDGEMAN**  
**Chairperson – Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee**



CC: CYPSC Members  
Sarah McGill, Corporate Director, People and Communities  
Deborah Driffield, Director of Children's Services  
Liz Williams/Debra Willis, PA to the Corporate Director  
Alison Taylor, Cabinet Support Office  
Kim Thorpe, PA to the Director of Children's Services