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Date 18 September 2015

My Ref SS/CYP/MJH
Your Ref:

Councillor Sue Lent
Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Families, Children and Early Years
County Hall
Atlantic Wharf
CARDIFF
CF10 4UW

Dear Sue

Thank you for attending Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee on 15 September 2015 to help introduce the Child Health and Disability progress report, Families First Annual Review and Quarter 1 Performance Information. I would also like to thank Tony Young and his officers, as well as Rachel Jones, Sara Payne (Barnardo's) and Eve Williams (Action for Children) for their full and honest answers that were provided at the meeting. During the consideration of the reports and answers to Members' questions, the Committee identified a number of comments, concerns and recommendations which they asked me to write to you.

Child Health and Disability progress report

The Committee were pleased to receive the update on the Department's progress in implementing its development plan and addressing the Committee's inquiry recommendations. Member noted that the disability team was now more stable and that the take up of direct payments had improved.

Members were however concerned that there was still a lot of partnership work to be undertaken and that the eligibility criteria had still not been developed. Members recommended that the department consult on and implement the new criteria as soon as possible.

Finally the Committee were disappointed that regular consultation meetings with children and their families or carers were not occurring. The committee recommends that these should be started straight away, so that Children's Services can ensure that the service and support provided is appropriate and effective.

Families First Annual Review

The Committee were extremely impressed with the work that the Annual Review report highlighted. Specifically impressive is the partnership working, the clear monitoring of the packages and presentation of outcomes achieved, the willingness to take difficult decisions to change providers when outcomes are not achieved and the flexibility that

enables gaps in the delivery being identified and then funding re-allocated to fill the gaps. Members noted the clear positive impact of the packages and felt that they might also be having an impact on school attendance (anti bullying and "connect" courses) and Children's Services referrals (Disability Focus).

Finally the Committee recommended that you and Officers must lobby the Welsh Government to try to ensure that the funding and packages continue to be provided after the present funding programme ends in 2017.

Quarter 1 Performance Information

The Committee welcomed the number of key improvements shown in the report's performance indicators.

The committee noted that the PI "recording decisions on referrals" performance was reported as having improved from 85.8% in Q4 to 89.8% in Q1, however the number of referrals had reduced by 16%, which should have enabled the staff to deal with considerably more cases. Therefore Members were concerned that this PI had not improved more rapidly, and would expect to see an improvement at Q2, if the number of referrals continues to fall.

Members also questioned why the indicators used by the Wales Data Unit had not been included in the corporate monitoring report as these PI's were being publically report by the Welsh Government. The Committee recommended that future corporate performance reports must include those indicators published by the Wales Data Unit, to enable them to be closely monitored.

Members also questioned the number of cases that social workers currently had, as they had been informed that some had over 25 cases whereas the average was 18.9 as reported in the corporate performance report. The Director informed the Committee that an analysis had been undertaken and some social workers did have case loads of 25 however those cases were appropriate for the social workers and he was satisfied with the level of caseloads across all social workers. Members noted that social worker case loads were now more manageable and also welcomed the development of a pool of social workers, to help reduce the need for agency workers and help to eliminate the establishment gaps, which inevitably occurs during the recruitment process.

Members also discussed the current and forecasted budget position for Children's Services for this year and requested clarification of whether the contingency budget had already been fully used in Q1.

Finally the Committee wished to inform you that they approved their work programme for the year, as required by the constitution, and I have attached, for your information, a copy of the work programme calendar so that you and your officers are aware of the issues that the Committee will be seeking to scrutinise at each meeting.

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

To recap, this letter requests several actions, requests for information and recommendations, as follows, and requires a response:

- Recommended that you consult and implement the new Child Health and Disability eligibility criteria as soon as possible;
- Recommends that regular consultation meetings are undertaken with children and their carers who use the Child Health and Disability service;
- That you and officers lobby the Welsh Government to ensure that the Families First funding and packages continue to be provided post 2017;
- That future corporate performance quarterly reports include the relevant performance indicators published by the Wales Data Unit and publicised by the Welsh Government; and
- Provide details of the use of the contingency budget for Children's Services.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'R. Cook', with a horizontal line underneath it.

COUNTY COUNCILLOR RICHARD COOK
Chairperson – Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee

CC: Tony Young, Director of Children's Services
Rachel Jones, Operational Manager - Partnerships & Citizen Focus
Melanie Jackson - Personal Assistant to Deputy Leader
Ifan Alam – Assistant Director of Social Services

**SWYDDFA'R DIRPRWY ARWEINYDD
DEPUTY LEADER'S OFFICE**

Fy Nghyf / My Ref: CM32215

Eich Nghyf / Your Ref:

Dyddiad / Date: 25th November 2015

Councillor Richard Cook
Cardiff Council
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Annwyl / Dear Richard

Children & Young People Committee September Letter

Thank you for your letter dated 18 September outlining the discussions held and recommendations made by the committee.

In relation to the recommendations, I can confirm that the first two recommendations in relation to Child, Health and Disability (CHAD) are accepted. The change manager Eve Williams was present at the committee and will continue working on the CHAD development plan which incorporates your recommendations.

I can confirm that officers are in conversation with the Welsh Government in respect of funding for Families First post 2017. I have copied in the Operational Manager Rachel Jones in to this letter who will keep me updated of any developments or challenges.

I can also confirm that future performance reports will include the relevant performance indicators published by the Welsh Data Unit, though I must emphasise that these indicators are likely to change in light of the Social services and Wellbeing Act (2014).

The £950,000 contingency budget was allocated as part of the Council's 2015/16 Budget. It was set aside to reflect the potential for additional costs to be incurred in supporting looked after children in external residential and fostering placements. At month 4 the projected expenditure was above budget in this area and therefore the drawdown of the contingency sum was put forward for approval. The allocation of the contingency budget was therefore in line with the purpose of the budget as approved by Council in February 2015 and was approved by Cabinet as part of the Month 4 Monitoring Report. If the monitoring

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position in this area were to improve during the year then an adjustment to the contingency allocation can be made, however at this stage there is no indication that this will be the case.

Yn gywir / Yours sincerely

Susan J. Lent.

Councillor / Cynghorydd Sue Lent
Deputy Leader / Dirprwy Arweinydd
Cabinet Member for Early Years, Children & Families
Aelod Cabinet Dros Y Blynyddoedd Cynnar, Plant a Theuluoedd

My Ref: T: Scrutiny/CYP/MJH

Date: 21 October 2015



Councillor Graham Hinchey
Cabinet Member for Corporate Services and Performance
City of Cardiff Council
County Hall
Cardiff
CF10 4UW

Dear Graham

CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE – Budget Monitoring Panel

I am writing to you on behalf of the Children & Young People Scrutiny Committee, following its consideration of an update report from the Committee's Budget Monitoring Panel.

The Committee established this Panel as part of its 2015/16 work programme, to seek ways to optimise Committee time in line with WAO advice managing the length of meetings within a three hour target. While the approach will place some extra burden on Panel Members and on the committee scrutiny officer, I and my Committee colleagues hope that it will maintain the effectiveness of our current scrutiny consideration, while reducing the burden on you and senior managers. We will be interested to hear your thoughts as the work of the Panel develops.

The Panel met on 6 October and reviewed the Month 4 budget monitoring Cabinet report, and associated documents, which were relevant to the Committee's Terms of Reference. The Panel's findings were referred to our Full Committee meeting on 13 October.

The Committee considered a number of concerns that the Panel had raised, during its consideration of the Education and Children's Services budget projections for the end of 2015/16. The Members agreed that I should write to you with some comments made by the Panel as they considered to be of a general and corporate nature.

The concerns raised were:

- In the "comments" column the projected budget showed that a number of budget savings (e.g.: **Line 212 Business Support Review (Lean Review) in Children's Services and Line 134: Staff Realignment and Restructure in Education**) were unlikely to be achieved. The Panel felt this indicated that, in future, a more robust assessment of achievability needs to be undertaken prior to approval, to ensure that decisions are made on the correct information.
- Members did not understand why the draw down of the Corporate Contingency budget of £950,000 had already been included in the budget monitoring narrative. The Panel believed that the contingency budget should

only be allocated and approved by Cabinet at the year end, should it be needed.

Finally the Panel also agreed to hold a further meeting shortly after the Month 6 Budget Monitoring Cabinet Report had been published, and a further meeting at full Committee after the month 9 report has been published. This will enable Committee to assess the progress made in monitoring and managing the Education and Children's Services budgets, as well as reviewing the responses received to the Committee's letter.

I look forward to receiving a positive response to this letter within the next month.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Richard Cook', with a horizontal line underneath it.

COUNTY COUNCILLOR RICHARD COOK
Chair – Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee

Cc Christine Salter, Section 151 Officer
Cheryl Cornelius, Cabinet Support Manager

**SWYDDFA CYMORTH Y CABINET
CABINET SUPPORT OFFICE**

Fy Nghyf / My Ref: CM32531
Eich Cyf / Your ref: T: Scrutiny/CYP/MJH



Dyddiad / Date: 05 November 2015

Councillor Richard Cook
Chair, Children & Young People Scrutiny Committee
Scrutiny Services
Room 263
County Hall
Cardiff
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Annwyl / Dear Councillor Cook

Children & Young People Scrutiny Committee – Budget Monitoring Panel

I refer to your letter dated 21 October 2015. I am sure the work undertaken by the panel will be of assistance to the Committee in identifying and reviewing any issues arising from the budget monitoring process during the year and I look forward to seeing how this progresses. With regard to the specific issues raised, I would comment as follows.

The budget savings in relation to the Business Support Review (Lean Review) in Children's Services and the Staff Realignment and Restructure in Education were both proposed by the respective directorates as part of the 2015/16 Budget and subsequently approved by Council in February 2015. In both cases the risk analysis identified the level of risk associated with these proposals as red / amber acknowledging that further work was required in order to fully identify and implement the savings. However, at the time that these were approved the directorates anticipated that these savings would be fully achieved.

There is a limit to what can be achieved in relation to the assessment of achievability and where further detailed work and actions are required in order to implement savings then to some extent at least I have to assume that the necessary actions will be taken. Where concerns are identified then these are discussed with the directorates and the risk analysis included at budget time provides an indication that there were some concerns around these proposals. In the current financial climate however and with the scale of the budget savings the Council has to make, it is inevitable that an element of risk will be present in the overall quantum of the proposals and to reflect this a general contingency budget of £4 million was built into the budget. Ideally though this should not be required and it is essential that directorates take the necessary actions to fully implement their saving proposals within the timescales identified. These are closely monitored and reported on during the year with Directors challenged on any shortfalls in their areas.

Due diligence is currently being undertaken in relation to proposals for the 2016/17 Budget and this will be progressed as rigorously as possible however as indicated above, the overall scale of the budget savings the Council has to make on top of the savings found in previous years means that some degree of risk will be inevitable in the increasingly difficult task of preparing a balanced budget for the Council. As ever, our role in Council will be to approve a budget that balances risk with the impact on service users and council tax payers.

With regard to the allocation of the £950,000 contingency budget to Children's Services, the treatment of this sum is in line with previous years and is consistent with the treatment of other specific contingency budgets allocated as part of the Council's Budget. In this case the contingency was set aside to reflect the potential for additional costs to be incurred in supporting looked after children in external residential and fostering placements. At month 4 the projected expenditure was above budget in this area and therefore the drawdown of the contingency sum was put forward for approval. The allocation of the contingency budget was therefore in line with the purpose of the budget as approved by Council in February 2015 and was approved by Cabinet as part of the Month 4 Monitoring Report. If the monitoring position in this area were to improve during the year then an adjustment to the contingency allocation can be made, however at this stage there is no indication that this will be the case.

Yn gwyir,
Yours sincerely,



Councillor / Y Cynghorydd Graham Hincley
Cabinet Member for Corporate Services & Performance
Aelod Cabinet dros Wasanaethau Corfforaethol a Perfformiad

My Ref: T: Scrutiny/CYP/MJH

Date: 21 October 2015



Councillor Sue Lent
Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Families, Children and Early Learning
City of Cardiff Council
County Hall
Cardiff
CF10 4UW

Dear Sue

CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE – Budget Monitoring Panel

I am writing to you on behalf of the Children & Young People Scrutiny Committee, following its consideration of an update report from the Committee's Budget Monitoring Panel.

The Committee established this Panel as part of its 2015/16 work programme, to seek ways to optimise Committee time in line with WAO advice managing the length of meetings within a three hour target. While the approach will place some extra burden on Panel Members and on the committee scrutiny officer, I and my Committee colleagues hope that it will maintain the effectiveness of our current scrutiny consideration, while reducing the burden on you and senior managers. We will be interested to hear your thoughts as the work of the Panel develops.

The Panel met on 6 October and reviewed the Month 4 budget monitoring Cabinet report, and associated documents, which were relevant to the Committee's Terms of Reference.

At its 13 October meeting the Committee considered a progress report from the Panel which included a number of comments and concerns that the Panel Members made during their consideration of the Children's Services budget projections for the end of 2015/16. The Committee agreed that I should write to you with these concerns, namely:

- **Line 203 Payment by Results Looked after Children & Rehabilitation Project Year 1.** Members requested further information on the barriers in achieving this saving, as well as further details of the ongoing review of all "out of county placements" to identify other savings and plans to ensure that this budget saving is fully met.
- **Line 212 Business Support Review (Lean Review).** The Panel were concerned that it did not appear that robust challenge of this proposal had been undertaken prior to it being included in the Budget proposals, as the Finance comment now indicated that this saving would not be achieved. Members requested information on how the Directorate would be seeking

alternative actions to ensure that this saving is fully achieved along with a timeline and milestones in achieving this saving.

- **Line 217 Market and Demand Management of Commissioned Residential Services.** Members expressed concern that the finance comment stated that there was some doubt as to whether the whole targeted savings would be achieved in 2015/16. Members requested further explanation on why the saving would not be achieved and what actions were being developed to ensure that alternative saving were being developed.
- **Budget Realignment** - The Panel expressed concern that Children's Services had consistently had budget realignments in recent years. In 2015/16 this amounted to £2.4 million to meet on-going pressures on the budgets for external placements, leaving care support costs and adoption allowances. The Panel agreed to undertake a further investigation into these areas of consistent overspend at the next Panel meeting, when it considers the Month 6 Budget Monitoring Report.

Finally the Panel also agreed to hold a further meeting shortly after the Month 6 Budget Monitoring Cabinet Report had been published, and a further meeting at full Committee after the Month 9 Budget Monitoring report has been published. This will enable Committee to assess the progress made in monitoring and managing the Education and Children's Services budgets, as well as reviewing the responses received to the Committee's letter.

I look forward to receiving a positive response to this letter within the next month.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Richard Cook', with a horizontal line underneath.

COUNTY COUNCILLOR RICHARD COOK
Chair – Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee

Cc Tony Young, Director of Social Services
Christine Salter, Section 151 Officer
Cheryl Cornelius, Cabinet Support Manager

**SWYDDFA'R DIRPRWY ARWEINYDD
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Fy Nghyf / My Ref: CM32545

Eich Nghyf / Your Ref:

Dyddiad / Date: 2nd December 2015

Richard Cook
Cardiff Council
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Annwyl / Dear Richard

Cyp Scrutiny - Budget Monitoring

Further to your letter of 21st October regarding the above, I would respond as follows:

Firstly, I think that it is extremely important that any consideration of budget savings or the overall financial position of Children's Services always be considered in the context of the relatively high risk nature of the service. Clearly the consideration of the cabinet budget monitoring reports via a dedicated panel provides opportunities for focus and rigour in relation to a single dimension – in this case budget – and this enables effective and appropriate challenge.

That said, there are dangers in disconnecting this from the consequences for safeguarding or for the welfare of children and their families and I am sure that scrutiny members would be the first to be concerned if cost or budget reductions incurred greater risks for the welfare of children that were otherwise avoidable. In this context it is always worth reminding ourselves of the obligations on members, as set out in the Victoria Climbié Report recommendations, to satisfy themselves that sufficient resources are available to enable children's social services to function safely in relation to prevailing need.

It is also very clear to me from my own direct observations of the Children's Services Management Team that they robustly engage on an ongoing basis, in exploring new alternatives for reducing costs and spend. This does not mean of course, that all such options will deliver in full or in part, against targeted expectations and the relatively likelihood of delivery is of course reflected in the risk ratings for each saving. Equally, when they fail to do so, it is not always possible to simply identify another alternative which balances the books. I would

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also remind you, above context notwithstanding, that in 2014-15 Children's Services saved £2.516m with further savings of £1.867m projected for 2015-16.

None of these comments enable Children's Services to escape their responsibilities to steward resources well and wherever possible at reduced spend, but I make the following comments in relation to your specific concerns, with the above context always in mind.

1. Line 203 Payments by Results – the barriers to this saving are a direct consequence of a clear failure by the procured provider to deliver on their promises in terms of placements or timeliness. Although the Director's intervention at Chief Executive level produced an initially positive response, subsequent delivery has continued to be very unsatisfactory and virtually non-existent, despite an appropriate improvement plan being put in place. The Director is now considering the viability of the partnership and actively examining alternatives. Unfortunately, these alternatives will not enable the service to meet the consequent shortfall, given the time remaining in the financial year.
2. Line 212 Lean Review – it is acknowledged that this saving was less well evidenced. It is also clear however, that the uncertainty of this saving was spelled out by the Director at the time it was submitted and that this was reflected in the risk rating accordingly. No specific alternatives have been identified to close the gap created as a result, bearing in mind that the savings were always challenging in a service where a significant proportion of the overall budget is committed to direct care for looked after children.
3. Line 217 Market Demand – predictions about what could be saved, in effect by undertaking a challenge exercise with individual residential providers, were based on challenge exercises that had been successfully conducted elsewhere in the UK so to this extent the estimate of likely savings was always speculative. In the event, the analysis as to predicted demand and the extent to which we could realistically demand cost reductions, proved disappointing. This could not have been known at the outset since it is not until the negotiations are completed that the result is known.
4. Budget Realignment – I will obviously be interested in knowing the outcome of any further work that committee decides to undertake in this respect and would very much hope that your enquiries reveal tangible and realistic opportunities not previously identified, for finding savings.

Yn gywir / Yours sincerely

Susan J. Lark

Councillor / Cynghorydd Sue Lent
Deputy Leader / Dirprwy Arweinydd
Cabinet Member for Early Years, Children & Families
Aelod Cabinet Dros Y Blynnyddoedd Cynnar, Plant a Theuluoedd

My Ref: T: Scrutiny/CYP/MJH

Date: 21 October 2015



Councillor Sarah Merry
Cabinet Member for Education
City of Cardiff Council
County Hall
Cardiff
CF10 4UW

Dear Sarah

CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE – Budget Monitoring Panel

I am writing to you on behalf of the Children & Young People Scrutiny Committee, following its consideration of an update report from the Committee's Budget Monitoring Panel.

The Committee established this Panel as part of its 2015/16 work programme, to seek ways to optimise Committee time in line with WAO advice managing the length of meetings within a three hour target. While the approach will place some extra burden on Panel Members and on the committee scrutiny officer, I and my Committee colleagues hope that it will maintain the effectiveness of our current scrutiny consideration, while reducing the burden on you and senior managers. We will be interested to hear your thoughts as the work of the Panel develops.

The Panel met on 6 October and reviewed the Month 4 budget monitoring Cabinet report, and associated documents that were relevant to the Committee's Terms of Reference. The Panel's findings were referred to our Full Committee meeting on 13 October, and this letter contains the Committee's agreed feedback on issues pertinent to your Portfolio.

The Committee welcomed Neil Hardee's attendance at the Panel meeting, as the Members had a number of queries and concerns, on which Neil was able to provide a detailed response or explanation. The Panel did, however, raise a number of concerns during its consideration of the Education Services budget projections for the end of 2015/16, and the Committee agreed that I should write to you with the following observations and requests for clarification:

- The Panel questioned the deteriorating position in respect of delegated schools' balances, and the risk that it represented. Members sought assurance that appropriate actions have been put in place to ensure that all school deficits are addressed within a reasonable timescale. Members did, however, wish to receive further information on the actions being taken in respect of Cantonian High, and in Michaelston Community College and Glyn Derw High School which were "federated" in 2011.
- Members also requested details of the discussions being undertaken to review the City of Cardiff Council's contribution to the funding of the Central South

Consortium in future budgets. Members were of the opinion that the Consortium should contribute to the savings required by the commissioning Councils.

- **Line 134: Staff Realignment and Restructure** – Members expressed concern that the finance comments against this saving stated that “Whilst some savings have been achieved there is a level of uncertainty in respect of the full level of savings”. Members noted that this saving had been put on hold, due to the Estyn inspection. The Panel considered that as the Estyn inspection was known well before the budget saving was agreed, this delay should have been built into the overall savings proposals. The Committee therefore expect that this saving will be fully achieved by the end of this financial year and request details of how the full saving will be achieved.

Finally, the Panel also agreed to hold a further meeting shortly after the Month 6 Budget Monitoring Cabinet Report had been published, and a further meeting at full Committee after Month 9 Budget Monitoring report has been published, to assess the progress made in monitoring and managing the Education and Children’s Services budgets, as well as reviewing the responses received to the Committee’s letter.

I look forward to receiving a positive response to this letter within the next month.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Richard Cook', with a horizontal line underneath it.

COUNTY COUNCILLOR RICHARD COOK
Chair – Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee

Cc Nick Batchelar, Director of Education and Lifelong Learning
Neil Hardee, Operational Manager, Resources
Christine Salter, Section 151 Officer
Cheryl Cornelius, Cabinet Support Manager

**CABINET SUPPORT OFFICE
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My Ref / Fy Ref: CM32533

Your Ref / Eich Ref :

Date / Dyddiad: 5 November 2015

Councillor R. Cook
Chair
Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee
County Hall
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Dear / Annwyl Richard,

**RE: CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE – BUDGET
MONITORING PANEL**

Thank you for your recent letter, following the Budget Monitoring Panel meeting held on the 6th October 2015.

In response to the issues that required further clarification;

Delegated School Balances – I note and share your concerns regarding the deteriorating position of certain schools deficit balances. However I can assure you that officers are working closely with every school with a deficit budget within an agreed protocol. Schools in deficit are obliged to agree a medium term financial plan showing how they will balance their delegated budget and any staffing changes can only be made with the authorisation of Council Officers. Additionally you will be aware that the Council has intervened in four schools; Michaelston, Glyn Derw, Eastern and Cantonian High Schools and withdrawn delegation from the Governing Bodies. In each school a senior officer from the Finance Department is assigned to work with the school to ensure the medium term financial plan is adhered to.

Central South Consortium – I share your opinion that the Consortium should contribute to the savings being made by the commissioning Councils and I can confirm that this has been made clear to the Managing Director of the Consortium. The next meeting of the Consortium Directors will be considering how these savings targets can be met.



Line 134: Staff Realignment and Restructure – I note your concerns regarding the current level of savings that have not been achieved within this financial year. This saving will be achieved through restructuring and reduction of posts which will be in place before the start of the new financial year.

I also note your request for further meetings after the months 6 and 9 monitoring figures are available and I will ensure that officers are available to attend.

Yours sincerely
Yn gwyir

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Sarah Merry".

**Cllr /Y Cyng Sarah Merry
Cabinet Member for Education/
Yr Aelod Cabinet Dros Addysg
Member for Cathays /
Aelod Dros Cathays**

My Ref: Scrutiny/Correspondence/MJH

19 October 2015

Suzanne Griffiths
Director of Operations
National Adoption Service
County Hall
Cardiff



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Dear Suzanne

I would like to thank you, Rachel Evans, Head of Children's Services for the Vale of Glamorgan Council, Angela Harris, Vale, Valleys and Cardiff Regional Adoption Service Manager, for attending the Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee on 13th October 2015 to present the **National and Regional Adoption Service briefing updates**. I would also like to thank Councillor Sue Lent, as Board Member and Tony Young, Board Member, for their contribution to the report and the full and honest answers that were provided at the meeting. Following consideration of the report presented at the meeting and answers to Members' questions, the Committee has asked me to write to you with the following comments, concerns and recommendations.

The Committee was pleased to receive the National Adoption Services first Annual Report together with a briefing on the Governance and Operation of the National Adoption Service. The Members were really impressed with the work that had achieved since the service had been set up. The Members also appreciated the briefing on the Vale, Valleys and Cardiff (V V C) Regional Adoption Service. Members welcomed the additional performance data as well as the positive picture it was now showing.

The Committee did however express some concern that the VVC region was not as yet performing consistently at the same level as the other regions and looked forward to seeing steady improvements in performance in future reports. Members did also request that future reports should have some comparative information from relevant English Authorities.

The Members considered that the scrutiny of the National and Regional Adoption Service should continue, to enable the Committee to be assured that the services are providing an appropriate service for Cardiff's Looked After Children. The Committee recommended that the Annual Report should therefore be presented to Committee, at this time each year, together with an additional Regional Annual Report, to allow the Committee to fully scrutinise the work of the VVC Regional Adoption Service.

I hope that the comments, advice and recommendation, detailed above, will be of use and support in the adoption of children across Wales and in particular in Cardiff, and I look forward to a positive response to this letter within a month.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Richard Cook', with a long horizontal line underneath it.

COUNTY COUNCILLOR RICHARD COOK
Chairperson – Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee

CC Rachel Evans, Head of Children's Services for the Vale of Glamorgan Council,
CC Angela Harris, Vale, Valleys and Cardiff Regional Adoption Service Manager
CC Councillor Sue Lent, Board Member
CC Tony Young, Board Member



Gwasanaeth
Mabwysiadu
Cenedlaethol

National
Adoption
Service

COUNTY COUNCILLOR RICHARD COOK
Chairperson – Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee
City of Cardiff Council
County Hall
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CF10 4UW

November 13th 2015

Dear Councillor Cook,

Re: City of Cardiff Council - Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee

Thank you for your letter which followed my attendance at the above committee on October 13th 2015. Can I also thank you for the warm welcome and interest shown in the overarching 'national' elements of the National Adoption Service alongside those pertaining to the Vale Valleys and Cardiff Regional Adoption Service which is now primarily responsible for the adoption service to the City of Cardiff Council.

You will recall from the discussions at the committee that the scrutiny of the National Adoption Service in its entirety is conducted through other mechanisms including the Governance Board and ultimately by Welsh Ministers. I am however very willing to attend future committee meetings where you are exercising your role in scrutinising the performance of the regional service, to assist the committee to put this into the wider national context and to provide you with any information you may seek as to how the Council is fulfilling its role as 'host' to the national functions.

Your letter makes some comments about the performance of the VVC region. From my perspective the National Adoption Service is in the very early stages of having comparative data available for its use; the annual report that the committee saw, published in July 2015, was the very first time that such information had ever been available for adoption services in Wales. From my perspective no region is yet performing consistently and improving upon this across the board is a national priority. My perspective on VVC's performance is that in the areas which are the current priorities nationally namely timely placement of increased numbers of children and effective recruitment of adopters; the region was amongst the better performing regions for 2014/15 despite this being against a backdrop of re-organising itself into what has become 'VVC'.

c/o City of Cardiff Council/ d/o Cyngor Dinas Caerdydd,
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There was also a request that in future there was comparative data with relevant English authorities. The benchmarking the National Adoption Service does is against the other UK administrations and particularly the performance of 'England' as a whole which is also closely monitored through its Leadership Board. This is set to continue to be made available to the Governance Board for consideration at relevant points of the year. I can certainly use this to inform discussions whether or not this is ultimately published in our reports.

The response from VVC will address directly your points about the service to Cardiff.

I trust this is helpful.

Yours sincerely

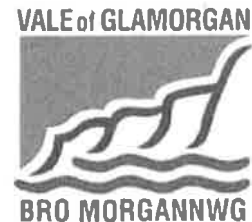


Suzanne Griffiths
Director of Operations
National Adoption Service for Wales

CC Rachel Evans, Head of Children's Services for the Vale of Glamorgan Council,
CC Angela Harris, Vale, Valleys and Cardiff Regional Adoption Service Manager
CC Councillor Sue Lent, Board Member
CC Tony Young, Board Member

Date/Dyddiad 10th November 2015
Ask for/Gofynwch am Rachel Evans
Telephone/Rhif ffôn 01446 704864
Fax/Ffacs
Your Ref/Eich Cyf
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County Councillor Richard Cook
Chairperson – Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee
City of Cardiff Council
County Hall
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Dear Councillor Cook

Re: City of Cardiff Council - Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee

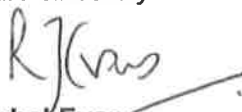
Thank you for your letter dated 21st October 2015 which followed our attendance at the above Committee on October 13th. Angela Harris and I were pleased to be able to share with you the progress that has been made since the Vale, Valleys and Cardiff Regional Adoption Collaborative went live on 1st June 2015, and we appreciated the welcome we received.

I have discussed your comments about the performance of our region in the context of the performance across Wales with Suzanne Griffiths, Director of Operations. She has confirmed that no region is yet performing consistently and that our region was amongst the better performing regions despite this being against a backdrop of re-organising ourselves into what has become our Regional Collaborative. Maintaining our performance in areas where we performed well in quarter one and addressing areas for improvement remains a high priority for the region and we are looking forward to opportunities to analyse the emerging data for quarter two.

With regard to future reporting to each of the Scrutiny Committees across the region, provision is made for this in our Collaborative Agreement signed by each of the partner authorities. An Annual Review of the Collaborative will be undertaken within three months of the end of the financial year and this Review will be forwarded to the Joint Committee, which includes nominated elected member representatives from each local authority. The Regional Adoption Manager will prepare an Annual Report following the Annual Review for submission to the partners' respective Scrutiny Committees.

I trust this letter responds to your queries and I look forward to meeting with you again soon.

Yours sincerely


Rachel Evans
Head of Service
Vale of Glamorgan Council

My Ref: Scrutiny/Correspondence/MJH

16 November 2015

Hannah Woodhouse
Interim Managing Director
Tŷ Dysgu
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Dear Hannah

Thank you for your letter dated 27 October entitled "A common scrutiny work programme and sharing best practice". I decided that it would be more appropriate for the full Committee to consider it at their next meeting on 10 November. The Committee considered your letter at the meeting and discussed at length the proposals put forward by the Joint Committee.

The Committee agreed with the proposal to hold termly meetings with the Scrutiny Chairs with a view to sharing best practice, and Councillor Richard Cook is looking forward to attending the first meeting in the near future.

The proposal to have a Joint Scrutiny Model for all five Authorities, in which the Joint Committee suggests that the Consortium attends all five Scrutiny Committee's once a year in January, Members considered this proposal at some length, particularly the need to have a consistent approach across all five scrutiny committees, however the Committee considered that at this time, when the Council is still in Estyn Monitoring, it would be unwise to reduce the number of times the Committee scrutinises the work of the Consortium in respect of its support for Cardiff's schools.

The Committee agreed to continue the current practice of inviting the Consortium to three Committee meetings a year, in January, June, and November, until this Council has improved and been removed from Estyn Monitoring.

Finally I would like to thank you for the opportunity to comment on these proposals and look forward to your attendance at the Committee's meeting on 12 January 2016.

Yours sincerely

COUNTY COUNCILLOR - LYNDA THORNE

On behalf of the Chairperson of the Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee.

CC Nick Batchelar, Director of Education and Lifelong Learning

My Ref: Scrutiny/Correspondence/MJH

16 November 2015

Councillor Sarah Merry
Cabinet Member - Education and Skills
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Dear Sarah

Thank you for attending the Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee on 10th November 2015 to provide an opening statement and answer questions on the agenda item **School Performance Monitoring – School Inspection and Literacy and Numeracy report**. I would also like to thank Nick Batchelar and Angela Kent for their presentation of the report and answers to Members questions. During the way forward section of the meeting the Members' considered the information in the report and answers to their questions, and identified a number of comments, concerns and recommendations for your consideration, as detailed below.

The Committee welcomed the opportunity to be presented with these sections of the Schools Annual Report as the Members consider that they are able to focus more directly on these areas, rather than in the full Annual Report in January.

In respect of the School Inspections the Members initially questioned the lessons learnt from the June 2015, Eastern High School Inspection report. Members reflected on the comments made by Estyn in the report, and wished to be assured, that lessons would be learnt from the merger and opening of Eastern High and addressing the Estyn inspection report's recommendations, will be used to aid in the merger of Glyn Derw and Michaelston High Schools, when the merger is next reported to Committee.

Members also noted that the consultation on the merger of Glyn Derw and Michaelston High Schools is currently being undertaken and welcomed the Directors commitment to provide a further report on the merger, following the completion of the consultation on 23 November.

The Members were pleased to hear that all school assessments were now in line with Estyn inspections as this had previously been a concern of the Members as they had heard that some schools were being informed that they were performing well, but then received a disappointing Estyn assessment.

In respect of the report on the Literacy and Numeracy results for 2014/15, Members were pleased to hear that schools had access to the improving teacher programme and the outstanding teacher programme, as Members had previously recommended that a pool of expert teachers should be developed to support teachers across Cardiff.

The Committee recommended that future reports, including the Schools Annual report should present where possible a graphical representation of the results rather than the long list of tables that had been included in the report.

Finally the requested that the Annual Schools report presented to Committee in January 2016, should include a breakdown of the results using Free School Meal, looked after children and English as an Additional Language data, to enable members to assess the Councils progress in addressing the attainment issues in each of these groups.

I hope that these comments, advice and recommendations, detailed above will be of use and support in improving outcomes for Cardiff's pupils. The Committee looks forward to receiving the requested additional information listed above together and as such does not require a formal response to this letter.

To recap, this letter requests several actions, requests for information and recommendations, as follows and requires:

- A further report on the merger of Glyn Derw and Michaelston High Schools in the near future
- That future reports, including the Schools Annual Report should present where possible a graphical representation of the results.

Yours sincerely



COUNTY COUNCILLOR LYNDA THORNE
For the Chair of the Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee

CC: Nick Batchelar – Director of Education and Lifelong learning
CC: Angela Kent, Head of Attainment and Inclusion
CC: Cheryl Cornelius – Cabinet Support Manger
CC: Nichola Hayward – Resources Manager



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Date 10 December 2015

My Ref SS/CYP/MJH
Your Ref:

Councillor Sue Lent
Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Families, Children and Early Years
County Hall
Atlantic Wharf
CARDIFF
CF10 4UW

Dear Sue

Thank you for attending Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee on 8 December 2015 to help introduce the **Quarter 2 Performance Information**. I would also like to thank Tony Young and Irfan Alam for their full and honest answers that were provided at the meeting. During the consideration of the reports and answers to Members' questions, the Committee identified a number of comments, concerns and recommendations, as follows:

The Committee welcomed the many improvements shown in the report's performance indicators and wished to ask that you pass on the Committee's thanks to the Departments staff for all their hard work in improving performance across the service. The Committee noted that many of the performance indicators were now consistently moving in the right direction, and that this had been helped by the stability of the management structure and the appointment of an Assistant Director for Children's Services.

The Committee did however, in the way forward section of the meeting, express their continued concern around the low performance in completing the Personal Education Plans (PEP) for children who were being looked after. The Members were aware of some of the reasons why the timeliness of the completion of PEP's is slipping, however Members did express their disappointed that quality had not yet improved. Can you please provide the Committee with the action plan and targets for the improvement of PEP's, so that progress can be monitored.

The Committee noted that there had been some delay in the development of the Cardiff and Vale Child Sexual Exploitation Strategy, by the Local Safeguarding Board. Members wish to reiterate their concern that the Council must to have the Strategy in place as soon as possible, and that it be made available for pre-decision scrutiny. The Members also noted that the Assistant Director had produced a "Campaign briefing paper" and the service had developed a "Safer Families" scheme. Member requested that copies of these to be made available, as they were very interested in both initiatives.

Finally the Committee agreed to undertake a "Deep Dive" investigation into the procurement process and due diligence around the Payment by Results contract, with Core Assets. Members would be pleased if you could liaise with scrutiny officers to facilitate this investigation.

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

To recap, this letter requests several actions, and copies of briefings and documents as follows, and requires a response:

- Provide a copy of the action plan and targets for the improvement of Personal Education Plans for children who are looked after.
- Copies of the Campaign briefing paper and details of the "Safer Families" scheme, for Members.
- A draft copy of the Child Sexual Exploitation Strategy for pre-decision scrutiny as soon as it is available.
- Provide support for the Deep Dive investigation into the procurement process and due diligence of the payment by results Core Assets contract.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'R. Cook', with a horizontal line underneath it.

COUNTY COUNCILLOR RICHARD COOK
Chairperson – Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee

CC: Tony Young, Director of Children's Services
Melanie Jackson - Personal Assistant to Deputy Leader
Irfan Alam – Assistant Director of Social Services

**SWYDDFA'R DIRPRWY ARWEINYDD
DEPUTY LEADER'S OFFICE**

Fy Nghyf / My Ref: CM33027
Eich Nghyf / Your Ref:
Dyddiad / Date: 4th January 2016

Cllr Richard Cook
Cardiff Council
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Annwyl / Dear Richard

CYP Scrutiny 8th December - Qtr 2 Performance

Thank you for your letter dated 10 December 2015.

I am pleased to enclose the draft Child Exploitation Strategy and the details in respect of the Safer Families initiative. The draft CSE strategy is due to be discussed at the forthcoming cabinet meeting in January 2016, however I can confirm that work has commenced in relation to the implementation plan.

In your letter you refer to a "campaign briefing paper" and I am sorry but I do not recall such a paper. Whilst talking about Safer Families, I advised that Irfan had initiated a pilot project called Rapid Response and that this pilot had achieved some excellent outcomes for children who otherwise would have become looked after. I have enclosed a report in relation to this initiative for your information.

You have asked for an action plan in relation to the improving the Personal Education Plans. The service will aim to have a written action plan to share with you in quarter 1 of 2016 as this action plan will need to be jointly developed with colleagues in Education. However, I would like to reiterate that whilst performance on compliance with PEP requires improving, you have recently heard from the CSSIW inspector Mr McDonald that outcomes for looked after children in Cardiff are good, furthermore Irfan informed the committee that there have not been any permanent exclusions in the last 4 years in relation to looked after children.

Officers will be very happy to support the Deep Dive Investigation into the procurement process and due diligence of the payment by results Core Assets contract in liaison with Martyn Hutchings.

Yn gywir / Yours sincerely

**Councillor / Cynghorydd Sue Lent
Deputy Leader / Dirprwy Arweinydd
Cabinet Member for Early Years, Children & Families
Aelod Cabinet Dros Y Blynyddoedd Cynnar, Plant a Theuluoedd**

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My Ref: Scrutiny/Correspondence/MJH

10 December 2015

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Dear Clive

On behalf of the Members of the Children & Young People Scrutiny Committee, I would like to thank you and your colleague, Huw Davies for attending the Committee meeting on 8 December to present the Estyn Significant Improvement visit (5-9th October 2015) letter.

We greatly appreciated your attendance, and that you continue to value your engagement with this Scrutiny Committee and we hope to further develop this engagement in the future. The Committee also wished to reiterate its commitment to continue to monitor and challenge education performance, schools causing concern and review the development of education policies.

The Members also welcomed the opportunity to be presented with the letter and hear your explanation of the positive outcome from the inspection visit and your comments on Recommendation 2 – Reduce exclusions and reduce the proportion of young people who are not in education, employment or training post-16 and Recommendation 4 – Improve the effectiveness of joint planning across the range of partnership working. I understand that the comments were captured by staff from the Education Department and will be taken into account as they continue to improve educational standards across Cardiff.

Finally the Committee looks forward to receiving the final Estyn Significant Improvement visit letter following the visit in January 2016.

Yours sincerely

COUNTY COUNCILLOR – RICHARD COOK
Chairperson of the Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee.

CC Nick Batchelar, Director of Education and Lifelong Learning

My Ref: Scrutiny/Correspondence/Cllr McGarry

21 December 2015

Councillors Sue Lent & Susan Elsmore
Cabinet Members
c/o Room 520
County Hall
Cardiff
CF10 4UW



Dear Sue and Susan

**Joint Children & Young People and Community & Adult Services Scrutiny
Committee – 17 December 2015:
CSSIW Evaluation on Social Care in Cardiff 2014/15**

On behalf of the Members of the Children & Young People and Community & Adult Services Scrutiny Committees I would like to thank you and the officers for attending our Joint Committee on 17 December 2015 to support the scrutiny of the Care and Social Services Inspectorate Wales' evaluation of social care in Cardiff for the 2014/15 financial year.

The Joint Committee noted the positive comments from the CSSIW on the improvements already being made, particularly with regard to the educational attainment of Looked After Children, the introduction of a preventative strategy regarding Children's Services, the take-up rate of Direct Payments for Adult Services clients, the work of Community Mental Health Teams, the recruitment of permanent social workers and the work in hand on the integration of social care and health across Cardiff and the Vale of Glamorgan. Members are pleased that the CSSIW has recognised these improvements, which are testament to the hard work of staff.

Members note the positive comments made by the CSSIW regarding the Director's Report submitted earlier in the year in that it provides a clear, easy to read and honest assessment of Social Services. Members also note that the CSSIW believe there to be strong corporate support for Social Services and that there is good strategic planning to ensure that the direction of travel aligns with the Social Services and Well Being Act (Wales) 2014.

I have written separately to Bernard McDonald, (Area Manager for Cardiff, CSSIW) thanking him for his attendance and seeking clarification on some issues, namely: the use of comparator data by the CSSIW; and clarification on the purpose and function of the CSSIW report. I have copied both of you and the relevant officers into that letter.

ISSUES HIGHLIGHTED BY THE JOINT COMMITTEE

Following discussion on the issues raised in the Inspection report along with the answers to Members questions, the Joint Committee has asked me to write to you both, with the following observations, requests for information and recommendation.

Social Services and Well Being Act (Wales) 2014: Members were pleased to hear that the CSSIW believe that Cardiff Council is in a good position with regard to implementation of this Act and to hear that the Director of Social Services will provide a written briefing to our January 2016 committee meetings, with progress reports on each work stream to come each month to subsequent committee meetings.

Personal Education Plans: Members note that the new performance indicator set resulting from the Social Services and Well Being Act (Wales) 2014 will be outcome focused and therefore will not include the specific measure currently collected. Members believe this measure to be of value and ask therefore to be informed about how the Directorate proposes to monitor performance in this critical area and how this will be reported.

Personal Advisors: Members note that the issue with the lack of personal advisors for children is due to problems in recruiting suitable individuals, rather than children being deemed ineligible for this service. Members share the Director of Social Services surprise that it has proved so difficult to recruit and were pleased to hear that he has asked for a further investigation into the root causes of recruitment difficulties. Members wish to have sight of this review and ask that it be sent to Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee Members. Members suggest that thought be given to how to support potential personal advisors by providing suitable training to enhance skills.

Enhanced Fostering Service: Members wish to remind you and officers that the Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee's Performance Panel plans to undertake a deep dive into the procurement process.

Delayed Transfer Of Care: Members note that performance in this area has worsened and that the CSSIW are proposing to meet with senior officers to discuss this but that no further investigation is planned at this stage and, therefore, no report will be published.

Quality of residential care: Members are surprised and disappointed to learn that Proactis does not take account of quality during the tendering process; Members believed that it did do this. Members were pleased to hear that the Escalating Concerns Protocol is robustly applied and that CSSIW is not aware of any cases in 2014/15 where formal review proceedings needed to be initiated.

Quality of domiciliary care: Members were surprised to learn, via the CSSIW report, that three major domiciliary care providers had left the Approved Providers List. Given the impact that this type of change can potentially have on service users and their families, as well as on Council budgets, Members would like to be kept informed of these types of issues in future.

Review of older people's care packages: Members note that the decline in performance is the result of budget savings made that reduced the capacity of staff to undertake these reviews whilst also managing the need to improve performance by increasing the number of carers' assessments. Members note that officers are reviewing the allocation of resources, the skills mix required in assessment and care management with regard to the mix of social workers and social work assistants and that this review, coupled with the introduction of mobile working and scheduling, should help to rectify performance. Members also note that the Assistant Director for Adult Services is undertaking weekly monitoring of this area and will move resources across the section to tackle pinch points. Members wish to highlight that the Community and Adult Services Scrutiny Committee's Performance Panel plans to undertake a deep dive into this area, as part of their care pathway and care management deep dive.

Direct Payments: Members note that the contract for Direct Payments provider is being reviewed and would like to receive further information on the timescales associated with this.

Early intervention and prevention: Members note the difference in opinion between the CSSIW and officers at the meeting with regard to whether there is clarity about the various responsibilities and roles for early intervention and prevention services. Members are aware that the Director for Communities, Housing and Customer Services has taken on responsibility for defined areas that were previously part of Adult Services, following the Senior Management Restructure earlier this year. Members are also aware that this Director has responsibility for a significant portion of the Organisational Development work. Members therefore seek reassurance from you regarding the clarity of the various responsibilities and roles for early intervention and prevention services. On a related point, Members wish to accept the Director of Social Services offer to provide a written response to the point regarding the long term sustainability of the Council subsidising Vaga watches.

Financial position: Members note that the CSSIW would not comment on the financial position of Social Services as this is more of a matter for the Wales Audit Office. Members note that Cabinet Members believe that the process this year with regard to proposed budget savings has benefited from an enhanced due diligence process, with more rigorous business cases and more probing regarding the deliverability and achievability of proposed savings.

Given the importance of the above and the need to ensure that these areas of improvement are appropriately addressed, Members recommend that the Directorate develops a detailed action plan to address these areas, as well as embedding the actions into a future directorate delivery plan. Members of both Scrutiny Committees would like to receive regular monitoring reports focussing on the implementation of the actions.


Regarding the structure of the meeting, this was clearly set out on the Agenda for the meeting and is a matter for the Committee. As you heard at the meeting, Scrutiny Committee Members supported the structure as it gave them an opportunity to question the CSSIW inspector on their report and thus receive clarification on a number of areas before asking you and officers for your response.

Members feel that it would have been helpful for the Director of Social Services to have provided an update against the areas for improvement highlighted by the CSSIW, in order that Members had an up-to-date view of the position on these. This is something we would like to happen at next year's meeting.

Finally, I look forward to hearing back from you on the following:

- Recommendation – to prepare an action plan to address the areas for improvement highlighted in the CSSIW report;
- Provision of Information – the Director of Social Services to provide a written briefing on our readiness to implement the Social Services and Well Being Act (Wales) 2014 to our January 2016 committee meetings, with progress reports on each work stream to come each month to subsequent committee meetings;
- Request for information - to be informed about how the Directorate proposes to monitor performance in the critical area of Personal Education Plans for Looked After Children and to be informed how this will be reported;
- Request for information – to provide Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee Members with sight of the review into recruitment of Personal Advisors;
- Request for information – to provide Community and Adult Services Scrutiny Committee Members with further information on the timescales associated with the review of the contract for the Adult Services Direct Payments provider;
- Request – to provide reassurance regarding the clarity of the various responsibilities and roles for early intervention and prevention services;
- Provision of Information – to provide a written response to the point regarding the long term sustainability of the Council subsidising Vaga watches.

Yours sincerely,



COUNTY COUNCILLOR MARY M^CGARRY

Chairperson - Community & Adult Services Scrutiny Committee

Cc: Bernard McDonald - CSSIW

Tony Young Amanda Phillips

Irfan Alam

Kim Brown

Claire Deguara Melanie Jackson

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15th February 2016

Cllr Mary McGarry
Chairperson - Community & Adult Services Scrutiny Committee
County Hall
Atlantic Wharf
Cardiff CF10 4UW

Dear Cllr McGarry

Further to the joint C&YP and CASSC scrutiny committee in December, as agreed I write to update you on the situation with regard to the recruitment of Personal Advisors.

We recognise that there have been high numbers of interest, but the role of a PA is challenging – particularly as PAs have case accountability for over 18 years and the safeguarding and public protection risks related to many of the young people in this cohort mean that we need to employ competent people who come to the role with the requisite experience and skills.

We do provide induction and extensive training opportunities (2 PAs are currently seconded on to the Social Work degree course and another is due to start next year), however, it is vital that applicants have some prior experience of working with young people.

The selection and interview panel always has a young person in attendance. The young person we have recently used has extensive experience in interviewing and his view was that none of the previous cohort of applicants interviewed were suitable. His views were consistent with the two managers who were also on the panel.

We currently have 3 agency workers who are covering the vacant posts. This has enabled us to meet current levels of need and we are also in the process of shortlisting for the vacancies.

I hope this brief summary goes some way to reassure you that we are actively recruiting and will continue to do so.

Irfan Alam
Assistant Director, Childrens Services



**SWYDDFA'R DIRPRWY ARWEINYDD
DEPUTY LEADER'S OFFICE**

Fy Nghyf / My Ref: CM33128

Eich Nghyf / Your Ref:

Dyddiad / Date: 27th January 2016

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Annwyl / Dear Mary

**Scrunity - Joint Children & Young People And Community & Adult Services
Scrutiny - 17 December 2015 - Cssiw Evaluation**

Thank you for your letter of 21st December following our attendance with officers to hear the presentation by CSSIW of their Annual Evaluation of Social Services 2014/15.

Please note as a preliminary that it is important to apply the correct nomenclature and that the term is 'Social Services' not as indicated in your letter 'Social Care'. Whilst this is a generic term which many of us use in a variety of settings it is in fact somewhat broader and less specific than 'social services'. This is important in the context of the report that was considered by committee because it relates to the very clearly defined statutory duties and functions of the Director of Social Services in Wales; his discharge of those specific duties in Cardiff; his Annual Report assessment of performance in relation to those duties; and the Annual Performance Evaluation by CSSIW of Social Services in Cardiff.

We very much welcome your recognition of the positive comments from CSSIW concerning improvements being made.

We note your comments concerning the committee's desire for an update against the 'Areas for Improvement' and feel that this is appropriately addressed in our response to your first recommendation as set out below.

In relation to the committee's consideration of the issues covered in the CSSIW report overall and your recommendations in particular, we would respond as follows:-

1. **Recommendation concerning an action plan.** The established practice in relation to this issue is for all 'Areas for Improvement' to be incorporated into the Directorate Business Plan for the forthcoming year where relevant. This has worked effectively in each of the last two years and CSSIW have, as reported, been satisfied that the 'Areas for Improvement' raised in the 2012/2013 and

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2013/14 evaluations were addressed satisfactorily as a result. The Director does not see value in preparing a separate action plan to deal with the 'Areas for Improvement' only, particularly when there are also parallel improvement plans in place in both adults and children's services already; taken together with the existing business plan, these plans address themselves to those issues. To prepare yet another plan that would require separate monitoring activity is simple not efficient and moreover would require additional attention and draw on already limited management capacity. We would also emphasise that the committee will also have a full opportunity to scrutinise the Directorate Business Plan and the extent to which it effectively addresses the 'Areas for Improvement' , when the Directorate Business Plan is considered by Scrutiny in March.

2. **Provision of SSWB Act Briefings** - this is agreed.
3. **Further Information - Personal Education Plans** – this is agreed.
4. **Recruitment of Personal Advisors** – further information following the investigation of this concern; this is agreed.
5. **Further Information on the Review of Direct Payments Contract** – this is agreed
6. **Request to clarify roles and responsibilities re Prevention** – this is agreed
7. **Provision of Information – Vega Watches** – this is agreed.

Yn gywir / Yours sincerely



Cllr / Cynghorydd Sue Lent
Deputy Leader / Dirprwy Arweinydd
Cabinet Member for Early Years,
Children & Families
Aelod Cabinet Dros Y Blynnyddoedd Cynnar,
Plant a Theuluoedd



Cllr / Cynghorydd Susan Elsmore
Cabinet Member for Health,
Housing & Wellbeing
Aelod Cabinet dros Iechyd, Tai a
Lles

Dyddiad / Date: 14 January 2016

Dear Councillor McGarry

Thank you for your letter dated 22 December and I do apologise for the delay in responding to the issues that you raise.

You are correct in your assumptions that our report is a performance evaluation of Cardiff social services for the year 2014/15. However, it is not an "end of term" report which seeks to judge the council nor is it a definitive or comprehensive explanation of all aspects of social services in Cardiff; it could never be. Social services departments are large, complex organisations which are very dynamic and subject to constant change. The report does provide a high-level summary which provides lines of inquiry and areas for improvement. It should not be read in isolation but used in conjunction with other information members of the scrutiny committee will be sighted on i.e. it is only one piece of evidence members should consider.

I am concerned that some of your members feel the evaluation report gives the impression Cardiff social services are performing well. In some areas the council is, in others it is not. We consider the report to be balanced and that it provides a fair and proportionate analysis of the services provided by the council and highlights both good areas of practice as well as areas of concern.

I would like to draw the elected members to the following areas of the performance evaluation that identifies areas for improvement.

Our opening sentence reads '*The council continues to face significant challenges in transforming services in light of increasing demand and financial pressures, alongside preparing for the implementation of the Social Services and Well Being (Wales) Act*'

This is followed by the opening statement in paragraph 1.3 regarding key areas of performance as follows, *'Performance indicators demonstrate some key areas of performance still require improvement. In adult services improvements are required in reducing the number of people waiting for hospital discharge. In children's services there has been an increase in the number of children being looked after by the council. Performance in the area of intake and assessment needs continued improvement'*.

The report on page 2 identifies the nine areas for improvement from the annual performance evaluation for 2013/14. Our report identifies further improvement is required in four of these areas.

Page 3 of our evaluation identifies areas of practice that CSSIW want to follow up in 2015/16 these include

- *the council's approach to improve performance in the number of delayed transfer of care from hospital;*
- *the commissioning arrangements for residential and domiciliary care;*
- *performance within children's services, in particular intake and assessment and children in need;*
- *progress on the payment by results initiative in enabling young people to be provided with a service in Cardiff; and*
- *readiness for the Social Services and Wellbeing Act (SSWB Act).*

Within adult services we specifically identified the challenges the council faced in re-commissioning domiciliary care services and specifically the impact of the implementation of the new model on the reduced capacity in the market. This is an area that we have already followed up as part of our national review of the commissioning of domiciliary care service.

The lack of any quality element in the commissioning of residential care was raised in regard to ensuring people were offered a wider choice and a quality service to meet their needs.

As you state in your letter we did raise concerns within our evaluation regarding the decline in performance in the number of people awaiting discharge from hospital. This was an area we discussed at our quarterly engagement meetings with the director of social services. Our report identifies this could be attributed to the new commissioning model for domiciliary care and delays in delivering the supported housing project to support the re-ablement service.

In considering the key national priorities for adults, the report commented that it is not clear who is leading the preventative agenda for older people's services. In summary, our report identifies five areas for improvement that the council needs to consider in adult services.

Within children's services the first four paragraphs (6.24 – 6.27) of our report highlights the decline in the percentage of Looked After Children reviews completed, the need to improve the personal advisor services, the need to improve the number of Looked After Children who have a personal education plan and the decrease in the completion of core assessments completed within the statutory timescale. The report highlights five areas for

improvement in children's services. It is because of our concerns we are undertaking a full inspection of children's intake and assessment service in January.

When considering the extent to which leadership and governance promotes improvements in outcomes for people we have identified three areas for improvement which focus on the stability of leadership and direction within the department.

The annual performance report is written in a constructive manner which not only reflects the above areas of improvement but also highlights areas of good practice. Throughout the year we met with the director and senior officers to raise concerns or discuss good practice and innovation throughout the year.

Where we do identify areas that may warrant further analysis we would consider undertaking a review or site visit to the particular area of practice. The past three years has seen us undertake site visits to the intake and assessment team, physical and sensory impairment team, community mental health team and visit to the managed team in children's services. In addition we have undertaken a review of Looked After Children's services as part of a national review in addition to supporting the Wales Audit Office inspection of services provided to older people.

This year we will complete an inspection of domiciliary care services as part of our national review and as I have said undertake a further formal inspection of the intake and assessment team in children's services.

As you have pointed out in your letter there are challenges in looking at comparative data, and as discussed at scrutiny it is difficult for us to consider Cardiff against all Wales' average although we do compare Cardiff with other larger cities in Wales. As you are aware on a number of metrics Cardiff is exceptional and very different in scale, (demography, economy and diversity) to any other councils in Wales. This difference is statistically significant. Our analysts advise us the most valid comparison would be against an English city such as Walsall or Newcastle but as the legislative and policy requirements are different that poses some difficulty. We accept some data / ratios do appear to offer comparison but one has to take account of the very different volumes and the very different complexities in the cases being presented in different council areas. One also has to take into account the fact that whilst data sets are carefully defined, in practice the way information is coded and captured varies considerably between councils depending on the local arrangements for providing services. For example, what is regarded as a carer's assessment in one council area will be quite different to what is regarded as an assessment in another. Similarly with reviews of adult care, some councils will count "telephone reviews" or reviews undertaken by an independent provider, others will only count in depth, face to face reviews completed by a reviewing team. We therefore treat a number of indicators with a degree of caution.

For your information we do employ a team of specialist analysts to scrutinise the data provided for each council and they advise Area Managers on each council's performance. Furthermore all of our evaluations are considered as part of a moderation process which includes independent scrutiny (an ex director of social services) to ensure they are fair and balanced and that any concerns have been highlighted.

We really value the role played by members of scrutiny committees and it is important that people who undertake the scrutiny role are independent, impartial, diligent and robust. I

appreciate you writing to me and the level of interest your fellow committee members have in Cardiff's performance.

I hope this letter provides some explanation and reassurance and I am happy to discuss these issues further when we next meet.

As you will be aware the Social Services and Wellbeing (Wales) Act 2014 will bring a change in our role and engagement with the council and elected members. There is greater emphasis on the council's self-evaluation and indeed this is the last year we will be producing an annual evaluation report for councils. However we will continue to inspect council services and meet with scrutiny committees.

I look forward to working with you and your committee in securing improvement in the quality services to the people of Cardiff.

Yours Sincerely

Bernard McDonald
Area Manager
CSSIW – Care and Social Services Inspectorate Wales

My Ref: Scrutiny/Correspondence/MJH

15 January 2016

Carl Davies
Home office Prevent Co-ordinator
County Hall
Cardiff
CF10 4UW



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Cardiff,
CF10 4UW
Tel: (029) 2087 2087

Neuadd y Sir
Caerdydd,
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Ffôn: (029) 2087 2088

Dear Carl

On behalf of the Committee I would like to thank you and Barrie Phillips, for attending the Children & Young People Scrutiny Committee meeting on 12 January 2016 to present Cardiff's Prevent Strategy. After consideration of the strategy Members had the following comments:

The Committee greatly appreciated the explanation of the various elements of the strategy and considered it to be very robust. Members also noted that the Welsh Government was developing an updated guidance and self assessment tool and requested that copies be made available to the Committee as soon as it had been published.

The Committee were also pleased to hear details of the training and awareness raising that was being provided through the WRAP programme and are also aware that the Local Government Association had published a leaflet "Leading the preventing violent extremism agenda - a role made for Councillors". Members requested that specific training be developed for Councillors and be provided as soon as possible.

Finally Members did express their concern that the Prevent Strategy did not have clear links with all Council Departments, and did not seem to include unregistered Schools. Members recommended that the Strategy be reviewed to ensure that these two areas are included in the next version of the strategy.

I hope that these comments, advice and requests for information, will be of use and support the implementation of the Prevent Strategy in Cardiff. The Committee looks forward to receiving the requested information listed above together with a positive response to this letter within the next month.

To recap, this letter requests several actions, requests for information and recommendations, as follows and requires:

- A copy of the latest guidance and self assessment tool

- Training on the role of Councillors in the Prevent Strategy
- Revise the strategy to include unregistered schools and links with all Council Departments

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Richard Cook', with a long horizontal flourish underneath.

COUNTY COUNCILLOR – RICHARD COOK
Chairperson of the Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee.

CC Barrie Phillips – HE/FE prevent Coordinator



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12th February 2016

County Councillor Richard Cook
Chairperson
Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee
Cardiff

Dear Councillor Cook,

Thank you for giving us the opportunity to appear before the Children and Young People's Scrutiny Committee on 12th January 2016, it really is appreciated and we are grateful for the feedback.

In relation to the follow-up actions from the meeting, I provide the below update:

ACTION (1) Provide a copy of the latest guidance and self-assessment toolkit.

An email containing both documents was sent to Martyn Hutchings, for onward circulation to Committee members on 13th January 2016.

ACTION (2) Deliver training on the role of Councillors in the Prevent Strategy.

I have contacted Gill Nurton in respect of Councillor training and will deliver inputs in due course.

You may be aware that we have previously delivered Prevent presentations to a number of Cardiff Councillors; this being offered via all political parties. However, not all Councillors attended the training, so it would be ideal to provide a refresh.

ACTION (3) Revise the strategy to include unregistered schools and links with all Council departments.

To reassure you, unregistered schools and Local Authority departments are included in the Cardiff Prevent Delivery Plan.

The issue of unregistered schools is one that also requires political intervention, as they are not covered under the Prevent Duty. However, we work closely with the Home Office and Welsh Government on such matters, as well as having worked collaboratively with ESTYN, CSSIW and Cardiff Council education department on previous cases.

In addition, Welsh Government is currently reviewing policy on the matter.

It is my understanding that this letter will not be available publicly.

Yours sincerely

Carl Davies

Home Office Prevent Co-ordinator / Swyddfa Gartref Atal Cydlynnydd
Operational Manager / Rheolwr Gweithredol
Cardiff Local Authority / Awdurdod Lleol Caerdydd

My Ref: Scrutiny/Correspondence/MJH

15 January 2016

Councillor Sarah Merry
Cabinet Member - Education and Skills
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Dear Sarah

On behalf of the Committee I would like to thank you for attending the Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee on 12 January 2016 to provide an opening statement and answer questions on the agenda item **Cardiff Schools Annual Report 2014/15**.

I would also like to thank Nick Batchelar and Angela Kent for their presentation of the report and answers to Members questions. Members were also pleased to welcome Hannah Woodhouse, Managing Director of the Central South Education Consortium, John Hayes, Head Teacher of Ysgol Gyfun Cymraeg Plasmawr, Helen Turner, Head Teacher Pencaerau Primary School and Kevin Tansley, Head Teacher Ty Gwyn Special School, and wished to thank them for their contribution to the scrutiny of this item.

Members raised a number of comments, concerns and recommendations for your consideration, which they asked me to write to you about.

The Committee welcomed the report and that it showed a steady and sustained improvement of performance in Cardiff. Members noted that this improvement was at a greater pace than the rest of Wales. The Committee did however note with some concern that secondary schools were not yet performing as well as primary schools, Members looked forward to an improved picture once the poor performance in three secondary schools had been addressed.

The Committee were pleased to hear from the head teachers that they felt that they were working much more closely with the Consortium. They were now working in improvement groups, were identifying and embedding good practice from other schools into their working practices, and were actively using the leadership training being offered by the Consortium. Members were also pleased to hear that pupil tracking was now embedded into schools performance improvement process and that teachers were held to account for their work.

The Members did reiterate that the categorisation of pupils by ethnicity may not be particularly useful, as some pupils were now 3rd or 4th generation. Members considered that a better category could be “pupils who can not speak English”, and suggested that you could consider using this categorisation in future reports.

The Members noted that the report did not contain information on the National Literacy and Numeracy Framework 2015 performance as well as the results of individual school. Members noted the reasons for this, but recommended that they be included when the report is presented to Cabinet. Members also asked if copies of the individual school data could be sent to Martyn Hutchings, so that he can copy them to all Members.

The Committee was surprised to hear that, in respect of the gender gap, girls performance is stronger than boys in all of the core subjects, however compared with the National Outcomes, there is a notable underperformance in the attainment of girls in English. Members requested that this inconsistency should be investigated to determine exactly what actions need to be implemented to address this issue.

In discussion around the performance of pupils for whom English is not their first language, Members wished to highlight that currently there is a very successful immersion initiative, for pupils who wish to learn Welsh. The Committee recommended that a similar initiative should be developed for pupils who can't speak English.

Finally Members noted that the Director of Education and Lifelong learning was developing a long term plan for education “Cardiff 2020” members requested that a draft of the plan be presented to this Committee in March 2016.

I hope that these comments, advice and recommendations, detailed above will be of use and support in improving outcomes for Cardiff's pupils. The Committee looks forward to receiving the requested additional information listed above and response to its recommendations; as such the Members require a formal response to this letter within the next month.

To recap, this letter requests several actions, requests for information and recommendations, as follows and requires:

- That the National Literacy and Numeracy Framework 2015 performance be included in the report to Cabinet
- That a copy of the performance of individual schools 2014/15 be sent to Martyn Hutchings, Scrutiny Services
- That the inconsistency in the National and Local Gender performance be investigated

- That an Immersion initiative, similar to that used for pupils who cannot speak Welsh, be considered for pupils who start school unable to speak English; and
- That the Director of Education and Lifelong learning presents to Committee, in March, the draft "Cardiff 2020" plan.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'R. Cook', with a horizontal line underneath it.

COUNTY COUNCILLOR RICHARD COOK
Chair – Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee

CC: Nick Batchelar, Director of Education and Lifelong Learning
Angela Kent, OM Schools Performance
Hannah Woodhouse, Managing Director, South Central Consortium
John Hayes, Ysgol Gyfun Cymraeg Plasmawr,
Helen Turner, Pencaerau Primary School
Kevin Tansley, Ty Gwyn Special School

**CABINET SUPPORT OFFICE
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My Ref / Fy Ref: CM33348

Your Ref / Eich Ref :

Date / Dyddiad: 15 February 2016

Councillor R. Cook
Chair
Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee
County Hall
Atlantic wharf
Cardiff
CF10 4UW

Dear / Annwyl Richard,

Thank you for your letter dated 15th January, 2016 following the meeting of the Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee on the 12th January, 2016 in which you request several actions, additional information and make recommendations.

You requested that:

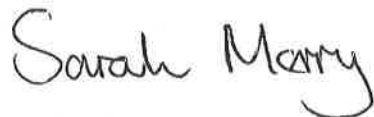
1. The National Literacy and Numeracy Framework 2015 performance be included in the report to Cabinet. The report had already been sent to the Cabinet Office prior to receipt of your letter. A copy of the report on Performance in Literacy and Numeracy 2015 has been circulated to Cabinet Members.
2. A copy of the performance of individual schools 2014/15 be sent to Martyn Hutchings, Scrutiny Services. I can confirm that this has been arranged.
3. The inconsistency in the National and Local Gender performance be investigated. This is being done by the Head of Achievement and Inclusion and the senior challenge adviser through the progress reviews with individual schools.
4. An immersion initiative, similar to that used for pupils who cannot speak Welsh, be considered for pupils who start school unable to speak English – the relevant LA officer has been contacted and will investigate the feasibility of such an initiative.



5. The Director of Education and Lifelong learning presents to Committee, in March, the draft "Cardiff 2020" plan. I am sure that the Director will welcome the opportunity to present the plan to the committee when it is sufficiently developed.

I will be discussing progress with the actions listed above in my regular meetings with education officers.

Yours sincerely
Yn gwyir



Cllr /Y Cyng Sarah Merry
Cabinet Member for Education/
Yr Aelod Cabinet Dros Addysg
Member for Cathays /
Aelod Dros Cathays



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Date 22 January 2016

My Ref SS/CYP/MJH

Councillor Peter Bradbury
Cabinet Member for Community Development, Co-operatives & Social Enterprise
County Hall
Atlantic Wharf
CARDIFF
CF10 4UW

Dear Peter

On behalf of the Committee I would like to thank you for attending the meeting on 12 January 2016 to present the Cabinet briefing paper on the **New Model for Cardiff's Play Service**. I would also like to thank Andrew Gregory, Malcolm Stammers and Jane Clemence for attending and answering Members questions. During the way forward section of the meeting Members considered the information in the report and answers to their questions, and identified a number of comments, concerns and recommendations for your consideration, as detailed below:

The Committee welcomed the opportunity to be briefed on the changes being brought in following the Budget savings decision made in February 2015 along with the Cabinet commitment that "All Play Centre's to remain open and staffed for children's play for five evenings per week until the alternative arrangements are put in place".

Members expressed their concern that the briefing paper did not seem to set out clearly how the play service and each play centre would move from its present operational model to the Play Grant Commissioning Model. Members queried this during the presentation and received further clarification, however they requested that a further briefing paper should be provided that sets out clearly the plans for the change in play service provision around each Play Centre. The Committee also requested copies of the submitted business plans, on a confidential basis, so that Members can ensure the robustness and sustainability of the proposals.

The Committee also heard from representatives from Ely and Grangetown Play Centres about their experiences of the changes to the Play Service in their areas. They both expressed concern that some of the proposals were not viable. They had not received sufficient support and advice to help them develop plans to take over the buildings and run the Play Centres and commented that they felt forced into developing business plans. Both representatives felt passionately about their Play Centres. They also felt that the move to a play grant commissioned service, with the option to provide play in alternative all-purpose community settings, would remove the child friendly, inclusive environment, with structured play areas and personalised facilities that the present Play Centres provide.

Finally Members requested a further progress report on the operation of the Play Grant Commissioning Model and provision of the Council's Play Service following the completion of the Play Sufficiency Assessment.

I hope that these comments, advice and requests for information, will be of use and support in the operation of the Play Service. The Committee looks forward to receiving the requested information listed above together with a positive response to this letter within the next month.

To recap, this letter requests several actions, requests for information and recommendations, as follows and requires:

- A further briefing paper setting out clearly the plans for the change in Play Service provision around each Play Centre;
- Copies of the submitted Business plans, on a confidential bases;
- That the views of the Play Centre representatives be sought and taken into account during the implementation of the new Play Service;
- That a further report is presented to Committee following the completion of the Play Sufficiency Assessment

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Richard Cook', with a horizontal line underneath it.

COUNTY COUNCILLOR RICHARD COOK
Chairperson – Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee

CC: Andrew Gregory, Director of City Operations
Malcolm Stammers, Operational Manager Leisure and Play
Jane Clemence – Active Communities Officer

**CABINET SUPPORT OFFICE
SWYDDFA CYMORTH Y CABINET**



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Fy Nghyf / My Ref: CM33415

Dyddiad / Date: 22nd February 2016

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Councillor Richard Cook
Cardiff Council
County Hall
Cardiff
CF10 4UW

Annwyl/Dear Councillor Cook

Cyp Scrutiny 12 Jan - New Model For Childrens Play Services

Thank you for your letter of January 22nd conceding the Scrutiny Committee's meeting regarding Children's Play.

I am quite happy for officers to provide you with a briefing paper on the provision for Play in each Neighbourhood Management area when the Centre is to be transferred after it has been agreed with local Ward members.

As to the transfer of each of the Centre's then again I am happy to provide copies of the submitted business plans which will have been considered by the Community Asset Transfer Board in recommending entering into a lease agreement although the party that we are entering into the lease agreements with will need to give their approval as well.

I note your comments regarding the views expressed by the representatives from Ely and Grangetown Play Centres. I understand that the groups feel that more support could have been given in developing their respective business cases. However we have provided development officers to work with groups, (particularly in the case of Ely via ACE) and we have also given officer support from within Leisure & Play where an individual officer has been tasked with supporting the transfer of the Centres for the past 4 months or so. In addition, some of the groups have taken advantage of the consultants available via the "Steeping Up" process to assist in developing their plans and this support is ongoing. We continue to be very conscious of the views of the community, hence our continued engagement with the various community groups expressing interest in taking responsibility for the buildings.

There is no problem at all with providing you with a further progress report on the Play Commissioning Model and also the Play Sufficiency Assessment at the

PLEASE REPLY TO / ATEBWCH I: Cabinet Support Office / Swyddfa Cymorth Y Cabinet
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Tel/ Ffon: (029) 2087 2598 Fax/Facs (029) 20872691



appropriate time.

As always I would like to thank you and your Committee for their interest in the subject of Play which is so valuable to our young people.

Yn gywir
Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Peter Bradbury', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Councillor / Y Cynghorydd Peter Bradbury
Cabinet Member for Community Development, Co-operatives & Social Enterprise
Aelod Cabinet Dros Datblygu Cymunedol, Mentrau Cydweithredol a Mentrau Cymdeithasol

My Ref: Scrutiny/Correspondence/MJH

15 January 2016

Hannah Woodhouse
Interim Managing Director
Tŷ Dysgu
Cefn Coed
Parc Nantgarw
Cardiff
CF15 7QQ



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Dear Hannah,

On behalf of the Committee I would like to thank you and Councillor Chris Elmore, Chairman of the Consortium Joint Committee, for attending the Children & Young People Scrutiny Committee meeting on 12 January 2016 to present the Consortium's draft Self Assessment and draft Business Plan 2016/17. I would also like to thank Nick Batchelar and Angela Kent for their contribution to the discussions on the two papers. Following consideration of the report and answers to Members questions, the Committee raised the following concerns and recommendations:

The Committee noted that these papers were being reported to all five Consortium member Authorities, during this month and Members welcomed the opportunity to review the two documents at such an early stage, and be invited to provide advice and comment on their content prior to their formal approval by the Joint Committee.

The Committee reflected on the contents of the draft Business Plan 2015/16 and expressed their concern that the document lacked focus in some of the actions to address improvements. For example under improvement priority ONE, the action 'to reduce the variations in performance between schools' says 'Secure improvement at pace in red and amber support schools reflecting what works through effective intervention'. Other actions had a more detailed narrative. Members recommended that the Business Plan must include clearer explicit actions with targets, milestones and outcome measures.

Members sought further clarification of the role of challenge advisors in reducing the number of Neets, as their role had been highlighted at previous meetings. Members requested that the role must be referenced in the business plan, as a specific action, for 2016/17.

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

Yours sincerely

COUNTY COUNCILLOR – RICHARD COOK
Chairperson of the Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee.

CC Nick Batchelar, Director of Education and Lifelong Learning



Central South Consortium
Consortium Canolbarth y De

Joint Education Service
Gwasanaeth Addysg ar y Cyd

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Our Ref: HW/TD

1st March 2016

County Councillor Richard Cook,
Chairperson of the Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee,
Cardiff Council,
County Hall,
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Dear Councillor Cook,

Thank you for your letter and for the opportunity to share our self evaluation and business plan with the Scrutiny Committee at this early stage.

The Business Plan reflects the needs of the region and is focused on setting out the ambitions of the authorities and schools across the region to develop a region which can compete not only in Wales but internationally. We are delighted that the region shows strong improvement across all authorities and particularly so in Cardiff, but we are not complacent about making further strong progress working with partners across the region.

The Committee raised two points with me in discussion. I can reassure the Committee that it is the case that Challenge Advisers working across the region, but particularly in Cardiff, to challenge and support schools to reduce the numbers of young people not in education employment or training (NEET) and indeed in the final inspection monitoring visit, we reviewed challenge adviser records to evidence this. Once again we will continue to keep to make this a focus of our work into the year ahead.

Secondly, on the issue about detail in the business plan, we are further developing it so that it is as clear and measurable about activity and impact as it can be and can be really effective in driving our work, and our evaluation of progress and impact, throughout the year. However the Business Plan itself is intended to be a high level summary document and is backed by detailed plans under each of the areas of focus. It is here that we are setting out the specific activities which sit beneath each commitment. We will publish the Business Plan on our website when complete and the Committee will be aware that the Consortium Joint Committee - including the Chief Executive and Cabinet Member for Cardiff approves the final version.

With many thanks for your constructive comments.

Yours sincerely,

Hannah Woodhouse
Managing Director

Date 18 January 2016

My Ref SS/CYP/MJH

Your Ref:



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Councillor Sue Lent
Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Families, Children and Early Years
County Hall
Atlantic Wharf
CARDIFF
CF10 4UW

Dear Sue

I am sorry that you were not able to attend Committee on 12 January 2016, and your apology was noted by the Committee. I would therefore like to thank Tony Young and Nicola Poole for attending Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee to present the progress report on the **Social Services and Well Being Act (Wales) 2014**.

The Committee welcomed the information contained in the report and appendices and were pleased with the progress being made in implementing the requirements of the Act. Members were pleased to hear, from officers, that they had planned to provide monthly briefings to Committee, on the implementation of the six work streams that were relevant to this Committee's Terms of Reference. The Committee agreed to include these briefings in its future work programme.

Members noted that the Governance section of the briefing did not include any reference to Scrutiny's involvement, despite the commitment to bring regular briefings. The Committee requested that the Governance structure be amended to include scrutiny of the implementation of the Act.

Members had previously questioned the overall cost of the requirements of the Act as they did not feel that its implementation would be cost neutral as indicated by the Welsh Government. The Members welcomed the commitment by the Director to seek additional funding, for the implementation of the Act, as part of the 2016/17 budget.

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

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Richard Cook', with a horizontal line underneath it.

COUNTY COUNCILLOR RICHARD COOK
Chairperson – Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee

CC: Tony Young, Director of Children's Services
Melanie Jackson - Personal Assistant to Deputy Leader
Irfan Alam – Assistant Director of Social Services

My Ref: Scrutiny/CYP/MJH

Date: 16 February 2016



Councillor Graham Hinchey
Cabinet Member for Corporate Services and Performance
City of Cardiff Council
County Hall
Cardiff
CF10 4UW

Dear Graham

CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE - Corporate Plan and Draft Cabinet Budget proposals

Thank you for attending the Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee on 16 February 2016. The Committee would also like me to thank Councillor Lent, Councillor Merry, Councillor Bradbury, Christine Salter and relevant Directors and Officers for their attendance. The Committee welcomed the presentations on the Corporate Plan, Cabinet draft Budget proposals overview and the departmental budget proposals for each directorate. The Committee considered the information presented together with answers to members questions and agreed to provide you and the Cabinet Members with the following comments, concerns and recommendations

In respect of the Budget Consultation exercise undertaken during December, the Committee acknowledges that Cabinet is increasing the scope of the consultation but recommends caution on the weight given to such a small sample of responses, acquired from certain demographic areas and minority groups. For example respondents from the east of the city are low and the numbers of responses from young people are proportionately low given the number living in the city. The Committee recommends that in future the Cabinet improves its consultation of the budget proposals by attending existing community groups, such as luncheon groups, youth groups, family centres and minority ethnic groups.. The Committee was also concerned that the questionnaire had a number of leading questions and Members suggested that future budget consultation questionnaires should be validated by an external market research company.

The Committee also questioned the achievability of many of the savings proposals, particularly those that were identified as RED or RED/AMBER. The Members highlighted the need for robust and detailed action plans with key milestones to be in place as part of each savings action plan. The Committee will be monitoring the action plans as part of the Committee's budget monitoring panels function.

The Committee also wished to highlight the following points:

- Members expressed particular concern around the achievability of lines 84, 85 and 86 of the savings proposals (Education – reduction of the costs of placements, Looked After Children placed out of County and the number of new placements), as these are dependent on partnership working. Members therefore requested details of the partnership action plans to be made available to the Committee as soon as possible.
- Members wished to seek assurance, that in respect of savings proposals – line 88, the different delivery model for tuition for children who are not educated in school, would not have a detrimental outcome for the pupils receiving the service.
- Given the present budget pressures, Members expressed surprise that there was no intention, at the present time, to have a debate around the provision of school transport for Faith and Welsh schools.

Finally following consideration of the new model for Children's Play, the Committee recommended an alternative way forward as follows: the proposed reduction in service would be better provided, from each of the current Play Centres, rather than spreading the service around several different buildings in each community, until the Community Asset Transfers have each been completed. This would ensure continuity of provision and be less confusing for children and parents..

I will be copying this letter to all the relevant Cabinet Members and Directors as well as the Chair of Policy Review and Performance Scrutiny Committee in advance of its meeting on Wednesday 17 February and it is possible that these points will be raised with you in greater detail at that meeting.

We hope that these comments will have been of assistance to you and the Cabinet in agreeing the Budget proposals on Thursday 18 February and look forward to a positive response to the points raised in the letter, from you and the other cabinet Members, within the next month.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Richard Cook', with a horizontal line underneath it.

COUNTY COUNCILLOR RICHARD COOK
Chair – Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee

Cc

Councillor Lent, Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Early Years, Children and Families

Councillor Merry, Cabinet Member for Education

Councillor Bradbury, Cabinet Member for Community Development, Co-operatives, & Social enterprise.

Christine Salter, Section 151 Officer

Tony Young, Director of Social Services

Nick Batchelar, Director of Education and Lifelong learning

Andrew Gregory, Director of City Operations

Chair of Policy Review and Performance Scrutiny Committee

Rita Rohman

Cheryl Cornelius

**SWYDDFA CYMORTH Y CABINET
CABINET SUPPORT OFFICE**

Fy Nghyf / My Ref: CM33640
Eich Cyf / Your Ref: Scrutiny/CYP/MJH

Dyddiad / Date: 24 February 2016

Councillor Richard Cook
Chair, Children & Young People Scrutiny Committee
Scrutiny Services
Room 263
County Hall
Cardiff
CF10 4UW



Annwyl / Dear Richard

Children & Young People Scrutiny Committee - Corporate Plan & Draft Cabinet Budget Proposals

Thank you for your letter dated 16 February 2016 and the useful comments raised. I can assure you that Cabinet was able to reflect on the points raised prior to meeting on 18 February 2016.

This response to your letter relates to multiple Cabinet portfolios and directorates and has been written in consultation with all Cabinet Members and Directors that have responsibility for the relevant functions.

The following paragraphs set out responses to your specific points.

Budget Consultation

I appreciate the comments made and will ensure that they are fed into a review of the 2016/17 process which will inform the work for 2017/18.

Budget Proposals

I note your concerns regarding the achievability of the savings proposals that have been identified as Red or Red/Amber and will ensure that Officers are able to present robust and detailed plans with key milestones to your Committee's budget monitoring panels.

I also note your particular concerns regarding EDU savings lines 84, 85 and 86 in relation to savings proposals on Out of County Placements and EDU savings line 88 in relation to Education Other Than At School (EOTAS). I can confirm that once Officers have finalised the partnership action plans in relation to these savings proposals, copies will be made available to the Committee and would reiterate the verbal assurance provided to your Committee regarding EDU 88 that any alternative provision will be at least as good as or better than existing provision.

ATEBWCH I / PLEASE REPLY TO: Swyddfa Cymorth Y Cabinet / Cabinet Support Office,
Ystafell / Room 514, Neuadd y Sir / County Hall,
Glanfa'r Iwerydd / Atlantic Wharf, Caerdydd / Cardiff,
CF10 4UW Ffon / Tel (029) 2087 2479

The Committee's comments regarding the delivery of the new model of play from existing Centres until any Community Asset Transfer (CAT) has been concluded is noted. Can I reassure the Committee that this approach has always been a central element of the delivery plan in that it was always understood that the service levels and locations would need to be fully agreed with local ward members prior to its introduction. One implication of this is that depending on circumstances this could mean that play continues from those Centres until such time as the CAT is completed. Even after a CAT is completed play may continue to be delivered from the Centre if applicable and subject to the Play Sufficiency Assessment (PSA) findings.

I hope that this letter captures all the points raised in your letter and thank you again for your support in the budget process.

Yn gwyir,
Yours sincerely,



Councillor / Y Cynghorydd Graham Hinchey
Cabinet Member for Corporate Services & Performance
Aelod Cabinet dros Wasanaethau Corfforaethol a Perfformiad

Cc Councillor Lent, Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Early Years, Children and Families
Councillor Merry, Cabinet Member for Education
Councillor Bradbury, Cabinet Member for Community Development, Co-operatives, & Social Enterprise.
Christine Salter, Section 151 Officer
Tony Young, Director of Social Services
Nick Batchelar, Director of Education and Lifelong learning
Andrew Gregory, Director of City Operations
Chair of Policy Review and Performance Scrutiny Committee
Rita Rohman
Cheryl Cornelius

My Ref: Scrutiny/CYP/AEJ

Date: 16 February 2016



Councillor Sue Lent
Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Families, Children and Early Learning
City of Cardiff Council
County Hall
Cardiff
CF10 4UW

Dear Sue,

CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE – DRAFT CARDIFF CHILD SEXUAL EXPLOITATION PREVENTION STRATEGY

I am writing to you on behalf of the Children & Young People Scrutiny Committee, following its consideration of the draft Cardiff Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) Prevention Strategy.

This response is based on an evaluation and review of the draft Strategy on the 21 January 2016 by the CSE Task & Finish Group, and endorsed by full Committee on the 16 February.

Overall, whilst the development of a Strategy document on this critical issue is welcomed, the Committee has requested that a number of additions, updates and amendments be made to the Strategy and Action Plan before it is adopted by Cabinet. Whilst it is appreciated that it will evolve and develop, this Committee recommends that additional data and information that should be available at this juncture be added to the Strategy and Action Plan before it is considered by Cabinet.

This includes:

- Key baseline data;
- Explicit references to governance and lines of accountability;
- Performance measures, including targets, costs and clear timeframes for review;
- Details of progress made to date; and
- Links to other key plans and strategies

The Committee's detailed comments and recommendations on specific parts of the Strategy are set out in Appendix A.

I look forward to receiving an updated version of the Strategy document in due course.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Richard Cook', with a long horizontal line underneath it.

COUNTY COUNCILLOR RICHARD COOK
Chair – Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee

Cc Tony Young, Director of Social Services
Irfan Alam, Assistant Director, Children's Services
Sandra Cornwall, Operational Manager, Safeguarding Services, Children's Services
Jan Coles, Interim Lead Manager for CSE, Children's Services
Andy Senior, Business Manager, Cardiff & Vale Local Safeguarding Children Board

CHILDREN & YOUNG PEOPLE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
Draft CSE Prevention Strategy
Detailed Recommendations

Purpose of the Strategy

The draft document states *"It is important to note, for now, this is a Cardiff only Strategy..... With an aim to develop a regional strategy if it is felt that one is needed"*.

Evidence has shown that cross boundary, multi agency working is critical in identifying and tracking victims and perpetrators and it is therefore recommended that this Strategy should commit to working in this way from the outset and link to other LSCBs – to the Vale of Glamorgan; the SE Wales SCB (Newport, Torfaen, Monmouthshire, Blaenau Gwent and Caerphilly); and the Western Bay SCB (Neath Port Talbot, Swansea and Bridgend). Whilst we recognise the need for a local strategy, it is crucial that a commitment to work and interact together is put in place to maximise impact in tackling this issue.

Strategic Context

The Committee recommends that additional content be added to this Section. Birmingham LSCB CSE Strategy 2015-17 detailed the following in its Strategic Context and it is recommended that these be included in the Cardiff document:

- A profile of children and young people in the area – numbers, ages, breakdown of ethnicity, numbers and percentages in school, achievements; NEETs etc.
- General overview of wards in the City, including numbers and percentages of children living in poverty and deprivation etc.
- Young people's views - for example, children & young people's perceptions of their neighbourhoods etc.; and
- Health – admissions of Under-18s to A&E, scale of mental health issues etc.

The Cardiff CSE Strategy Action Plan states a number of activities that could provide this context. The commitment to *"complete an audit of children's services referrals and cases..... to identify the nature and prevalence of CSE in Cardiff" (by end December 2015)* should provide this, and it is therefore recommended that the relevant parts of these audit results be included in this part of the draft Strategy at this time, prior to consideration by Cabinet on the 10 March 2016.

What we know about CSE in Cardiff and how we will make sure we understand the scale of the problem

Linked with the Strategic Context, we recommend the following be added to this Section:

Further details arising from the audit and other sources including:

- The numbers of children at risk and a breakdown of what category of risk (as per the SERAF framework)
- The ages of children at risk
- The ethnicity of those at risk
- Numbers of children classified as missing from school
- How many of those at risk are in the care of the Local Authority
- How many have plans in place
- How many Assessment meetings have taken place in the past 3 months
- Output of the mapping of existing services exercise (*as stated in the Action Plan as being completed by the end of January 2016*);
- Profile of ethnic groups, including any changes in demographics over the past five years;
- Indicators identified that could lead children to become “at risk” from CSE;
- Further detail needs to be made in relation to the Police “problem profile findings”, for example, “hotspots” identified – not just “where”, but numbers too; and a profile of the numbers of victims who have been identified as engaging in risky behaviour.
- Results/Findings of the Children’s Services Audit should be included at this juncture to clarify and back up the statement of *“early indication from this audit suggest an improving picture in terms of effective responses to CSE and real strength in terms of protecting Looked After Children from exposure to CSE”*.

Identifying and monitoring CSE

Whilst we supported the intention of the commitment to working with multi-agency intelligence to identify and monitor CSE, terms such as “systematically” and “routinely” were used through this Section, with no indication of timescales. We recommend that the Strategy set out in clear terms **how** they will identify and monitor CSE, and **when** they will do this, using set timescales.

Raising Awareness, Identifying and Protecting Those who are Vulnerable

We recommend that further detail (including supporting data) be added to this Section. In addition, arising from the Police Profile findings in a previous Section, where City Centre Hotspots had been specifically identified, the Committee felt that there was a need to engage with the City Centre Team to raise awareness and

educate across licensed premises, large chain restaurants, hotels etc. in tackling this issue, and this should be specified in this Section.

Supporting Victims to breakaway from CSE

The Action Plan indicates that work on this commenced in January 2016, and it is therefore recommended that this Section be updated, prior to consideration by Cabinet, to support the statements in this Section.

How we will measure our Performance

We recommend that *“progress on implementing this Strategy will be reviewed regularly”* be amended to *“progress on implementing this Strategy will be reviewed quarterly”*.

The Strategy and Action Plan do not specify how performance will be monitored or measured and recommend that performance indicators, targets and costs be added to the Action Plan. It is recommended that this be rectified at this stage to ensure that the Strategy is achievable, measurable and realistic in its expectations.

Our Plan to Implement this Strategy

The draft Strategy states that terms of reference and governance arrangements will be presented to the LSCB and Vulnerable Children and Families Board in January 2016. We recommend that this Section be updated to reflect this, prior to consideration by Cabinet on the 10 March. The output from the LSCB and VC&FB presentations should be stated clearly within the Strategy, including governance arrangements across all agencies.

It is recommended that links to other key Plans and Strategies be included as part of the Strategy implementation.

There are also no details of which body will be holding the LSCB to account to ensure that the Strategy and Action Plan is being properly implemented, monitored and reviewed. As the major inquiries and serious case reviews revealed, the effectiveness of the LSCB is a critical element of managing CSE in an area. Therefore, it is recommended that these arrangements be explicitly stated in the Strategy document being considered by Cabinet on the 10 March.

Action Plan to implement the CSE Strategy

This Committee recommends that this be updated, as some of the actions specified in the Plan should have been achieved and implemented by the date of this response and by the time it is considered by Cabinet in March. Where this is the case, this should be reflected in updates to the Strategy document and Plan.

Performance targets and measures should also be included in the Action Plan to ensure that a thorough and proper review of the Action Plan can be achieved in October 2016.

Children & Young People Scrutiny Committee

16 February 2016

**SWYDDFA'R DIRPRWY ARWEINYDD
DEPUTY LEADER'S OFFICE**

Fy Nghyf / My Ref: CM33619

Eich Nghyf / Your Ref:

Dyddiad / Date: 1st March 2016

Councillor Richard Cook
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Annwyl / Dear Richard

CYP Scrutiny - Child Sexual Exploitation Prevention Strategy

Thank you for your letter of 16th February following the Task and Finish Group's consideration of the above, as endorsed by committee. Thank you also for Appendix A to your letter and the annotated version of sections of the draft strategy which officers will consider and take into account in due course, when revising the strategy.

Much as some of the committee's comments are clearly intended to strengthen the strategy, I am prompted to re-emphasise the nature of the current draft as a working document that enables us to establish a current position. As you will be aware I have made statements to Council on several occasions setting out my commitment to the establishment of a strategy and on ensuring that those at risk of CSE are protected.

However, as the covering report clearly explains, agencies in Wales are facing a very fluid national policy context which is also complicated by the lack of a clear multi-agency picture in any given region concerning prevalence, location, impact or response coordination. Whilst this does not mean that the picture is static or that agencies are failing to work together to address these inherent challenges, it does mean that our strategies need to strike a balance between providing an effective initial platform on the one hand but allowing a degree of revision and amendment as our understanding and attack strengthens. The dilemma we have faced is whether to wait until we 'have all the facts' and have complete coherence, or resolve a position from which we can strengthen our understanding and build and design effective responses. It remains my view that this latter approach is more appropriate to the issues we appear to be facing in Cardiff.

I am puzzled by the suggestion that members believe that "additional data and information that should be available at this juncture" should be added to the

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strategy. Clearly if the data existed there would be no reason not to include it and we would have done so. As the report clearly advises (para 7), the lack of coherent data is precisely the fundamental issue that the Welsh Government is also seeking to address by virtue of its "CSE Data Collection Pilot" with which we are engaged. Given that this exercise is not due to be completed it is difficult to see how the outputs could be incorporated at this point. Now that the report is to be considered by cabinet at a later date than intended at the time of drafting officers will of course take any opportunity to update it appropriately.

Similar considerations apply to the question of performance measures, targets and costs although it would be interesting to know what committee understands or suggests in this regard.

I am not entirely clear what is meant by 'explicit references to governance and lines of accountability' and perhaps colleagues could clarify what it is they believe is needed here? I am aware that we have previously discussed the accountability of the LSCB in committee and that you have been advised that as a statutory body the LSCB is not accountable to any specific authority in itself. Each of its constituent member agencies is in turn accountable to its respective agency or authority and to relevant regulators. In this sense the Director of Social Services has accountability for the Council's safeguarding arrangements, including Cardiff's contribution to the LSCB and he reports to Cabinet and scrutiny on this basis accordingly; CSSIW meanwhile also subjects those arrangements to regulatory scrutiny. It is important to understand however, that in addition, the Council, like other bodies, also owes accountability for the effectiveness of its safeguarding practice, to the LSCB. This does not mean that the LSCB is not open to challenge by others or that the Board is unwilling to advise Cardiff's scrutiny members.

Finally in relation to your comments about links to other plans and strategies I acknowledge that more explicit reference to the Corporate Plan would be helpful but would also wish to reiterate the report's advice about the emergent nature of national, regional and commissioner driven plans and strategies. So again this is a fluid context which the strategy endeavours to take into account.

I hope that this goes some way to clarifying the approach being taken by partners in Cardiff, in concert with the LSCB, to make sure that we have a coherent starting point from which to strengthen prevention and intervention in relation to CSE in Cardiff.

Yn gywir / Yours sincerely



Councillor / Cynghorydd Sue Lent
Deputy Leader / Dirprwy Arweinydd
Cabinet Member for Early Years, Children & Families
Aelod Cabinet Dros Y Blynyddoedd Cynnar, Plant a Theuluoedd

**CABINET SUPPORT OFFICE
SWYDDFA CYMORTH Y CABINET**

My Ref / Fy Ref: 12 January 2016

Your Ref / Eich Ref :

Date / Dyddiad: CM32708

Cllr Richard Cook
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Dear / Annwyl Cllr Cook

Re:- Schools Causing Concern – Committee members Investigation

Thank you for your letter giving provisional findings from the Schools Causing Concern – Committee Members' Investigation. In responding to these provisional findings I would like to also outline a broader account of the ways that the Authority is challenging and supporting all schools to improve, including in particular those causing concern.

As you are aware Estyn are carrying out their next monitoring visit of the local authority during the week beginning 25th January, 2016.

In preparation for the visit the local authority has prepared a self-evaluation report which looks specifically at the progress made in challenging and supporting schools and reducing variation between schools.

Schools have improved as a result of strengthened challenge and support. The quality of the work of challenge advisers whether from the Consortium or Challenge Cymru has improved. There are clearly understood processes in place for reviewing the impact of improvement plans and for holding school leaders and governors to account. Where it is warranted, the local authority has used powers of intervention appropriately. Most recent data (December 2015) shows that in the primary sector, within the context of increasing pupil numbers and increased diversity, 70.5% percent of schools are in standards groups 1 and 2 (up from 48.4% in 2014) and 55.6% of secondary schools are in standards groups 1 and 2 (up from 44.4% in 2014).

The local authority has refined the "Schools Causing Concern" process in order to identify underperformance early in a systematic way. Where schools give rise to concern there is a more systematic approach to holding headteachers and chairs of governors to account for the progress of their school. A programme of half termly (red) or termly (amber) meetings to evaluate progress against the



priorities is implemented. In many cases, there is evidence of greater pace in the improvement.

There is good joint working between the local authority, the Central South Consortium and Challenge Cymru. Through progress reviews, Accelerated Improvement Board (AIB) meetings and the strengthened schools causing concern process there are effective structures in place to consider appropriate escalation of action for schools that are not making progress where necessary including the use of statutory powers.

Where progress is insufficient in scale or pace the local authority formally communicates its concerns to the chair of governors and takes swifter action, when necessary, in respect of statutory powers. In the 2014-2015 academic year the local authority issued five warning notices in accordance with the School Standards and Organisation (Wales) Act 2013 and eight schools received letters of concern which clearly outlined expectations for improvement within clear timescales. In five schools, four secondary and one primary, the local authority used powers of intervention under the Act.

These strengthened arrangements to identify and intervene in underperforming schools are impacting on leadership capacity, standards of attainment and the quality of provision in schools. The outcomes improved in ten out of the fifteen schools that received a warning notice, letter of concern or where formal intervention actions were taken.

There has been appropriate use of interventions to impact on tackling long standing weaknesses in secondary schools. The local authority has used a wider range of approaches to securing improvement in underperforming schools, including appointing experienced leaders with a proven track record from beyond Cardiff, the appointment of new governors, in particular from the world of business, increasing short term resources and structural change linked to our school organisation strategy. Robust working relationships between the local authority, the Consortium and Challenge Cymru are ensuring that schools receive an appropriate degree of challenge. Brokered school to school working is increasing the range of effective support available to meet schools' needs, in particular enabling improving schools to gain first hand access to good practice which they can replicate or adapt in their own context.

Strengthen and broaden the role of challenge advisers

The introduction of the national categorisation has supported improvements in the accuracy of challenge advisers' judgements on schools' performance and on their capacity to improve. This has led to earlier intervention in schools causing concern.

Performance management and quality assurance of challenge advisers' work is now more systematic. Challenge advisers' written reports are quality assured by senior challenge advisers and challenge advisers are accompanied on identified visits to schools to provide a first-hand view of the quality of their work. As a result of these changes there is now stronger oversight of challenge advisers' work and improvements in their practice. This has resulted in a closer alignment

between the judgements of Consortium Challenge Advisers and Estyn inspections.

In schools where challenge advisers have concerns that insufficient or incomplete first hand evidence is collected in a systematic way across the year, the Consortium carries out a whole school review on behalf of the local authority. The findings from such reviews are used to inform the categorisation process and the level and detail of support that is required. This has ensured that the correct school improvement priorities have been identified and, in most cases, has led to an increase in the rate of progress made by the schools.

In the six Challenge Cymru secondary schools there are close and robust working relationships between the Challenge Cymru adviser, the local authority and the school. The local authority Head of Achievement and Inclusion ensures, through the AIB meetings at each of these schools, that there are clear and agreed priorities for each school and that the action in support of the school from Challenge Cymru, the Consortium and the local authority is effectively aligned. Where necessary the Director convenes meetings with a wider range of contributors and with Welsh Government Officials in addition to the AIB cycle.

Developing School to School Support

Support for schools has been strengthened through a more formal brokering of school to school support by challenge advisers and Challenge Cymru advisers.

Structures for school to school working have been strengthened and the transfer of good practice is having a positive impact. A number of Cardiff schools are functioning as 'hubs' with a formal role in fostering the dissemination of good practice through providing training and networking opportunities, for example Cardiff High, Fitzalan High and Llanishen Fach Primary. In addition a number of strong schools are now formally commissioned as improvement partners to work with schools in need of rapid improvement such as Cardiff High at Eastern High, The Bishop of Llandaff High at Cantonian High, Stanwell at the Michaelston and Glyn Derw Federation and Herbert Thompson Primary at Trelai Primary.

In previously lower attaining primary schools in challenging contexts a robust focus on improving the quality of teaching and learning has accelerated the progress made by learners, particularly in the Foundation Phase and lower Key Stage 2. The transference of best practice through school to school support is raising expectations of both pupil progress and end of key stage attainment.

School to school working through school improvement groups has become well embedded. This is enabling the strongest practice to be shared. There are more green schools, an increase in the number of schools in the highest benchmarking quarter (top 25%) and a reduction in the number of schools in the lowest benchmarking quarter.

The local authority has recognised the need to build the capacity of leaders working across the system and to develop succession planning and sustainability. Cardiff has worked in partnership with the Consortium to ensure that the leadership needs in Cardiff are addressed in the suite of leadership

development programmes, in particular the consultant leader programme, the executive headteacher programme and the aspiring to headship programme and leadership in a diverse context to increase the proportion of minority ethnic leaders in Cardiff schools. Cardiff has supported and promoted the development of the role of consultant governors across the region. Twelve consultant governors have been appointed from across the five authorities (four from Cardiff). The consultant governors work with challenge advisers to provide support to other governors and governing bodies where weak governance has been identified.

The Longer Term Strategy for Improvement

The Estyn commentary on Recommendation 4, in October 2015, noted a 'shift in culture' and a more 'strategic approach to building a culture of partnership working', with 'better engagement between the local authority and its schools'. It said that there is a strong emphasis and shared commitment to developing the capacity of schools in Cardiff to lead and support their own improvement'.

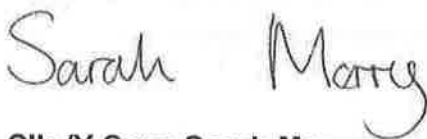
The strategy to develop a 'self-improving school system' promoted by the local authority and the Consortium is now well understood and is being resourced through a shift in funding for improvement activity from the Consortium to schools. Leadership roles spanning more than one school are being clarified and formalised. Accountabilities for the impact of such school to school working are being strengthened.

In order to build on the improvement actions taken in Cardiff over the past two and a half years the authority is developing, in conjunction with headteachers and governors an improvement strategy to 2020, 'Cardiff 2020 - Aiming for Excellence'. The strategy complements the business plan of the consortium and outlines the actions specific to Cardiff which will be taken to continue the improvements already made.

Estyn will report their assessment of the arrangements for supporting and challenging schools, and for addressing schools causing concern following their visit later this month.

I hope that their report, together with the assessments set out above, will be of assistance in helping the Committee to conclude its investigation. I look forward to receiving your final conclusions.

Yours sincerely
Yn gwyir



**Cllr /Y Cyng Sarah Merry
Cabinet Member for Education/
Yr Aelod Cabinet Dros Addysg
Member for Cathays /
Aelod Dros Cathays**