

Scrutiny Report



Performance Scrutiny Committee- Partnerships

Part 1

Date: 4 December 2019

Subject **Fostering Services**

Author Scrutiny Adviser

The following have been invited to attend for this item:

Invitee:	Designation
Sally Jenkins	Head of Children and Young People Services
Joanne Llewellyn	Service Manager Resources, Children and Young People Services

Section A – Committee Guidance and Recommendations

1. Recommendations to the Committee

The Committee is requested:

- a) To consider the Fostering Services Update and the following:
 - Foster Care Recruitment Strategy;
 - Foster Newport Communications Plan.
- b) To determine whether it wishes to make any comments.
- c) To determine the timescale for future monitoring.

2 Context

Background

- 2.1 The Committee approved its Forward Work Programme on 26 June 2019 to include a report requested upon Fostering Services Update in its November Committee Meeting. ***(A link to the Performance Scrutiny Committee – Partnerships held on 26 June 2019 Report and Minute is included in the Background Papers in Section 7 of this report.)***

Previous Consideration of this item

- 2.2 At its meeting on 8 November 2017, following consideration of a report upon a Proposal to Develop Fostering Services on a Regional Basis, the Committee made the following conclusions:
1. That the National Fostering Framework Phase 2 document linked to this report, which shows greater context and rationale behind the regional proposal, should be shared with Cabinet when considering the proposal.
 2. It is important that consultation continues with Foster Carers to feed their views into the ongoing development of this proposal and the need for harmonisation of policies for paying fees and allowances to local authority foster carers, to address the payment of foster care allowances and fees identified by foster carers and staff as a key issue during the consultation programme, was recognised. (Recommendation 9 of the National Fostering Framework Phase 1 Report refers.)
 3. The Budget modelling and forecasting for foster care provision is key and balancing the spending on fostering with the care needs, both of which are rapidly increasing.
 4. The Scottish Model, where legislation removed profit-making private sector foster care provision, could be explored and considered in Wales and nationally look at how to increase the number of carers and ways to maximise the use of the available funding, while reducing the spend on profit-making private sector foster care agencies.

(A link to the Performance Scrutiny Committee – Partnerships held on 8 November 2017 Report and Minute is included in the Background Papers in Section 7 of this report.)

3 Information Submitted to the Committee

- 3.1 The following information is attached to the report for the Committee's consideration:

Appendix A - Update on Fostering Services (Submission of Evidence to Scrutiny)

Appendix 1 - Foster Carer Recruitment Strategy;

Appendix 2 - Foster Newport Communications Plan.

4. Suggested Areas of Focus

4.1 Role of the Committee

The role of the Committee is to:

- **Consider the report upon Fostering Services and the following:**
 - Foster Care Recruitment Strategy;
 - Foster Newport Communications Plan.
- **Assess and make comment on:**
 - The progress being made by the Fostering Service in Wales and developments at both a regional and local basis;
 - How effectively the Services worked together upon developments to date;
 - How the Foster Care Recruitment Strategy and Communications Plan will be implemented. Is there an Action Plan with clear actions and measurable timescales identifying who is responsible for each action;
 - Will the Recruitment Strategy be reviewed before 2022;
 - How is recruitment for placements where there are issues of ethnicity and /or religion being met;
 - What mitigating actions have been put in place to address risks;
 - What barriers are there to achieving necessary outcomes.
- **In drawing its conclusions, the Committee should assess:**
 - What was the overall conclusion on the information contained within the report?
 - Is the Committee satisfied that it has had all of the relevant information to base a conclusion on developments at a Regional and National basis?
 - Does the Committee wish to make any comments upon developments?
 - When should future scrutiny activity be undertaken.

4.2 Suggested Lines of Enquiry

In considering the report, the Committee may wish to explore some of the following areas of focus, which have been adapted from the Welsh Government Guidance on Scrutiny of the Public Services Board:

1. To what extent will objectives be achieved?
2. How effectively have Services worked together to achieve outcomes? What lessons have been learned as a result and how would they be fed back?
3. What have been the resource implications of joint working? Has it maximised the resources available?
4. How has working together impacted on the outcomes in line with the five ways of working from the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act?
5. Have there been any unintended consequences of regional or national developments and if so what impact has this had?
6. How is service user experience being used to influence developments? What methods are being used to evaluate effectiveness and impact?

4.3 Wellbeing of Future Generations (Wales) Act

The Committee's consideration of the report should consider how working in partnership is maximising its contribution to the five ways of working. The following are examples of the types of questions to consider:

5 Ways of Working	Types of Questions to consider:
<p>Long-term The importance of balancing short-term needs with the need to safeguard the ability to also meet long-term needs.</p>	<p>What long-term trends will impact upon Regional and National service developments? How will changes in long term needs impact upon developments in the future?</p>
<p>Prevention Prevent problems occurring or getting worse.</p>	<p>What issues are facing service users at the moment? How is regional and national developments addressing these issues to prevent a future problem?</p>
<p>Integration Considering how public bodies' wellbeing objectives may impact upon each of the well-being goals, on their other objectives, or on the objectives of other public bodies.</p>	<p>Are there any other organisations providing similar / complementary services? How do the regional and national developments impact upon the services of other public bodies and their objectives?</p>
<p>Collaboration Acting in collaboration with any other person (or different parts of the organisation itself).</p>	<p>Who has the Fostering Service been working with to deliver outcomes? How are Fostering Services using knowledge / information / good practice of others to inform / influence outcomes?</p>
<p>Involvement The importance of involving people with an interest in achieving the well-being goals, and ensuring that those people reflect the diversity of the area, which the body serves.</p>	<p>How have Services sought the views of those who are impacted by service delivery? How have Services taken into account diverse communities in decision-making?</p>

Section B – Supporting Information

5 Supporting Information

- 5.1 The Characteristics of Effective Partnership Scrutiny set out in the Guidance for Local Authority Scrutiny Committees on the scrutiny of Public Services Boards issued by Welsh Government in August 2017 can equally be applied to the scrutiny of other joint working and states that:

“Research into the practice of collaborative or joint scrutiny in England and Wales identifies that arrangements are effective when they demonstrate the following characteristics:

Characteristics of effective partnership scrutiny:

- Scrutiny regards itself as a form of ‘critical friendship with positive intent’ in which scrutiny practitioners act as advocates for the success of joint working.
- Collaborative performance is evaluated from the citizen’s perspective.
- Strong efforts are made to understand the complexity of partnership arrangements and to facilitate learning about the culture and assumptions of different organizations.
- Scrutiny creates positive expectations by focussing on issues regarded as useful to the partnership or where there is consensus that ‘things need to change’.
- Scrutiny demonstrates intellectual independence and investigative rigour in all of its activities.
- Scrutiny demonstrates a positive impact by developing clear, timely, evidence-based recommendations aimed at enhancing collaborative performance.
- Scrutiny critically evaluates its own performance utilising partnership perspectives.

(A link to the full Welsh Government Guidance is included in Section 7 of this report in the Background Papers for Members’ information.)

6 Links to Council Policies and Priorities

- Newport City Council’s Corporate Plan and Wellbeing Objectives:

Well-being Objectives	Promote economic growth and regeneration whilst protecting the environment	Improve skills, educational outcomes & employment opportunities	Enable people to be healthy, independent & resilient	Build cohesive & sustainable communities
Corporate Plan Commitments	Thriving City	Aspirational People		Resilient Communities
Supporting Function	Modernised Council			

7 Background Papers

- Performance Scrutiny Committee – Partnerships [26 June 2019 Report \(Item 6\) & Minutes](#)
- Performance Scrutiny Committee – Partnerships [8 Nov 2017 Report \(Item 5 refers\) & Minutes](#)
- [The Essentials – Well-being of Future Generation \(Wales\) Act](#)
- [Welsh Government Guidance for Local Authority Scrutiny Committees on Scrutiny of PSBs](#)
- [Corporate Plan 2017-22](#)