

Report

Council

Part 1

Date: 16th July 2024

Subject Annual Report of the Director of Social Services

Purpose Presentation of the Annual Report of the Director of Social Services as required in the Social Services and Wellbeing (Wales) Act 2014

Author Strategic Director Social Services

Ward All Wards

Summary The Social Services and Wellbeing (Wales) Act 2014 lays out the statutory framework for the presentation of an Annual Report on the work of Social Services. The format and nature of the report is determined by Welsh Government with a requirement for the report to be submitted to both Welsh Government and Care Inspectorate Wales. This is the Annual Report of the Director of Social Services for 2023/24.

Proposal Council is requested:

- 1.1 Council is asked to note the Annual Report of the Director of Social Services.
- 1.2 Council is asked for comments on the content of the Annual Report of the Director of Social Services.

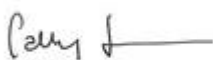
Action by Strategic Director Social Services

Timetable Immediate

This report was prepared after consultation with:

- Head of Adult Services
- Head of Children's Services
- Finance Business Partner

Signed



Background

Under the Social Services and Wellbeing (Wales) Act 2014 all Local Authorities must produce a report considering the work of Social Services. The outline for this report is laid out by Welsh Government.

The report must consider the work of the Local Authority to effectively deliver Social Services within the framework of the Social Services and Wellbeing (Wales) Act 2014. When complete and following submission through the governance of the Local Authority the report must be submitted to both Welsh Government and Care Inspectorate Wales.

The current format of the report has been reviewed. The template for 2024/2025 has recently been released. This will therefore be the last report in this format.

Financial Summary (Capital and Revenue)

This report has no financial implications.

Risks

This report is a retrospective consideration of the work of Social Services. There are risks identified in the Corporate Risk Register for Social Services for 2023/24 with Pressure on Services, Risks to providers and Safeguarding being the key risks. While this report references the challenges this report does not require decisions which would impact on these risks.

Links to Council Policies and Priorities

This report covers the period in which the Corporate Plan was finalised. It reflects the work of the three Service Plans for Adult Services, Children Services and Prevention and Inclusion.

Social Services works across the four Well-being Objectives within the Corporate plan. While this report merely reflects a small part of the quantum of work of Social Services it reflects the span and breadth of provision.

Well-being Objective 1 (Economy, Education and Skills) - Newport is a thriving and growing city that offers excellent education and aspires to provide opportunities for all.

Well-being Objective 2 (Environment and Infrastructure) – Newport is a city that seeks to protect and enhance our environment whilst reducing our carbon footprint and preparing for a sustainable and digital future.

Well-being Objective 3 (Quality Social Care and Community Services) - Newport is a supportive city where communities and care are at the heart of what we do.

Well-being Objective 4 (An Inclusive, Fair and Sustainable Council) - Newport City Council is an inclusive organisation that places social value, fairness and sustainability at its core.

The Social Services and Wellbeing (Wales) Act 2014 underpins the work of Social Services and core to the legislation is the well-being of citizens. Care and support which meets the needs of citizens as they themselves see those needs and work to ensure all are able to live safely and independently are fundamental to the work of both Adult and Children's Services.

Ensuring citizens can live in their own communities with hope for the present and the future drive social care in all the delivery of services.

Options Available and considered.

Council is asked to consider and accept the report from the Director of Social Services. This report is the view of the statutory Director and Council may wish to comment on the report.

Preferred Option and Why

For Council to accept the report.

Comments of Chief Financial Officer

The Director of Social Services annual report gives an overview of the performance of Social Services in 2023-24. Whilst there are no financial implications arising specifically from this report it is important that the service has an awareness and consideration of the financial position when making any decisions. The service area has experienced, and continue to experience, significant financial challenges especially in Children Services. The Elimination of Profit agenda aims to eliminate profit from children in care by April 2027 and this will result in a further financial risk to the authority as in-house provision is increased. This is being funded by a 3-year grant which ends in March 2025. The Service Area is developing a plan which will accommodate the existing numbers within the budget envelope with temporary investment.

There are significant savings to achieve in 24/25 within the social care services and there will be a requirement to identify further efficiencies and savings in 25-26 and onwards across the Council's budgets. This will be an on-going challenge to manage whilst delivering services.

Comments of Monitoring Officer

The Council has a statutory duty under s.144A of the Social Services and Wellbeing (Wales) Act 2014 (as amended by the Regulation and Inspection of Social Care (Wales) Act 2016) to produce an annual report which sets out details of how the Council has performed its social services functions during the previous financial year. This Annual report covers the financial year 2023/24. The report has been produced by the Strategic Director of Social Services and contains the Director's assessment of the performance of the Social Services Directorate. The report is presented to Council for information purposes and comment but not for amendment.

Comments of Head of People, Policy, and Transformation

This statutory report as part of the Social Services and Wellbeing (Wales) Act sets out the Director of Social Services' own assessment of the performance of Social Services in 2023/24.

Social Services is one of the key service areas within the council and the report sets out both the challenges and positive impact that service faced during the year.

HR Business Partners continue to support the service areas with workforce planning and development, recruitment and retention initiatives, management of attendance through the Council's Wellness at Work Policy and increasing Welsh Language skills. Our forthcoming People Plan will further enhance support throughout the Council to create a skilled, supported, and representational workforce.

Scrutiny Committees

Scrutiny considered this Report on 11th June 2024. Comments as noted below, for Council, 16.07.2024:

- The Committee recommended that case studies continue to be included in future reports.
- The Committee were content to recommend the report is forwarded to Cabinet as it stood.

Fairness and Equality Impact Assessment:

- **Wellbeing of Future Generation (Wales) Act**
- **Equality Act 2010**
- **Socio-economic Duty**
- **Welsh Language (Wales) Measure 2011**

As there is no decision required for this report a FEIA has not been completed. This is a retrospective report for the work of 2023/24 and while it holds considerations for the future it is primarily a look back at the work of last year. It will not fundamentally lead to changes in the way services are delivered. Reflecting on the past will inform the future but this is not the core aim of this report.

Summary of impact – Wellbeing of Future Generation (Wales) Act

Well-being of Future Generation (Wales) Act

- **Long term:** the importance of balancing short- term needs with the need to safeguard the ability to also meet long – term needs.
- **Prevention:** How acting to prevent problems occurring or getting worse may help us meet our objectives
- **Integration:** Consider how the proposals will impact on our wellbeing objectives, our wellbeing goals, other objectives, or those of other public bodies
- **Collaboration:** have you considered how acting in collaboration with any other person, or any other part of our organisation could help meet our wellbeing objectives
- **Involvement:** The importance of involving people with an interest in achieving the wellbeing goals and ensuring that those people reflect the diversity of the city we serve.

Throughout this report the core principles of the WFG are referenced and interwoven. Prevention and Inclusion underpins the work of Social Services. Sadly, while much of the direct work of Social Services teams is crisis and risk driven the aim is always to reach a place where citizens can support their own families and manage their own care with as little statutory intervention as possible. Integration with other elements of the Council and public bodies is key to the success of the work of Social Services. Working in collaboration with families and vulnerable adults as well as partner agencies is vital and drives this work. Throughout Social Services we are constantly looking for new ways to fully involve and engage children, young people, parents, vulnerable adults, and carers.

Summary of impact – Equality Act 2010

Social Services are largely reactive services with provision available to across the city. The services must be open to all fairly. Given the nature of vulnerability the two key elements of particular note are age and sex. Young and old are more likely to access services while women are more likely to feature as caregivers.

Summary of impact – Socio-economic Duty

Just as with the Equality Act and the protected characteristics Social Services work with all regardless of their socio-economic position. In Children’s Services the correlation between accessing care and support and poverty has been well documented in research while in adult social care the role of unpaid care givers creates socio-economic challenges for those with high levels of vulnerability.

During 2023/24 the impact of the cost-of-living challenge can be seen in the referrals and requests for support to Social Services and increasing demand for Prevention and Inclusion Services. This impact is reflected throughout this report.

Summary of impact – Welsh language

Within Social Services staff work to “More than Words” to promote the Welsh language. All who are referred to Social Services receive the “Active Offer” of service in Welsh or English. The choice is then

recorded on WCCIS to ensure appropriate service. The report contains a specific section regarding "More than Words".

Crime and Disorder Act 1998

The Youth Justice Services sit within Social Services. The work of Youth Justice is considered separately to meet the requirements of the Youth Justice Board.

Consultation

No comments at this stage

Background Papers

There are no additional background papers.

Dated: 24th June 2024