

Report

Council



Part 1

Date: 25 July 2017

Subject Annual Report of the Director of Social Services

Purpose To present to Council the Annual Report of the Director of Social Services.

Author Mike Nicholson, Strategic Director (People)

Ward City wide

Summary This report is the Director's evaluation of 2016/17 performance for Social Services and it identifies improving performance and, 'value for money' at a time of austerity. We are ready for the requirements of the Social Services and Wellbeing Act 2014. The report takes a backward look through, 'Telling the Story' and forward look by identifying strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats.

The bulk of the report comprises an account of how we are responding to the Future Generations and Social Services and Wellbeing Acts' requirement to deliver on citizen wellbeing. There are six quality standards and we set out a full account of our performance. The evidence demonstrates that we are well placed to continue to provide a comprehensive range of services that deliver improved wellbeing outcomes for citizens of Newport.

Proposal To receive the Annual Report of the Director of Social Services, 2016/17.

Action by Mike Nicholson and James Harris

Timetable Immediate

This report was prepared after consultation with:

- Social Services staff
- Cabinet Member for Social Services
- Monitoring Officer
- Head of Finance
- Head of People and Business Change

Signed

Background

The purpose of this annual report is to set out the local authority's improvement journey in providing services to people in Newport, who access information, advice and assistance, and those individuals and carers in receipt of care and support. This report sets out to demonstrate how Newport Social Services has responded to the new requirements of the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014 and how we have promoted and accounted for the delivery of well-being standards to the citizens of Newport.

The Regulation and Inspection of Social Care (Wales) Act 2016 (R&I) and the ***Social Services and Wellbeing (Wales) Act 2014 (SSWB)*** sets out the requirement for the Director to produce an annual report setting out the performance of Social Services, following the format proscribed by the Local Authority Social Services Annual reports (Prescribed Form) (Wales) Regulations 2016 and is intended for a range of audiences as set out in the Local Authority Annual Social Services Report guidance document.

The intention of the report is not to detail process but to focus on the journey and outcomes achieved and the impact this has had on citizens in Newport. The evidence of our citizens has been used throughout the report as has the contribution of our partner agencies and commissioned services.

Director's Summary of Performance

Introduction

This is my last report as Director of Social Services before I retire and hand over to James Harris who will be the next Strategic Director (People) in Newport City Council. I would therefore like to extend my thanks to all those colleagues who have offered me advice and support over the past four years. In particular I would like to thank the Leader, Cabinet Members, my Heads of Service, managers and practitioners in Social Services and also in Education as well as corporate and colleagues from partner agencies.

I believe that we are at a watershed moment for Social Services as we try to balance the aspirations of the Social Services and Wellbeing Act 2014 and the Future Generations Act 2015 against the continuation of austerity.

This report demonstrates an inspiring journey of transformation in Social Services. We have delivered genuine value for money insofar as we have 'washed our face' financially over the past five years and also contributed to corporate financial challenges. Funding for Social services is now a national and UK wide concern and we have every hope that this will lead to increased investment in the coming 5 years. As Director of Social Services I can say with confidence that without additional investment, it will not be possible to achieve the same record of financial probity without failing in our statutory duties and increasing safeguarding risks to the most vulnerable people in our community.

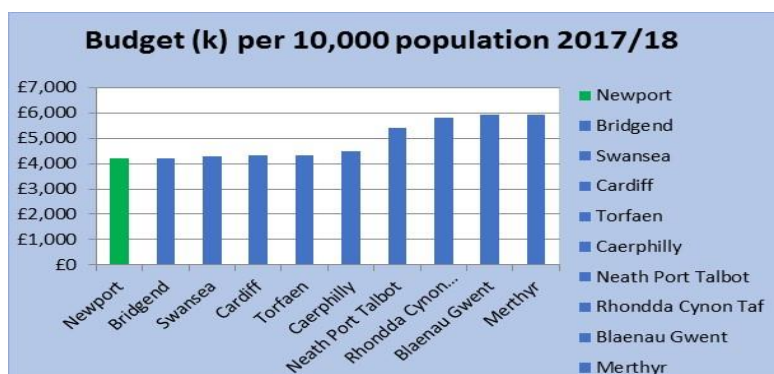
It is our hope that the Welsh Government will avoid this risk by continuing to invest in Social Services at the level they have during 2017/18.

Telling the Story

In a review of our performance over the past five years, 'Telling the Story' (see appendix), it is noted that whilst there has been occasional modest overspending over the past five years, savings outweigh investment by £3.8m.

This was achieved through re-engineering, restructuring, developing and adopting a robust commissioning strategy, enhancement of prevention initiatives and developing alternative provision such as assistive living technology and medication management. Currently Newport has the lowest net budget per 10,000 of the 10 local authorities in its comparator group, see figure 1 below.

Figure 1 – Spend Comparisons with Comparator Authorities – Budget per 10,000 Population 2017/18



Lessons learned include the need to, ‘take everyone with us’ when on a transformation journey and we take time to, ‘celebrate success.’ We realised that we have not always, ‘communicated our achievements’ to corporate colleagues as well as we should have and to a degree the full nature of the transformation has been somewhat hidden.

We also identified a number of key success factors and these include the importance of having, ‘a clear vision, purpose and underpinning values’ (Justice;Hope;Humility). ‘Strong governance’ ensured that projects delivered and a, ‘sense of pace’ was present in our most successful ventures. Developing a ‘successful coalition of change agents’ (Service Managers, the corporate business improvement team and the consultancy Peopletoo) that supported, ‘culture change,’ and the commitment to avoid a blame culture when things went wrong by having a commitment to, ‘capture and apply learning.’

The ‘Telling the Story’ report also highlights the fact that although we have the lowest spend and support less adults in the community than Wales comparators, we support around twice as many people when compared to England. Despite the level of deprivation in Newport, we have significantly lower rates of delayed transfers of care from hospital than the Wales average and we are, ‘mid-table’ compared to English comparators.

We support slightly more children in need than the Wales average and slightly less than the English average. There are lower numbers of children (per 10,000) on the Child Protection Register in Newport than the Wales and English average and we are below the Wales average and about the same as English comparators for the rate of children in care.

Implementing the Act

Throughout last year we used a programme management approach to implement the requirements of the Social Services and Wellbeing Act 2014. I am pleased to say that we have made considerable progress and are well placed to deliver on the letter and the aspirations of the law. The body of this report sets out our performance in delivering the Information, Advice and Assistance, care and support planning and review and distance travelled evaluation required in law. We are particularly proud of our developing preventions network and we have really benefitted from the Wales Government Intermediate Care Fund grant. We are making progress on Welsh Language requirements and have set the autumn as the date for implementing the all-Wales integrated data and case management system and we have electronic information systems for the public such as Dewis and ‘Ask Sarah.’

We need to improve our performance in the use of the distance travelled evaluation system and in compliance with the requirements for the Welsh Language.

CSSIW Feedback

In June 2017 we received a performance review letter from our colleagues in CSSIW and their assessment of our performance in 2016/17 included the following comments:

- Adult Care Management teams, aim to 'provide more effective individual outcomes': *CSSIW, 'we confirmed significant progress towards this aim—closer managerial oversight, coupled with maintaining an appropriate skill mix in each of the revised teams—is key to ensuring that progress made becomes embedded in routine practice.'*
- Relating to Placements for children in care: *CSSIW, 'There continues to be considerable difficulty in finding specialist placements for a small number of young people with very complex support needs—this resulted in difficulties in some of the LA's own provision where children have been placed due to lack of alternatives – the LA is experiencing financial pressures due to use of out of area placements. The LA has as a result put considerable thought into re-shaping one of its in-house residential facilities'*
- *The LA continues to build on its strong partnership with the Health Board, leading to a reduction in DToCs, but has challenges in relation to continuing health care funding*
- *The LA is making progress on implementing, 'More than just Words'*
- *CSSIW will wish to follow up the impact (of resource reductions) on services*

Overall this letter reflects a worry on behalf of the regulator that positive progress may be affected by the impact of austerity, but overall our individual inspection reports and the overall letter reflect the fact that our services are performing well.

Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats (SWOT)

This section of the report takes the form of a SWOT analysis based on the views of senior managers and other colleagues in Social Services. There is much to celebrate with a stable and innovative workforce delivering improving performance and great value for money over the past five years.

Whilst there are considerable threats (mostly financial in an age of austerity), there are also many excellent opportunities.

Promoting and Improving Wellbeing

The main report comprises an account of how we are responding to the Future Generations and Social Services and Wellbeing Acts' requirement to deliver on citizen wellbeing. There are six quality standards and we set out a full account of our performance. The evidence demonstrates that we are well placed to continue to provide a comprehensive range of services that deliver improved wellbeing outcomes for citizens of Newport. We will prepare a delivery plan for the priority outcomes set out below

Wellbeing Outcomes Delivery Priorities (2018/19)

1. We will develop a workforce strategy – as required by CSSIW
2. We will strengthen client informatics – in order to help identify which clients are getting what preventative services in order to target services more effectively through outcome focussed commissioning
3. We will strengthen our work on emotional and mental health services for vulnerable people particularly children in care
4. We will increase social work capacity in YOS – to manage additional referrals arising from targeted police interventions
5. We will improve risk assessments and joint working for young people in need of protection. This is an area identified by inspectors for improvement
6. We will strengthen the voice of carers and vulnerable people in the design and delivery of services

7. We will promote the resilience and independence of citizens in order to avoid creating dependency on traditional forms of service delivery
8. To develop a therapeutic milieu for children in our own residential homes and to explore regional approaches to commissioning residential care for children presently placed out of the Gwent region.
9. To continue the development of person centred care and support in our re-ablement, domiciliary care, residential and nursing care and increasing the use of direct payments and telecare.
10. To develop apprenticeship opportunities in the Council for people who use our services

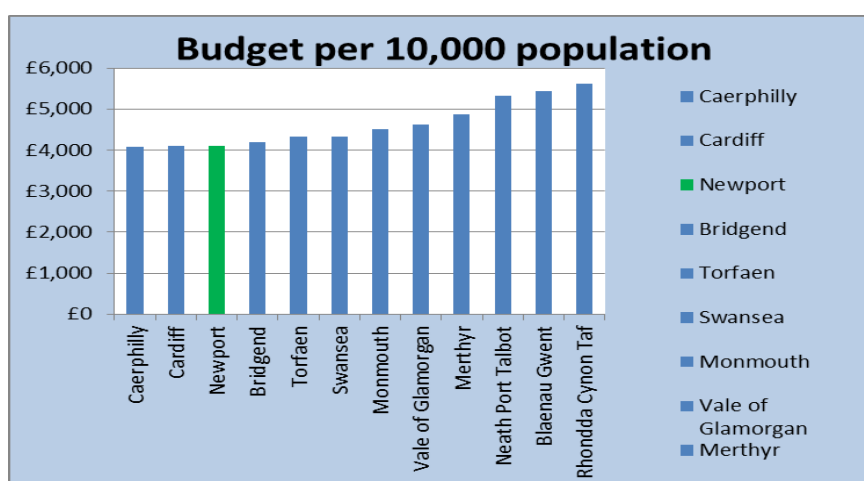
Conclusion

Overall this report sets out a comprehensive account of Social Services performance in the year of implementation of the most transformational legislation in a generation. I believe that the evidence indicates that Social Services has transformed over the past 5 years and that the service provides excellent value for money and has a record of strong, innovative and improving performance that has delivered better outcomes for our most vulnerable citizens. We have told the story of our transformation journey over the past 5 years, set out our future goals and we will be preparing a strategic commissioning plan for the period 2017-2022.

The storm clouds are gathering and without sustained investment from Welsh Government, the service will begin to become less innovative, more pressurised and provide less support to people who are in need. But, whatever the challenges, I can assure the administration and all members that the Social Services workforce will continue to put the needs of the most vulnerable first. We will do everything we can to continue to maintain the high standards of professionalism that is required to protect people from harm and to promote the wellbeing of our most vulnerable citizens.

Financial Summary

Compared to our benchmark and Gwent local authorities, the Social Services Budget for 2016/17 was the third lowest per head of population.



The challenges of delivering Social Services in what is between the 4th or 5th most deprived local authority in Wales (Index for Multiple Deprivation 2014) has led to an overspend at the end of the year. The overspend in Adult Services was £463k which is just over 1% of budget and this is a result of a £1.1m overspend on community care budgets due to more people needing residential and nursing care, and greater costs due to increasingly complex needs. The overspend in Children's Services was £181k which is around 0.8% of budget and the principle challenge is in finding placements for young people

with complex needs and challenging behaviour. This budget alone had a variance of £890k and it is to the credit of staff that the overall position was considerably less.

For the year 2017/18, Social Services has the lowest net budget per 10,000 of the 10 local authorities in its comparator group.

Risks

Risk	Impact of Risk if it occurs (H/M/L)	Probability of risk occurring (H/M/L)	What is the Council doing or what has it done to avoid the risk or reduce its effect	Who is responsible for dealing with the risk?
That the new duties identified in the Social Services and Wellbeing Act 2014 will bring unsustainable financial pressure	H	M	Directors of Social Services (and WLGA) fully engaged with Wales Government on the drafting of regulations and guidance. We are maintaining strong financial controls on day to day decision making in the service	Mike Nicholson, James Harris, Strategic Director (People) Chris Humphrey Head of Adult Integrated Services (Social Care and Health) and Sally Jenkins, Head of Children and Family Services
That users and carers will not have the opportunity to contribute further to our understanding of their experience to inform the development of services in future years	H	L	The plan will be to continue to hold regular and frequent service user and carer forum meetings, as well as making use of a wide variety of other consultative mechanisms that we have put in place for users and carers. We will continue to develop imaginative ways of capturing people's views, comments and experiences	Mike Nicholson, James Harris, Chris Humphrey, Head of Adult Integrated Services (Social Care and Health) and Sally Jenkins, Head of Children and Family Services
The members of staff are not given the opportunity to use this report to gain a greater sense of ownership for the future direction of services and their part in continuous improvement	H	L	The report will continue to be used widely amongst members of staff and partner agencies and used as a vehicle for ensuring a wide ranging discussion in team meetings and management to ensure that it provokes a healthy debate.	Mike Nicholson, James Harris

Links to Council Policies and Priorities

- Single Integrated Plan
 - Skills and Work – Youth Opportunity

- Safe and Cohesive Communities – Antisocial behaviour
 - Safe and Cohesive Communities – Youth Justice
 - Health and Wellbeing – Mental Wellbeing
-
- Newport City Council's Corporate Plan 2012-17
 - Newport 20/20

Options Available and considered

Option 1 -That Council endorses the Annual Report of the Director of Social Services for 2014/15

Option 2 – That Council does not endorse the Annual Report of the Director of Social Services for 2014/15 and sets out specific reasons and recommendations for action

Preferred Option and Why

Option 1 since the Annual Report of the Director of Social Services is a statutory requirement whereby the Director provides their assessment of performance to the Council

Comments of Chief Financial Officer

There are no direct financial consequences stemming from the annual report itself, although it does emphasise the volume of budget reductions that have been achieved over the last five years. As the report says, further budget savings will be very challenging but in the context of the current financial environment and the size of the social care budgets within the overall Council budget, inevitable.

The report also makes reference to significant progress made throughout 16/17 with regards to the implementation of the Social Services and Wellbeing Act 2014. This has brought new financial and operational challenges to the service area. The strategic change programme is continuing and delivering on its proposals. It is essential that due to the high risk nature of the service, it has robust financial management.

Comments of Monitoring Officer

The Director of Social Services has a statutory duty under the Services and Wellbeing (Wales) Act 2014 (as amended by the Regulation and Inspection of Social Care (Wales) Act 2016) to produce an annual report to the Council, setting out the performance of Social Services in delivering its social care functions during the past year. This Annual report has been prepared in accordance the Local Authority Social Services Annual Reports (Prescribed Form) (Wales) Regulations 2016 and statutory guidance as set out in the Local Authority Annual Social Services Report guidance document. The Report also sets out how the Council has promoted and delivered well-being standards for service users and carers in need of care and support, in accordance with the six well-being outcomes. In accordance with the Council's performance management framework, the Scrutiny Committee is being asked to consider and comment on the adequacy of the draft report in addressing the issues identified. The Report confirms that the Council has made good progress in implementing the Services and Wellbeing (Wales) Act, in a structured and programmed manner, and is meeting the requirements of the Future Generations and Well Being Act in delivering on citizen wellbeing. The final Report will need to be presented to full Council

Comments of Head of People and Business Change

This report sets out the Director of Social Services' own assessment of the performance of Social Services in 2016-17 as part of his statutory role. Whilst there are no direct staffing implications that arise specifically from the report there are potentially implications in the future, either as a result of on-going financial uncertainty or the further implementation of the Social Services and Wellbeing Act or Wellbeing of Future Generations Act. These will need to be considered as they arise and are not the purpose of this report.

The report rightly points out the significant additional pressure applied through the implementation of both Acts and how Social Services is responding and how it will continue to do so.

Comments of Cabinet Member

The Cabinet Member supports the position set out by the Director of Social Services in his report. Recognising the constraints and pressures under which we are operating it is heartening to see that service performance is improving year on year. In addition over the past 5 years, the savings made by Social Services has outstripped additional funding given to the service. This represents good value for money to the citizens of Newport.

Looking ahead, I am mindful of the fact that the Council may be facing even more financial constraints and Social Services will have to play its part. I remain concerned about the impact of austerity upon the ability of Social Services to deliver on its core purpose of safeguarding and promoting the wellbeing of our most vulnerable citizens.

Comments of Scrutiny (Response from Director of Social Services in Italics)

Content of the Annual Report

The Committee commended the Social Services Team on the positive, innovate and creative approach being taken within the service area, and the references to the detail within the report on the journey of transformation within social services to develop and improve the outcomes for service users.

The Committee noted the changes made to the report structure from previous reports, and agreed that the new format contained appropriate levels of detail, was informative and was easy to read making it accessible and understandable. Members felt that the report provided valuable insight on how services were delivered and the impact that it was having on service users

Performance of the Service Area

1. The Committee noted the positive progress being made within both Adult Services and Children and Young People service areas and noted that staff turnover was not an issue at the moment within the teams. Members agreed that going forward, it was fundamental that the service areas continue to 'do the basics' well and support staff within their teams to enable them to undertake their roles effectively. To make sure that a problem does not develop in the future, this should include continuing to ensure that appropriate managerial support and training is provided for social workers, and that caseloads remain at a manageable level.

Agreed by Director of Social Services

2. Within the report, the Director outlines concerns with the ongoing financial situation and the severe risk to the service if funding for social services continues to decrease. The Committee were concerned about this risk and the potential impact on service users as some of the most vulnerable people. Members agreed that this was a key risk within the service area, and that further consideration should be given by the Cabinet as to how the Council is mitigating this risk, and developing a more strategic approach to budgeting to protect vulnerable service users in this area.

This is a matter for Cabinet under advice from officers during the MTRP process

Implementation of the Objectives

3. Members were advised by the Director that a Strategic Commissioning Strategy would underpin this report, which would contain a delivery plan for how the service would implement the

objectives. The Committee requested that detail of any costs associated with implementing these objectives be outlined within the delivery plan.

Agreed by Director of Social Services

4. Implementation of the objectives will be key to the continued improvement within social services. Members agreed that the delivery plan should be monitored on a regular basis and that any update provided should cover:
 - How the objectives are being implemented;
 - How progress is being measured
 - How the voice of service users was being sought and considered in determining progress;
 - An assessment of what impact the implementation was having on service users.

Agreed by Director of Social Services

5. Members agreed that Regional working should be considered to address outcomes for looked after children. It was noted that this was captured within the Quality Standard E Objective; Members agreed that this would be a key area to explore and agreed to highlight this to the Cabinet.

Supported by Director of Social Services

Areas for further consideration

6. Consideration should be given to role of Councillors as Corporate Parents and how the Council can be developed to ensure positive experiences and outcomes for looked after children.

Agreed by Director of Social Services - we will bring forward a work plan to the Corporate Parenting Committee

7. The report highlighted key areas that would warrant further investigation and monitoring going forward. It was anticipated that this would be captured within the delivery plan / Strategic Commissioning Strategy through the delivery of the objectives. The Committee agreed to refer the monitoring of this delivery plan, to the Performance Scrutiny Committee – People for consideration for inclusion on their work programme.

Members felt that this would be a key document that would provide evidence to the Scrutiny Committee when undertaking their role in evaluating the performance of the service area, and give an important indication of progress in key areas of weakness identified.

Agreed by Director of Social Services

8. The Committee agreed to highlight the following issues to the Performance Scrutiny Committee – People to consider for inclusion in their work programme:
 - Outcomes for children in care and the exploration of regional working within this area to improve experience of looked after children ;
 - Participation and involvement – how service users are consulted on decisions;
 - Preventative services – the role of preventative services in reducing the demand for more acute services, and what evidence can be provided and investment in these types of services has an impact on outcomes for service users.
 - Site visits to the facilities.

Agreed by Director of Social Services

In concluding the meeting, the Chairperson noted that it was the Directors last attendance at Scrutiny prior to his retirement at the end of July. The Chairperson thanked the Director of Social Services for his

work over the last 5 years in this role, and commented that the Director had been invaluable in progressing improvements within one of the most important services within the authority.

Local issues

City-wide report

Equalities Impact Assessment and the Equalities Act 2010

Not applicable to this report

Children and Families (Wales) Measure

Not applicable to this report

Wellbeing of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015

This report sets out how Social Services has responded to the following requirements:

- 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.

Crime and Disorder Act 1998

Not applicable to this report

Consultation

There is a continuing programme throughout the year of meeting with users and carers to help people make their contribution to the continuing intelligence on which my annual report to Council will be built.

Background Papers

Telling the story [‘Telling the Story’](#) (pdf),