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Bridgend County Borough Council
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Our ref / Ein cyf:
Your ref / Eich cyf:

Date / Dyddiad: 29 October 2015

Dear Councillor,

CHILDREN & YOUNG PEOPLE OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

A meeting of the Children & Young People Overview & Scrutiny Committee will be held in the Council Chamber, Civic Offices Angel Street Bridgend CF31 4WB on **Wednesday, 4 November 2015 at 2.00 pm.**

AGENDA

1. Apologies for Absence
To receive apologies for absence (to include reasons, where appropriate) from Members/ Officers.
2. Declarations of Interest
To receive declarations of personal and prejudicial interest (if any) from Members/Officers in accordance with the provisions of the Members Code of Conduct adopted by Council from 01 September 2008 (including whipping declarations).
3. Approval of Minutes 3 - 10
To receive for approval the minutes of the Children and Young People Overview and Scrutiny Committee of 23 September 2015.
4. Forward Work Programme Update 11 - 16
5. Children With Disabilities Programme 17 - 22
Invitees
Susan Cooper, Corporate Director, Social Services and Wellbeing
Cllr Hailey Townsend, Cabinet Member, Childrens Social Services and Equalities
Laura Kinsey, Head of Safeguarding and Family Support
Pete Tyson, Planning and Contract Management Officer
6. Strategic Review Into The Development And Rationalisation Of The Curriculum And Estate Provision Of Primary, Secondary And Post 16 Education 23 - 30
Invitees

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Deborah McMillan, Corporate Director – Education and Transformation
Cllr Huw David, Deputy Leader
Nicola Echanis, Head of Strategy Commissioning and Partnerships
Sue Roberts, Group Manager – School Improvement
John Fabes, 14-19 Co-ordinator

7. Social Services Annual Reporting Framework 31 - 34

8. Urgent Items

To consider any item(s) of business in respect of which notice has been given in accordance with Part 4 (paragraph 4) of the Council Procedure Rules and which the person presiding at the meeting is of the opinion should by reason of special circumstances be transacted at the meeting as a matter of urgency.

Yours faithfully

P A Jolley

Assistant Chief Executive Legal and Regulatory Services

Distribution:

Councillors:

PA Davies
DK Edwards
N Farr
EP Foley

Councillors

CA Green
PN John
M Jones
G Phillips

Councillors

RL Thomas
C Westwood
DBF White

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE CHILDREN & YOUNG PEOPLE OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE HELD IN THE COUNCIL CHAMBER, CIVIC OFFICES ANGEL STREET BRIDGEND CF31 4WB ON WEDNESDAY, 23 SEPTEMBER 2015 AT 2.00 PM

Present

Councillor EP Foley – Chairperson

DK Edwards
M Jones

N Farr
G Phillips

CA Green
C Westwood

PN John
DBF White

Registered Representatives and Co-opted Members:

Mr W Bond
Mr T Calahane
Mr K Pascoe

Officers:

Darren Mepham	Chief Executive
Rachel Keepins	Democratic Services Officer – Scrutiny
Sarah Daniel	Democratic Services Officer – Committees

Invitees:

Cllr H Townsend	Cabinet Member, Childrens Social Services & Equalities
Catherine Parry	Interim Head of Safeguarding and Assessment
Susan Cooper	Corporate Director - Social Services & Wellbeing
Jane Illes	Unison Trade Union Representative
Zenda Caravaggi	GMB Trade Union Representative
Trefor Lewis	Unite Trade Union Representative

Cllr H David	Deputy Leader
Nicola Echanis	Head of Strategy Partnerships & Commissioning
Mark Lewis	Group Manager - Integrated Working
David Wright	Partnership Manager Integrated Partnership Support Team
Sarah Keefe	Senior Development Worker - Central Hub
Owen Shepherd	Engagement and Progression Coordinator - Central Hub

186. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from the following Officers/ Members for the reasons so stated:

Councillor P Davies – Leave
Councillor R Thomas – Work Commitments
Mr R Thomas – Leave
Deborah McMillan – Unwell

187. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None

188. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

The minutes of the Children and Young People Overview and Scrutiny Committee of 29 July 2015 were approved as a true and accurate record of the meeting

189. FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME UPDATE

The Scrutiny Officer presented a report to the Committee of the items due to be considered at the Committee's meeting to be held 4 November 2015 and sought confirmation of the information required for the subsequent scheduled meeting to be held on 5 January 2015. She also presented a list of further potential items for prioritisation by the Committee

Conclusions

Members requested that an Item on Residential Remodelling be brought to the November Committee meeting and defer the Permanency and Placement Strategy and Early Help Strategy update to after April 2016

190. RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION OF SOCIAL WORKERS

The Scrutiny Officer presented a report to Committee with information in relation to the recruitment and retention of social workers. The report set out some of the key activities undertaken in Bridgend County Borough Council since the previous report presented to the Committee in October 2014 and responded to issues which had been raised in relation to:

- Local Authority Pay Scales
- Provision of practice placements
- Support given to newly qualified social workers
- Staff engagement, including exit interviews and consultation
- Agency Workers

Members were concerned that 81% of social workers had less than two years' experience at the Authority; they asked Officers how they were managing the issue

The Corporate Director – Wellbeing stated that Childrens Social Services are continuing to see signs of improvement which is reflected in the performance indicators. She added that in terms of the retention of Social Workers the Authority has introduced a more robust staff induction and development programme which included a coaching and mentoring programme with their newly implemented Assistant Team Managers and Team Managers to ensure that staff felt supported. She further added that the Authority had recently completed their Annual Reporting Framework and had received recommendations back from CSSIW which they had acknowledged and put plans in place to address issues raised. She agreed that there were still issues which are currently being addressed regarding the retention of social workers which she hoped to evidence improvement at a future meeting.

Members questioned how the increasing amount of pressure being placed on Social Workers in relation to high caseload numbers were being managed.

The Corporate Director – Wellbeing confirmed that improving caseload allocation is a priority for the department which they are looking to drive down to a manageable level to efficiently support families. A new case management system had gone live in April 2015 which made it easier for the Social Worker to report on cases so they are able to spend

more time with families, instead of at a computer completing paperwork. This has enabled them to better allocate caseloads to Social Workers so they have a balance of complexity of cases. The Corporate Director- Wellbeing added that flexible working policies were also in place to allow staff to have a greater work/ life balance.

Members questioned whether the salary scales for Social Workers was a contributing factor for the low numbers of experienced Social Workers staying in the Authority. They also questioned the comparison of salary for Social Workers employed directly by the Authority and through an Agency.

The Corporate Director – Wellbeing stated that most Local Authorities have a two tier pay system in place for Social Workers which do not take into account career progression. She confirmed that Social Workers at the Authority start on the same entry salary and after two years they complete a competency test and would then be progressed to the appropriate level according to their skill. The Corporate Director – Wellbeing added that she would need to get comparison figures of salary for agency and permanent social workers and feedback to the Committee

Members asked how the traineeship scheme works and if it would be more cost effective to train Social Workers in house, instead of paying high costs to recruitment agencies to employ Social Workers on a temporary basis. They also queried once trainees had completed their apprenticeship if they were under contract to stay with the Authority.

The Corporate Director – Wellbeing confirmed that the Authority operates a traineeship scheme where trainee Social Workers costs had been paid for by the Authority for two years, they then need to complete two years for the Authority as a qualified social worker. She added that the costs are high as all fees are paid for and no mechanism was in place to stop the Social Worker leaving after they had completed their contract. She confirmed that they currently have one trainee Social Worker at the Authority.

The Trade Union representative for Unison had received feedback from TU Members and highlighted the feedback she had received from them which was:

- Social Workers felt improvements were slow.
- There was too much emphasis on PI's rather than the support of families
- There was a lack of support for Social Workers that were off work suffering from stress and anxiety
- Lack of support for staff having to deal with additional caseloads due to staff sickness
- IT design systems need to be simpler
- Fear if something goes wrong there is no support and felt they are working in a "blame culture"

Conclusions

1. Members expressed concern over the fact that 81% of the Authority's Social Workers had less than two years' experience. The Committee proposed that this should be used as a benchmark for future monitoring and reports as a measure of success.
2. Due to the unfortunate timing of the report; in that Officers reported that it was a little early to see the full results of the consultation exercise and analysis, and that there was a need to revisit aspects of the consultation exercise to delve deeper into particular areas; the Committee agreed to reconsider the item of Recruitment and Retention of Social Workers within the next six to nine months.

As part of this continued work, the Committee requested that the following points are considered and subsequently reported back to the Committee:

- Further analysis of work demands – As this had had the lowest satisfaction rating across all job types but, in Members' opinion, did not refer to dissatisfaction with working environment, as suggested in the report;
 - A comparison of salaries for those social workers directly employed by the Authority with and Agency staff;
 - A cost analysis of how much the Authority pays for agency staff compared with the cost of internal traineeships;
 - Examples of best practice from comparator Local Authorities UK wide;
 - A comparison and analysis of Adult Social Workers experiences to those of Children Social Workers;
 - Whether or not there is any correlation between the high numbers of social workers with less than two years of experience and the high numbers of LAC. Members referred to evidence reported by trade union representatives that there is a fear factor present with social workers at the moment that something is going to go wrong. Members queried whether fear, coupled with inexperience in the job, could affect their confidence and result in over caution when determining whether to take a child in to care or not.
3. The Committee commented on the important role Trade Unions played, in working practices and in Scrutiny, and asked that they be engaged in any future consideration of this topic.
4. The Committee agreed to engage with social workers either through inviting a couple to attend a Scrutiny Committee or to visit social workers in their own working environment. The idea behind this would be for Members to try to gain a better understanding of 'a day in the life of a social worker', in order to grasp what demands were being placed on them and where possible changes may assist.

Recommendations

Members referred back to their meeting in October 2014 where they had drafted recommendations relating to the standardisation of Social Workers pay scales and Social Workers training. The Committee had postponed sending these recommendations to Cabinet based on legal advice to obtain more evidence.

From the information contained within the report, the Committee felt that there were indications that pay could be an associated factor affecting the retention of Social Workers. This was further supported by discussions in the meeting relating to the Garthwaite Report: 'Social Work – A Profession to Value' whose recommendations incorporated the notion of standardised pay scales. This, along with evidence presented from Trade Union representatives that clients had specifically fed back on the need for an equal pay and grading system across Wales led the Committee to determine that the following recommendations previously agreed by the Scrutiny Committee in October 2014 be sent to Cabinet (with minor amendments):

The Committee recommends that Chief Officers and Cabinet Members engage with and lobby Welsh Government, WLGA/ADSS and CCW to achieve systemic changes in the following areas:

- *A standardised set of salary scales and conditions in line with the systems used for teachers for all social workers in Wales to ensure a 'no-poaching' approach, similar*

to that which is being introduced for foster carers whereby payments are harmonised across local authorities. The Committee propose that the Garthwaite report be revisited and used as a basis for evidence to support this proposal.

- *Place a duty on all Welsh local authorities to provide adequate practice placement opportunities for students going into children's safeguarding to better prepare them for their future career and also compel all authorities to provide a proportionate number of training placements.*

The Committee also requested that the Chair of the Children and Young People Overview and Scrutiny Committee meet with the WLGA Presiding Officer and the WLGA Health and Social Care Spokesperson to discuss these recommendations and the views and concerns of the Committee.

Members expressed concern over the ongoing situation with recruitment and retention of social workers and feared that this would continue. The Committee queried what was unique to Bridgend in terms of Social Workers and LAC as it has previously been reported to the Committee that Bridgend's LAC figures are far higher than some neighbouring LAs where you would expect it to be the opposite, (based on such things as social deprivation). Members agreed that in order to understand what changes need to be made to attract and retain Social Workers, a full understanding of need was essential.

- *The Committee therefore recommend that a Strategic Analysis of demand be undertaken looking into the day to day demands on social workers; for example caseloads, types of cases, numbers of LAC; in comparison to other Local Authorities.*
- *Members also proposed that a reputational piece of work be carried out in parallel to this to determine whether there is a link between the reputation of Bridgend with respect to demand on Social Workers.*

Additional Information

Members requested additional information as to why 12 out of the 25 leavers since August 2014 were not available to participate in the Exit Interviews.

The Committee requested that they receive a copy of the CSSIW report in response to the Authority's Annual Social Services Report when it is published.

191. **YOUTH ENGAGEMENT AND PROGRESSION FRAMEWORK**

The Scrutiny Officer presented a report to Committee with an update on progress implementation of the Youth Engagement and Progression (YE&P) Framework and the Youth Service Review. She explained that the YE&P Framework is key in reducing the number of young people not in education, employment or training (NEET). As part of the Framework, Welsh Government requested each Local Authority to complete an action plan by the 14 March 2014 outlining how they were going to take forward implantation of the Framework. In Bridgend this was initially developed by a multi-agency task and finish group; however, responsibility for developing a more focussed implementation plan has come under the remit of the Engagement and Progression Coordinator (EPC) and members of a newly formed YE&P Framework steering group.

Members asked if a Keeping in Touch Officer was still employed to support the Framework

The Family Support Services Manager stated that Integrated Working and Family Support now has six full time Lead Workers which are funded by the Education Improvement Grant that are allocated to each of the Authorities Secondary and Special Schools. Their priorities were to identify young people with the greatest need through the Authority's Early Identification tool which would then enable them to reduce the number of NEETS and also reduce a young person's vulnerability towards becoming NEET.

Members questioned how many hours of support from staff at the Authority was being offered to the Youth Council.

The Family Support Services Manager stated that three workers currently invest time in sub groups that had been set up with the Youth Council, he explained that they were still being developed so was unable to give the Committee specific number of hours at this time.

Members felt that that early intervention was key to the prevention of young people becoming NEET and suggested intervention earlier than Key Stage 3 & 4 to possibly Key Stage 2 & 3, especially in socially deprived areas where the vulnerability is higher. The Partnership Manager - Integrated Partnership Support Team stated that they were restricted by the Schools budget regulations that are set by Welsh Government on an annual basis. Members asked for further clarification of the regulations to be shared with the Committee.

Members asked if the Youth Engagement and Progression Framework were being proactive to prevent Looked After Children (LAC) becoming NEET as they were identified through the Vulnerability Assessment Profile as a potential high risk at becoming NEET; and Members queried if the Authority could do more as a potential employer.

The Partnership Manager – Integrated Partnership Support Team stated that they work closely with Corporate HR internally and also with external bodies such as Careers Wales. He stated they have a team of three Engagement and Transition workers to provide lead work support for post 16's. He added that they focus on potential apprenticeships and work opportunities for post 16 LAC in the Borough

Conclusions

Members requested further information in relation to how many hours of support from the Authority was being offered to the Youth Council.

Members asked that they receive the Outcome Report and Action Plan resulting from the Youth Review Consultation.

The Committee requested that they receive further information as to how the FE College were engaging and assisting schools regarding reducing the number of young people becoming NEET.

Members expressed concerns over the inability of schools to plan an alternative curriculum to enable them to intervene at Key Stage 2/3 with pupils who are potential future NEET, due to the constraints of a yearly budget instead of a Medium Term Financial Strategy. Whilst Officers reported that this was due to regulations under the Budget Statement for schools, Members argued that the statement had flexibility that if a school could prove it had a robust plan for spending the money they would be allowed to keep it. Members were concerned that this allowance was not being permitted and therefore requested further clarification of the subject and its regulations

192. URGENT ITEMS

None

The meeting closed at 4.45 pm

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REPORT TO ADULT SOCIAL CARE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

4 NOVEMBER 2015

REPORT OF THE ASSISTANT CHIEF EXECUTIVE – LEGAL AND REGULATORY SERVICES

FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME UPDATE

1. Purpose of Report

1.1 The purpose of this report is to:

- a) present the items due to be considered at the Committee’s meeting to be held 5 January 2015 and seeks confirmation of the information required for the subsequent scheduled meeting to be held on 21 January 2015;
- b) present a list of further potential items for prioritisation by the Committee.

2. Connection to Corporate Improvement Objectives / Other Corporate Priorities

2.1 The key improvement objectives identified in the Corporate Plan 2013-2017 have been embodied in the Overview & Scrutiny Forward Work Programmes. The amended Corporate Improvement Objectives adopted by Council on 25 February 2015 formally set out the improvement objectives that the Council will seek to implement between 2013 and 2017. The Overview and Scrutiny Committees engage in review and development of plans, policy or strategies that support the Corporate Themes.

3. Background

3.1 At its meeting on 29 July 2015, the Children and Young People Overview and Scrutiny Committee determined its Annual Forward Work Programme for 2015/16.

4. Current Situation / Proposal

Meetings of the Children and Young People Overview and Scrutiny Committee

4.1 In relation to the Committee’s next scheduled meeting to be held on 5 January 2015, the table below lists the items to be considered and the invitees due to attend.

Topic	Invitees	Specific Information Requested	Research to be Undertaken by the Overview & Scrutiny Unit
Annual School Performance (plus Attendance Strategy update)	Deborah McMillan, Corporate Director – Education and Transformation Cllr Huw David, Deputy Leader Sue Roberts, Group Manager – School	Annual school performance report from CSC (content TBC following workshop session between Committee Members and CSC), including Consortium Annual report.	Detail research / To be confirmed

Topic	Invitees	Specific Information Requested	Research to be Undertaken by the Overview & Scrutiny Unit
	Improvement Paul Wolstenholme, Bridgend Link Adviser Robert Hopkins, Head of Service, CSC Nicola Echanis, Head of Strategy Commissioning and Partnerships Hannah Woodhouse, Managing Director - CSC Cllr Chris Elmore - Chair of Joint Committee - CSC	Possibly also include update on Attendance Strategy.	
Residential Remodelling	Susan Cooper, Corporate Director, Social Services and Wellbeing Cllr Hailey Townsend, Cabinet Member, Childrens Social Services and Equalities Laura Kinsey, Head of Safeguarding and Family Support Natalie Silcox, Group Manager, Childrens Regulated Services	To review the way residential care is provided and to consider options and alternative ways of delivery.	
Member and School Engagement Panel Annual Report	N/A	To provide Members with an update on the work of the Member and School Engagement Panels.	Detail research / To be confirmed

4.2 The table below lists the item to be considered and the invitees due to attend in respect of the subsequent meeting of the Committee to be held on 21 January 2015.

Topic	Invitees	Specific Information Requested	Research to be Undertaken by the Overview & Scrutiny Unit
Directorate Budget Consultation Process	21 January 2016	MTFS Proposals for 2016-17	Detail research / To be confirmed

4.3 The table below lists all potential items that the Committee received at their meeting on 29 July 2015, which are put to the Committees for reprioritisation as appropriate.

Topic	Proposed Date	Specific Information Requested	Research to be Undertaken by the Overview & Scrutiny Unit
Education of LAC	9 March 2016	Priority arisen out of Business Planning Process – IP2 Working Together To Raise Ambitions And Drive Up Educational Achievement – Joint report between Education and Children’s Social Services providing evidence of the work that is being undertaken and the support that is being provided to target and raise educational performance for children in care.	Detail research / To be confirmed
FSM Attainment Gap	9 March 2016	Priority arisen out of Business Planning Process – IP2 Working Together To Raise Ambitions And Drive Up Educational Achievement – report detailing the work that is being undertaken and the support that is being provided to target and raise educational performance for children from socially deprived backgrounds – how do schools differentiate work for those who are in receipt of FSM? What specific support are they offering these pupils?	Detail research / To be confirmed

Extra Items for Consideration

4.4

- a) Permanency and Placement Strategy and Early Help Strategy Updates - Monitoring of action plans – what outcomes have been achieved as a result of this preventative work? What evidence is there to support this? Eg. Reduced numbers of CIN/LAC, reduced number of placements, increase in adoptions. Budget reduction CH25: Reduction in Safeguarding LAC numbers and related reduction in costs.
- a) Detail regarding the joining up of the two strategies into one – update on reorganisations and restructures
- b) Schools Task Group - Outcome of consultation and any proposed decision going before Cabinet;

- c) Exclusions in Schools – Deferred from 11 May meeting due to report containing insufficient information;
- d) Nursery Education Years Provision – as yet the Directorate do not know if this will be considered this year – if so, the Committee will need to consider it a priority and factor it into the FWP;
- e) Child Sexual Exploitation – Members have asked that this be considered as a priority item in the next Annual FWP after March 2016;
- f) Equality in Schools – is being considered by the Equalities Committee but has been raised as an issue specific to schools with issues around its education/training under PSE, (links also to other areas and issues of PSE);
- g) Report on the Consortia - detailing what services are being transferred to them
- h) Childrens Change Programme (Could just be a presentation outside of Committee);
- i) Teenage Pregnancies – Possible LSB project.

Corporate Parenting

- 4.5 Corporate Parenting is the term used to describe the responsibility of a local authority towards looked after children and young people. This is a legal responsibility given to local authorities by the Children Act 1989 and the Children Act 2004. The role of the Corporate Parent is to seek for children in public care the outcomes every good parent would want for their own children. The Council as a whole is the ‘corporate parent’ therefore all Members have a level of responsibility for the children and young people looked after by Bridgend.¹
- 4.6 In this role, it is suggested that Members consider how the services within the remit of their Committee affects children in care and care leavers, and in what way can the Committee can therefore assist in these areas.
- 4.7 Scrutiny Champions can greatly support the Committee in this by advising them of the ongoing work of the Cabinet-Committee and particularly any decisions or changes which they should be aware of as Corporate Parents.

4.8 Sickness

The Corporate Resources and Improvement Committee agreed that, in light of the figures reported for Sickness Absence for 2014-15 and the Committee’s previous comments and concerns, there was a need for further examination of this particular area. Given the fact that this subject was cross-directorate and also reports that a number of concerns have been raised in other Scrutiny Committee’s it was agreed that a Joint Research and Evaluation Panel for Sickness Absence be established comprising of the Chair and one other Member from each Scrutiny Committee.

5. Effect upon Policy Framework and Procedure Rules

- 5.1 The work of the Children and Young People Overview and Scrutiny Committee relates to the review and development of plans, policy or strategy that form part of

¹ Welsh Assembly Government and Welsh Local Government Association ‘*If this were my child... A councillor’s guide to being a good corporate parent to children in care and care leavers*’, June 2009

the Policy Framework and consideration of plans, policy or strategy relating to the power to promote or improve economic, social or environmental well being in the County Borough of Bridgend.

6. Equality Impact Assessment

6.1 None

7. Financial Implications

7.1 None.

8. Recommendations

8.1 The Committee is recommended to:

- (i) Note the topics due to be considered at the meeting of the Committee for 5 January 2015 and confirm if it requires any additional specific information to be provided by the invitees listed or the Overview & Scrutiny Unit;
- (ii) Determine the invitees to be invited to attend, any specific information it would like the invitees to provide and any research that it would like the Overview & Scrutiny Unit to undertake in relation to its meeting for 21 January 2015;
- (iii) Revisit and consider the list of future potential items for the Committees Forward Work Programme and reprioritise as the Committees feels appropriate;
- (iv) Nominate a Member of the Committee to join the Chair on the Joint Research and Evaluation Panel for Sickness Absence.

Andrew Jolley,
Assistant Chief Executive – Legal & Regulatory Services

Contact Officer: Rachel Keepins, Scrutiny Officer

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Postal Address: Democratic Services - Scrutiny
Bridgend County Borough Council,
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Background documents: None

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BRIDGEND COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

REPORT TO CHILDREN & YOUNG PEOPLE OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

4 NOVEMBER 2015

REPORT OF THE CORPORATE DIRECTOR – SOCIAL SERVICES AND WELLBEING

CHILDREN WITH DISABILITIES PROGRAMME

1.0 Purpose of Report

- 1.1 To inform Children and Young People Overview and Scrutiny of the work being undertaken as part of the Children with Disabilities Transformation programme, which focuses on the review of in-county residential provision and respite services for children with disabilities.

2.0 Connection to Corporate Plan

- 2.1 This report links to the following improvement priorities in the Corporate Plan:

- Working together to raise ambitions and drive up educational achievement;
- Working with children and families to tackle the problems early;
- Working together to make best use of our resources.

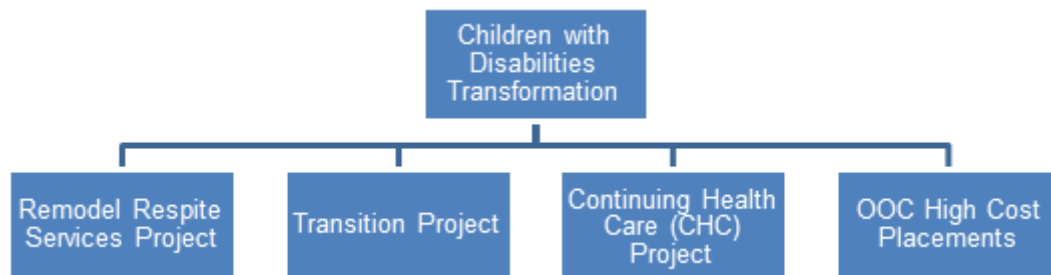
Plus the following background document:

- Medium Term Financial Strategy 2014-2018 (MTFS).

3.0 Background

- 3.1 The Safeguarding and Family Support Change Programme is a key element of the Bridgend Transformation Programme, and is the mechanism to deliver and manage change under Improvement Priority Three: Working with children and families to tackle problems early.

- 3.2 Children with Disabilities (CWD) Transformation is a sub-programme that sits beneath the Safeguarding and Family Support Change Programme, within which four distinct work areas have been identified:



- 3.3 A CWD Programme Board has been created to oversee the programme, provide a strategic direction and to monitor progress. The board comprises of colleagues from Social Services and Wellbeing Directorate, Children's Directorate, Finance,

Human Resources, Abertawe Bro Morgannwg University Local Health Board, and representatives from local residential care providers for disabled children. Work undertaken to date has focused on reviewing respite services and reviewing the high-cost out-of-county placements.

- 3.4 In May 2015, a report was presented to Children and Young People Overview and Scrutiny Committee, to update members on children and young people who are educated outside of the Authority. Local delivery, instead of out of county delivery of Autistic Spectrum Disorder provision, was identified as a potential source of savings.
- 3.5 In July 2015, a report was presented to Cabinet, to inform them of the work being undertaken as part of the Children with Disabilities Transformation programme. Cabinet noted the progress that had been made to date, and approved a consultation exercise with staff and stakeholders, to inform the options for delivery of respite services and in-county accommodation in the future.

4.0 Current Situation

Children with Disabilities – Out-of-County (OOC) High Cost Placements

- 4.1 The aim for Bridgend County Borough Council (BCBC) is for children and young people to remain within their local community with family and friends. Ensuring stability and continuity in young people's lives is of key importance to promote resilience and build success in later years. This aim is very much in keeping with the Social Services and Wellbeing (Wales) Act 2014, coming into force in April 2016.
- 4.2 At present, the residential provision available in-county is at Heronsbridge School. Heronsbridge is a local authority residential special school, maintained by Bridgend Council, which provides education for pupils aged three to 19 years. Heronsbridge School is currently registered with Care and Social Services Inspectorate for Wales (CSSIW) to provide residential care for up to 6 service users for 39 weeks per year, for 5 days a week.
- 4.3 In addition to this, there is 39-week residential provision at Weston House in Bridgend College. Weston House is currently registered to provide term-time accommodation and care for up to 35 younger adults aged 16 to 25 with physical disabilities and/or learning disabilities, but this is not currently utilised or commissioned by BCBC, because Weston House provides a residential service only during term time and on weekdays. That model does not meet current needs or demand.
- 4.4 When the needs, complexities and challenges of a young person escalate, and the family are struggling to cope and a 52-week accommodation service is required, the only option currently available is an OOC placement. Placing young children outside the county is not ideal for the child or their family as they have to move from their local area and these placements can also be expensive.
- 4.5 There is clearly a demand for a 52-week accommodation service for children with disabilities locally, as there are currently three young people with disabilities who

are placed OOC, and it has been identified they could be placed and educated in-county, should there be 52-week residential provision available in Bridgend.

- 4.6 In addition there are currently three young people receiving 39-week residential care, whose needs and complexities are increasing to such a degree that 52-week residential provision may be needed in the near future.
- 4.7 There are also three young people currently receiving substantial Direct Payments packages, whose complexities and home circumstances are changing, which may necessitate 52 week provision in the near future.

Children with Disabilities – Respite Services

- 4.8 Respite Services for Children with Disabilities are currently provided through a combination of services, including Bakers Way, Family Link (disabled respite foster carer service) and Direct Payments.
- 4.9 Bakers Way provide an overnight respite/short break service situated in the Bryncethin area of Bridgend. It is a five bedded home which provides regular, planned short break stays for disabled children and young people, aged 0-18 years. The unit also provides an outreach service for disabled young children, teaching them independent living skills.
- 4.10 A review of Bakers Way has been undertaken, which found that even though a valuable and quality service is being provided, there are some drawbacks, including high transport costs due to distance to Heronsbridge School, high cancellation rates, and the building itself is in need of some renovation.
- 4.11 As the existing model for respite services is a high-cost, traditional model that provides limited flexibility for young people and their families, it is an opportune time for the Council to consider alternative models for respite services.

Moving forward

- 4.12 A multi-agency workshop took place in May 2015, involving colleagues from Adult Social Care, Children's Services, Abertawe Bro Morgannwg University Local Health Board, CSSIW, Weston House, and Heronsbridge to discuss potential new models for respite services and residential provision.
- 4.13 Findings from the workshop identified that there is clear appetite from all partners:
- to work together to explore how we can better provide local based services, particularly to develop 52 week residential provision;
 - to explore the opportunity for residential provision in-county as an alternative to placing OOC; and
 - to scope potential options for respite services in the longer-term, including the delivery of residential respite and how to expand community based family link services.

Short term plan

- 4.14 Social Workers have commenced assessments and initiated discussions with the families of the three existing high-cost OOC placements, who could potentially be placed in-county should there be 52-week residential provision available.
- 4.15 Discussions are on-going with local providers in respect of the viability of increasing their registration to 52-week residential provision, in order to facilitate the return of the three existing high-cost OOC placements, should these providers be able to meet service users' specific needs.
- 4.16 Short-term service efficiencies have been implemented within Bakers Way from 2015/16, which include introducing a new process to manage and monitor cancellations, reviewing transport arrangements and identifying closer links with Adult Social Care, and reviewing the rates charged for placements from other local authorities using Bakers Way.

Long term plan

- 4.17 An early engagement session has taken place with staff at Bakers Way, and an options appraisal for respite services for children with disabilities is being developed. At present, the draft options appraisal focuses on three key areas:
- **Service provision** – continue to provide an overnight respite service 7 days a week, or provide a remodelled service at alternative times of the week, when there is greatest need
 - **Location** – continue to provide the service from the current building and location, or deliver/commission the service from a new building and location
 - **Service provider** – continue using existing staff, or commission the service from an alternative provider
- 4.18 These options will be further refined and developed during the consultation events that have been arranged with families/carers, staff and pertinent stakeholders; scheduled to take place on 4th November. A full public consultation will also take place during November and December, allowing all citizens of the county borough to have an input and help shape this service.
- 4.19 A new model for residential provision for children with disabilities using the facilities of local providers and other Council facilities is also being developed, to include 52-week provision in-county. Discussions are on-going with local providers in respect of the viability of increasing their registration to 52-week residential provision, and these discussions will inform the models for residential services.
- 4.20 Following this period of consultation and provider engagement, a further report will be presented to Cabinet early next year, regarding future provision of respite services and in-county accommodation for Children with Disabilities in the longer-term.

5.0 Effect upon Policy Framework and Procedure Rules

- 5.1 The three existing OOC placements that could potentially be placed in-county are exempt from Contract Procedure Rules, under exemption 3.1.3:

In the case of contracts for services entered into in pursuance of powers under the National Health Service and Community Care Act 1990 the Children Act 1989 and Children’s Leaving Care Act 2000 for the benefit of an individual client, the Corporate Director Wellbeing or the Corporate Director Children’s Services (as the case may be), insofar as it is consistent with the law, will make appropriate arrangements for provision.

6.0 Equality Impact Assessment

- 6.1 This report is for information only, and an EIA is therefore not required at this time.
- 6.2 When options have been fully considered, and officers are in a better position to know which service users and staff could be affected by the proposed new models for respite services and accommodation provision in the longer-term, an EIA screening (and a full EIA if necessary) will be undertaken, to assess the potential impact on service users and staff.

7.0 Financial Implications

- 7.1 The Safeguarding and Family Support service has a number of challenging savings targets as set in the Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS). Specifically in relation to Residential Care and Looked After Children, the following savings targets have been set:

MTFS	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18	TOTAL
CH22 Remodelling Children’s Residential Care	£200k	£400k	£300k	£900k
CH25 Reduction in Safeguarding LAC	-	£585k	£520k	£1,105k
TOTAL	£200k	£985k	£820k	£2,005k

- 7.2 Whilst the three OOC identified placements have a total current cost of £675k per annum, any savings will be dependent on whether the needs of these children can be met in-county and the timescale in which this can be facilitated as well as the cost of any proposed provision. Notwithstanding this it would be anticipated that having an in-county provision would offer some cost savings as well as enabling a reduction in the dependence on high-cost out of county placements in future years.
- 7.3 Any proposals will be subject to a financial assessment and analysis of opportunities to achieve cost efficiencies to contribute towards the service savings requirements and any such savings would be reported to Cabinet at a later date.

8.0 Recommendation

- 8.1 Children and Young People Overview and Scrutiny is requested to:
- Note the information contained in this update report;
 - Provide their views on the areas of focus for the options appraisal of respite services (paragraph 4.17);
 - Provide their views on the proposed approach to consultation, in order to inform the options appraisals and models (paragraph 4.18);
 - Note that following consultation, a further report will be presented to Cabinet.

Susan Cooper

Corporate Director, Social Services and Wellbeing
October 2015

9.0 Contact Officers

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10.0 Background documents

Medium Term Financial Strategy 2014-2018 (MTFS)

BRIDGEND COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

4 NOVEMBER 2015

REPORT OF THE CORPORATE DIRECTOR EDUCATION AND TRANSFORMATION

STRATEGIC REVIEW INTO THE DEVELOPMENT AND RATIONALISATION OF THE CURRICULUM AND ESTATE PROVISION OF PRIMARY, SECONDARY AND POST 16 EDUCATION

1. Purpose of Report

The purpose of this report is to update Overview and Scrutiny Committee on the work of the Schools Task Group in supporting the development of a Strategy that will provide an evidence based rationale for change and will form a foundation to reach informed conclusions about the nature of provision of primary, secondary, post 16 education and school reorganisation. The committee's views on the content of a specification for strategic review are also sought.

2. Connection to Corporate Improvement Objectives/Other Corporate Priorities

2.1 These proposals are related to the Corporate Plan and, in particular, in the Corporate Plan Improvement priority two and priority six:

- Working together to raise ambitions and drive up educational achievement
- Making best use of resources

3. Background

Schools Task Group

3.1 In August 2014 the Children's Directorate established the Schools Task Group to consider the way forward for schools within the County Borough and to ensure we continue to plan for and provide a high quality education system for our young people, that gives them the very best opportunities for their lives in the 21st century and builds upon the excellence and good practice that we already have in our county.

3.2 The rationale for the task group was agreed in the context of falling rolls, a large number of surplus primary and secondary school places, a number of headteachers reaching retirement age in the near future, and financial constraints leading to a growing number of schools in a deficit budget situation, which means that maintaining the status quo may not be an option but at the same time acknowledging the great variety and diversity across the county which needs to be taken into account in any future plans. A strategic approach for sustainable provision is required.

3.3 Further to this rationale, there is a need to increase the pace of school improvement with a particular focus on outcomes for groups of vulnerable learners, narrowing the

wide attainment gap between learners who have free school meals and those who do not receive free school meals.

- 3.4 The government's statutory guidance, 'Federation Process of Maintained Schools in Wales', provides that the government's policy objective is to promote collaboration between all parts of the education system to improve outcomes. School federations are a formal way of extending collaboration and promoting closer working relationships to improve performance and narrow the attainment gap for deprived pupils and enable schools to work together through a formal structured process by sharing a governing body that will make decisions in the best interest of all the schools, staff and pupils in that federation. The statutory guidance will help to shape the strategic review.
- 3.5 Planning the future of the learning community across the County Borough needs to be a collaborative process with a range of stakeholders. The Schools Task Group was made up of primary and secondary headteachers, governor representatives, Welsh medium sector representatives, Diocesan representatives, local officers and an independent advisor. Terms of Reference were agreed, and the group was tasked with carrying out five pieces of work, with a view to producing an option appraisal paper and to make recommendations which could be consulted upon.
- 3.6 The Task Group established a set of principles and criteria to underpin the future of education and learning provision which may be applied to establish a strategy for the next ten years (Appendix A). These were approved by Cabinet on 3rd March 2015. These criteria provide a framework upon which decisions may be considered and will contribute to the formation of a draft model of schools' provision prior to full consultation. It may be that alternative models may be designed for consultation. The Schools Task Group has taken into account the different dynamics of Bridgend County Borough –towns, rural areas, valleys and such like and other issues as they arise.
- 3.7 These principles have been developed to support an overarching strategy for school improvement that aims to provide 'fit for purpose' schools capable of delivering high quality educational experiences for all pupils. It is in this context that the principles are to be applied. They provide clarity of purpose and transparency of approach, and identify important factors that will be taken into account in considering all proposals for change, including, where necessary, school reorganisations.

Workstreams

- 3.8 The Schools Task Group established six workstreams:

1. Analytics

This group analysed the data and prepared calculations of projected numbers for the future and secured a high degree of confidence from stakeholders. Surplus capacity within schools was also reviewed.

2. School Modelling

This group has researched a variety of school delivery models to facilitate raising standards and have developed a menu of delivery models including hard federations, soft federations, all-through schools and amalgamations.

3. Post 16 Provision

This group has considered the options for post 16 provision.

4. Welsh Medium Provision

This group has explored potential future developments related to Welsh medium provision in the borough.

5. Catchment Review

This group has considered a proposed methodology for revising/determining catchment areas.

6. 21st Century School Modernisation

This group has worked to develop criteria which may determine/influence decisions about which schools should form part of the School Modernisation programme in the future to meet the needs of the future.

Brief Summary of Findings of Each Workstream

Analytics

- 3.9 Analysing pupil admissions data, this group considered the calculations of projected numbers for the future. The process for calculating pupil numbers was interrogated to ensure there was a high degree of confidence from headteachers. Surplus capacity within schools was also reviewed. The workstream found that the projected pupil number process was robust and accurate.

School Modelling

- 3.10 The group researched and considered a variety of options including: all-through 3-16 / 3-19 schools; hard federations; soft federations and closures/amalgamations of schools. A menu of delivery models outlining the potential benefits and drawbacks of federations, 3-16 schools and school closures was drawn up by the group to use as guidance for any further decision making.

Post 16 Provision

- 3.11 In parallel with the school modelling and Welsh medium workstreams, there has been further consideration of Post 16 options via the Partnership Steering Group (PSG) involving secondary headteachers and senior managers from Bridgend College as well as LA officers. This has been followed up with individual meetings with each school and the college to ensure that all views have been fully captured regarding options related to tertiary, sixth form or hybrid models of post 16 education. The group have considered the case for reorganisation and agree that the current arrangements cannot be maintained due to reduced levels of funding from the grant.

Welsh Medium Provision

- 3.12 The Welsh medium workstream was established to consider the future viability of Welsh medium provision. Recognising the need to cater for demand and over-capacity experienced at Ysgol Gymraeg Bro Ogwr and the importance of attracting sufficient numbers of pupils to enter Welsh medium provision at nursery/foundation phase, the group have suggested establishing a starter-class within the grounds of an existing English medium school where there is surplus capacity. The group is also exploring a potential solution to Post 16 Options related to Welsh medium provision in the borough via formal collaboration and course sharing with Welsh medium schools in Rhondda Cynon Taf and with Bridgend College. Feasibility work is currently being conducted.

Catchment Review

- 3.13 The group worked on a revised set of principles. These were identified as:

- The number of pupils in catchments should match the capacity of the school (as defined by the Pupil Admission Number, PAN).
- Schools should be located within their own catchment area.
- There should be no shared catchment areas.
- Wherever possible addresses should be allocated to a school within the statutory distance using an approved safe walking route.

A revised methodology was explored that could be considered and consulted upon during any revision of existing school catchment areas.

21st Century School Modernisation

- 3.14 The purpose of this workstream has been to consider the council's school estate, and from a buildings perspective, how it can contribute towards educational attainment. The work of the group being to assess the factors which should influence future programmes for new builds, school remodeling works and school estate management, having particular regard to Band B of the 21st Century School Modernisation scheme. A priority matrix/map has been produced highlighting criteria to determine building investment based on: running costs, maintenance backlog, condition, surplus pupil places and overcrowding. This information has been entered onto a spreadsheet and a weighted scoring produced. Based on this scoring the condition of the building and the current and projected school places have been geographically mapped out. The plan produced highlights those schools with the greatest need, where investment should be prioritised in terms of improving the buildings and planning of pupil numbers. However, this work will need to link and inform the workstreams relating to catchment, school models, leadership, post 16, Welsh medium schools and faith schools. Coordination of this information will help determine where and how investment will be made in our schools.

Interdependencies

- 3.15 In each workstream there has been recognition of the fact that a strategic response from the Local Authority will only be possible by working together and combining the work of each group; it cannot be devised in isolation. A workshop on interdependencies found that none of the issues could be tackled in isolation. The findings for each of the individual workstreams were reported to the Schools Task Group Board. It is apparent that these cannot be viewed in isolation and therefore the interdependencies between them have been given some consideration. Presented as a problem solving exercise, eight 'problems' were identified from the emerging themes from each strand of work, as follows:

1. Standards

Continual drive to raise standards

2. Leadership/Succession

Headteacher demographics/importance of high calibre leaders/fewer Deputy Headteachers achieving NPQH (National Professional Qualification for Headship) the qualification essential to become a headteacher

3. Finance

Budget constraints

4. Buildings

Significant maintenance backlog of circa £30m.

5. Pupil Demographics

Surplus capacity in some schools/overcapacity in others

6. Post 16

Viability of small sixth forms

7. Transport

Proposed changes to learner travel

8. Welsh Medium

Meeting growing demand in some areas and ensuring viability at post 16.

3.16 Links can be drawn between each of these strands to demonstrate the interdependencies between them. For example:

- each of these strands impacts on standards;
- finance has a bearing on each of the strands;
- options for Post 16 provision may affect/be affected by the provision in primary schools/Key Stage 3 and Key Stage 4.

3.17 The work presented by the individual workstreams can assist in offering solutions to each of these 'problems'. For example:

- Catchment changes may be considered as a solution to surplus capacity in some areas or to finance associated with learner travel.
- School models/amalgamations may be considered as a solution to costs associated with building maintenance backlogs and funding that is not needed in this area may be invested elsewhere to drive up standards.
- School models/federation may be considered as a solution to leadership capacity, providing greater scope to attract high calibre leaders.
- Removing sixth forms from schools may be considered as an opportunity to re-organise provision into 'all-through 3-16' schools.
- Increasing Welsh medium provision at nursery/reception age may be considered as a long-term solution to viability of Welsh medium provision at post 16.

3.18 The list of interdependencies is complex and extensive.

4. Current situation / proposal

Developing a Strategy

4.1 The new principles provide a structured approach to aid in consideration of the rationalisation of education provision in Bridgend. The principles and the strategy is an approach that will provide evidence based rationale for change and will form a valuable basis in order to reach informed conclusions about the nature of provision and the need to add, remove or relocate school places. The approach will support the drive for improved pupil outcomes through the Central South Consortium by securing a more sustainable and effective pattern of provision than exists in all areas of the County Borough at present.

4.2 The purpose of the strategy is to provide the context in which to consider decisions relating to the organisation of school places in Bridgend and to plan the future delivery of a managed programme for change. The nature of change in school organisation will mean that some schemes can be affected within a short timescale

whilst others will only be achieved over an extended period over the next 5-10 years.

- 4.3 Proposals will be clearly linked to corporate priorities articulated in the Council's plans and policies. They will focus upon making the most effective, efficient and flexible use of finite resources in order to raise educational standards and support continuous improvement in the performance of our schools.
- 4.4 In addition the strategy will need to address key issues and agreed priorities at both primary and secondary levels in areas that include:
- Welsh medium provision and the Welsh Education Strategic Plan
 - School Leadership
 - Curriculum and partnership developments, e.g. 14-19
 - Sixth Form Provision
 - Surplus places/overcrowding
 - Poor condition surveys
 - Reducing school budgets
- 4.5 The Schools Task Group has provided a useful foundation on which to build, providing a helpful insight into pressures faced within Bridgend and beyond. The local context has been explored in some depth, although at this stage the outcomes have been generic in nature. Every workstream has recognised the need to bring their work together in order to develop a coherent strategy for Bridgend. It is clear from the above exercise that a strategic review is required to consider the full range of interdependencies and to make recommendations to suit specific scenarios.
- 4.6 Due to the limited expertise and capacity in house, and the amount of work to be undertaken it is recommended that the council source a strategic partner to contribute to the development of a strategy.
- 4.7 It is expected that the strategic partner will carry out a Strategic Review into the Development and Rationalisation of the Curriculum and Estate Provision of Primary, Secondary and Post 16 Education, including the findings of each of the workstreams and taking account of the specific local context of Bridgend, to deliver an options appraisal paper to make recommendations which can be presented to Cabinet and consulted upon. .
- 4.8 The specification for the review will include:
1. scoping out Band B for the school modernisation programme and a timeline to facilitate proposed changes in a logical sequence;
 2. determining options around suitable leadership school models to meet the needs of each school in preparation for consultation;
 3. a sustainable catchment area methodology and recommendations for catchment area changes;
 4. determining options for future post 16 provision prior to public consultation ; and
 5. delivering improved financial modelling in each cluster in the context of Bridgend County Borough's demographic changes.
- 4.9 The review will consider a range of options, and these may include:

- some secondary schools may not have a sixth form;
- some schools may operate within federations;
- some schools may become all through schools for the age range of 3-16 or 3-19; and
- some schools may not have a non-teaching head.

5. Effect upon Policy Framework & Procedure Rules

5.1 There is no effect upon the policy framework or procedure rules.

6. Equality Impact Assessment

6.1 A full Equality Impact Assessment will be carried out following the formal consultation stage which will give stakeholders the opportunity to comment on any equality issues

7. Financial Implications

7.1 The costs have not yet been identified, but it is likely to be around £20,000. Bridgend College have agreed to part fund the cost of securing a strategic partner, although the amount has not yet been agreed. Any shortfall will be funded from the 14-19 revenue budget. A procurement process will begin following the working up of a clear specification for the work.

8. Recommendation

8.1 Cabinet have approved that the strategic review goes ahead. It is recommended that views from Overview & Scrutiny are sought on what should be in the specification for the strategic review, to inform preparation of the review.

Deborah McMillan
Corporate Director – Education and Transformation
October 2015

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Background documents

Appendix A: Cabinet Report: PRINCIPLES DOCUMENT (March 2015)

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BRIDGEND COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

REPORT TO CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

4 NOVEMBER 2015

REPORT OF THE ASSISTANT CHIEF EXECUTIVE – LEGAL AND REGULATORY SERVICES

SOCIAL SERVICES ANNUAL REPORTING FRAMEWORK

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1 To provide Members with an update on the work of the Joint Research and Evaluation Panel held on the Social Services Annual Reporting Framework in June 2015.

2. Connection to Corporate Improvement Objectives/Other Corporate Priorities

- 2.1 The key improvement objectives identified in the Corporate Plan 2013-2017 have been embodied in the Overview & Scrutiny Forward Work Programmes. The amended Corporate Improvement Objectives adopted by Council on 25 February 2015 formally set out the improvement objectives that the Council will seek to implement between 2013 and 2017. The Overview and Scrutiny Committees engage in review and development of plans, policy or strategies that support the Corporate Themes.

3. Background

- 3.1 At its meeting in November 2009, the Committee considered a report from the Corporate Director – Wellbeing on the Social Services Annual Reporting Framework. This outlined the arrangements put in place by the Chief Inspector of the Care and Social Services Inspectorate, Wales (CSSIW) for the inspection, evaluation and review of local authority social services.
- 3.2 The report explained that this framework would involve formal engagement with Scrutiny on an annual basis, through the following three stages:
- As an essential element of the “challenge” groups judging the accuracy of the initial judgements on our effectiveness
 - Agreeing a statement of findings over the year that should be considered by the Director
 - Providing comments on the final draft report prior to reporting to Cabinet and publication.

3.3 The Committee agreed that this work should be undertaken through a Research and Evaluation Panel established jointly with the Health and Wellbeing, (now the Adult Social Care), Overview and Scrutiny Committee, which subsequently also agreed to this approach.

3.4 This year, the following eight Members were appointed to the Joint Panel from the two Committees:

Cllr P A Davies	Cllr D Sage
Cllr P Foley	Cllr E Venables
Cllr P N John	Cllr D B F White
Cllr J Lewis	

3.5 The suggested Terms of Reference for the Panel's investigation were:

- To consider and examine the content of the Director of Social Services Annual Report 2014 – 15 prior to submission to CSSIW;
- To formulate comments, questions and lines of enquiry upon the draft reports;
- To engage with the Director of Social Services and representative Officers regarding the comments and questions.

3.6 It was considered that the above approach would result in the following positive outcome:

- Demonstrate self critically how effective social services activities are rather than just describing their activities to CSSIW and other stakeholders.

4. Current Situation

4.1 The Panel met on two separate occasions; the first was on 22 June 2015 at which Members considered the report and formulated questions and lines of enquiry together with Scrutiny Officers. The second meeting was held on 29 June 2015 where the Panel further explored the Director of Social Services Annual Report and offered comments and recommendations upon it.

4.2 This approach allowed the Panel to examine the draft report in a systematic way to identify issues to raise and discuss at their next two meetings with officers from both Directorates.

4.3 Some of the Panel's main points are summarised below:

- Overall, Members were positive about the content and format of the report and recognised it as an improvement on previous years' reports;
- Members observed that the report contained a lot of description of processes but very little about outcomes and impact on service users. Members commented that even case studies focused on the Local Authority perspective and not what the outcome was for the service user. Likewise, the key areas for improvement did not indicate how these would have a

positive impact on people's lives but rather were benefiting the Local Authority. Officers commented that the focus of the report was meant to be from a Local Authority point of view but agreed to look to also include positive outcomes from the service user perspective..

- The Panel requested that further information be incorporated to illustrate performance management processes and therefore evidence from this what improvements in performance have been made for 2014-15 and started to be made already for 2015-16.
- Members commented on the lack of detailed analysis of the issues and themes arising from complaints to the Authority and how this information is used to improve services.
- Members highlighted the need for more detail in relation to the outcomes of various consultation that has taken place over the year and how this has been used to inform provision.

4.4 The interaction with officers during the meeting was reported as being positive by Members, as was the feedback received from them. Officers were very receptive to the Panel's comments and reported the process as being extremely useful.

4.5 The Panel were advised that their comments and views, would be taken on board, and the report would be revised to reflect these and incorporate appropriate changes proposed. The finalised report was then submitted to Council at its meeting on 15 July 2015 for approval.

5. Effect upon Policy Framework and Procedure Rules

5.1 The work of the Children and Young People Overview and Scrutiny Committee relates to the review and development of plans, policy or strategy that form part of the Policy Framework and consideration of plans, policy or strategy relating to the power to promote or improve economic, social or environmental wellbeing in the County Borough of Bridgend.

6. Equalities Impact Assessment

6.1 There are no equalities implications arising from this report.

7. Financial Implications

7.1 None.

8. Recommendations

And The Committee is asked to note the work of the Joint Research and Evaluation Panel and identify any proposed ways the process may be improved for the next year.

Assistant Chief Executive – Legal & Regulatory Services

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Background documents: None