

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

Contact Officer:

Telephone: Rachel Keepins, Scrutiny Officer
01656 643613

Email: scrutiny@bridgend.gov.uk

Postal Address: Democratic Services - Scrutiny
Bridgend County Borough Council,
Civic Offices, Angel Street, Bridgend,
CF31 4WB

Background documents: None