

THE VALE OF GLAMORGAN COUNCIL

CABINET: 26<sup>TH</sup> SEPTEMBER, 2016

REFERENCE FROM HEALTHY LIVING AND SOCIAL CARE SCRUTINY  
COMMITTEE: 12<sup>TH</sup> SEPTEMBER, 2016

“ ANNUAL REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF SOCIAL SERVICES 2015-2016  
– CHALLENGE VERSION (DSS) –

The Director of Social Services presented a copy of his Annual Report for 2015/16. He advised that, through an earlier workshop, Members of the Committee had had the opportunity to have dialogue with officers, to raise issues and recommend change. He stated his appreciation for the level of discussion and he thanked Members for their contribution.

The Annual Report that was attached at Appendix 1 gave the Director an opportunity to provide people in the Vale with a rounded picture of Social Services - based on evidence drawn from a wide range of sources such as what users and carers have said, key performance indicators and measurements of progress against the overall goals of the Council.

The Report was written for a wide range of people, including service users and carers but also Elected Members, the Council's own staff, and a range of partners and providers who helped deliver services. It was used by the Care and Social Services Inspectorate for Wales (CSSIW) as evidence for their annual evaluation of the Council and to guide their inspection programme in the Vale of Glamorgan.

The Director's Annual Report was important for the people of the Vale of Glamorgan, Members of the Council and partners, both statutory and in other service sectors. It outlined the current context within which Social Services were operating and detailed proposed priorities for improvement. Circulating the Challenge Version was intended to allow key stakeholders the opportunity to comment and make observations before the Report was finalised, ensuring that it accurately reflected the position of Social Services.

In outlining the format of the Annual Report, the Director advised that a key use made of it was to encourage greater 'co-production' in areas such as service design and operational delivery. This had to be grounded in an informed understanding of the overall issues and the way in which specific services were being delivered. It was important for readers to fully understand what was going on. Some people would be interested in the big picture and some only in the specific service they received. Page 5 of the report included a summary, whilst the overview from page 6

provided a focus on achievements. A major element of the Annual report was the ongoing challenges facing social services, and the Director highlighted the following:

- Managing reductions in funding while minimising wherever possible the impact on front line service delivery;
- Providing effective support for a rising population of older people with increasing levels of need, for children and other people with increasing complex health conditions and for families experiencing periods of difficulty and vulnerability;
- Developing closer partnership working in order to deliver new models of care and support services across the whole range of need;
- Meeting new service requirements with limited public resources available to implement the changes, including those arising from increased statutory obligations;
- Ensuring quality of care, managing risk of service failure and increased safeguarding responsibilities;
- Reducing unnecessary bureaucracy so that the Directorate gets help to people more quickly and provides staff with more time for direct work.

The Director added that the Vale Council had a good reputation for managing its budget. However, he alluded to challenges as a result of increasing demand for domiciliary care services and the case for extra resources. He also referred to the considerable programme in regard to the re-modelling of services and the expectations that the Council could eventually have to face unpalatable choices around how services were delivered, if budget pressures and savings continue to grow. He also mentioned similar challenges facing the local health board, which might result in the lowering of performance targets or a cap on staffing levels/use of agency staff. It was important, therefore, for any priority objective to address these strategic concerns and the Director made reference to the 'agenda for change' around which the Vale Council had a good track record.

As in previous years, each Head of Service in the Directorate had also provided an Annual Report, including an assessment of how well each Division was doing in different service areas and priority objectives for improvement in 2015/16. These were attached at Appendices 2, 3 and 4. They were to be published separately but at the same time as the Director's Report. All the reports represented the views of the Director and other managers in Social Services; however, they were not Council policy at this stage.

The priority objectives contained in the reports would be delivered within the financial constraints set by the Social Services Budget Programme, which was approved by Cabinet and reported regularly. The final reports would be presented to Cabinet for approval of the priority objectives and then circulated widely. They would be made available via the Council's website.

A Committee Member thanked the Director for a very detailed report. He commented on the assessment of challenges, and he highlighted his concerns around the financial situation and the projected £1million overspend for this year. He stated that

with increased demand and less resources, the Welsh Government needed to outline how it intended to fund social care and well-being services. He added that the Scrutiny Committee had welcomed previous reports about significant improvements such as the evaluation by the Care and Social Services Inspectorate for Wales (CSSIW) but there had to be recognition of the £1million budget overspend.

In querying the size of the Annual Report, the Chairman stated that he felt that some sections were quite repetitive and he commented that it would be preferable if specific areas were mentioned only once. He also felt that the Director's Report dealt with service objectives, whereas reports of the Heads of Services were aligned to service areas, and so the same topics would be covered in various parts of the report.

A Committee Member stated that he considered the report was not too long and that it was meant for many different audiences. There was a need for detail which readers could find in the main body of the report and he stated that the report covered all areas. He went on to comment that the report contained warnings and it was therefore important to look at the situation in England and the challenges being faced there. He added that the money would not be available to provide services in the same way, but there were always opportunities to introduce alternative models which were both cheaper and which provided better services. He then referred to an example with the Health Service around best practice. This related to a review undertaken on the take up of acute beds. It was found that at the University Hospital Wales the number of patients that required an acute bed was below 50%, whereas this was above 50% at Llandough Hospital. The Health Board had looked at its service model to ensure that those patients in acute beds were those that needed to be there and were supported with the right staff. He also outlined another example in relation to orthopaedics, in which, 6 surgeons would each carry out the same operation but in their own individual way. He felt that there must be some way of identifying which surgeon best performed the operation. The Member stated that finding best practice was key but he also expressed concern as to whether sufficient money would be available in future years to deliver services.

The Director, in responding to a query on partnership arrangements with Cardiff Council, stated that the situation was improving. He commented on the requirement, following the introduction of the Social Services and Wellbeing Act, to work on a collaborative regional basis and the need to achieve economies of scale and he stated that the Directorate could demonstrate that the Vale Council was itself a good partner.

## RECOMMENDED –

- (1) T H A T the contents of the report be noted.
- (2) T H A T the Director's Annual Report 2015-16 be referred to Cabinet for its consideration.

Reasons for recommendations

(1&2) To provide Elected Members with an opportunity to contribute to the challenge process for the Director's Annual Report 2015-16."

Attached as Appendix – [Report to Healthy Living and Social Care Scrutiny Committee: 12<sup>th</sup> September, 2016](#)