Report

Cabinet

Part 1

Date: 15 December 2021

Subject **Annual Report of the Director of Social Services 2020/21**

Purpose To present to Cabinet the Annual Report of the Director of Social Services.2020/21

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Ward Citywide

Summary This report is the Director's evaluation of 2020/21 performance for Social Services. It conforms in format and content with the statutory requirements for the Director's Report as set out in the Social Services & Wellbeing (Wales) Act 2014.

Proposal To receive the Annual Report of the Director of Social Services, 2020/21

Action by Director of Social Services

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 continued delivery of its statutory duties in providing services to people in Newport in terms of information, advice and assistance, and those individuals and carers who need care and support. This report demonstrates how Newport Social Services has responded to the requirements of the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014 and how we have promoted and accounted for the delivery of well-being and care and support to the citizens of Newport.

The Regulation and Inspection of Social Care (Wales) Act 2016 (RISCA) 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 prescribed by the Local Authority Social Services Annual reports (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 activities 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

2020/21 was another demanding year characterised by the maintenance of quality and standards of service delivery within the context of the ongoing Coronavirus Pandemic.

The delivery of the Social Services and Well-Being (Wales) Act continues to drive the provision of early intervention and preventative services and the ongoing work to manage the increasing demands placed upon Social Services. The well-being objectives are wound through all Social Services operations and tie closely to the Newport City Council (NCC) Corporate Plan, notably:-

- To improve skills, educational outcomes and employment opportunities.
- To enable people to be healthy, independent & resilient.
- To build cohesive & sustainable communities.

The new performance framework implemented from 1st April 2021 has changed the way we are required to measure data so comparison with last year is problematic.

This new set of metrics and recording processes along with the enforced working from home arrangements and the shift in demand as a result of the Pandemic means that it is sensible to treat this period as a baseline set of figures.

There is a continuous striving to maximise the efficient use of resources both financial and resources whist identifying savings. In Children's Services efforts have continued to address the shortage of placement options with another 4 bed residential home opened in Jan 2021. The preventative work to minimise the number of children becoming Looked After continues to develop with new and innovative practices such as Baby & Me, MyST and Family Group Conferencing.

Work in Adult and Community Services continues to focus on working across the interface of health and social care through the use of the Integrated Care Fund. The collaborative work to minimise the number of delayed hospital discharges has further developed with the combined impact of Home First and the Reablement service now fully integrated into the new Grange Hospital that opened at a very challenging time in December 2020.

At the time of writing significant changes to the way services are being delivered has been implemented in order to maintain levels of essential support. New priorities and pressures have emerged such as the intensive and complex work with street homeless the systems required to allocate additional funding made available by Welsh Government to support the social care sector.

Across adults and children's services, we are now experiencing higher than usual levels of complexity and increasing referral numbers. Social care services have not had sufficient time to recover and there are concerning signs of a significant staffing shortage. We expect ongoing budget constraints but at this stage, we are still in the midst of a crisis and uncertain about how the medium to long-term impact of the Coronavirus Pandemic will affect the community and how we deliver our services.

Financial Summary (Capital and Revenue)

The 2020/21 revenue out-turn for the Council produced a net underspend, after core budget contributions to/from reserves, of £14m against the £300.2m budget (4.6% variance). This variance has arisen for several reasons.

At a high level, the following explains the position:

- Receipt of one-off Welsh Government (WG) funds to compensate Council services to support its enhanced service delivery to Newport's communities in response to Covid; and lost income from Covid restrictions; meant these costs were not borne by the Council;
- Funding for the direct costs of, and delivery' of the WG support programs to businesses; meant these costs were not borne by the Council;
- Underspends across all services in relation to (i) costs of general administration and service provision due to changes in working practices and (ii) not undertaking planned/normal services, as they were not required or unable to be carried out due to Covid response work being prioritised;
- Resulting directly and indirectly from all of the above, the Councils budget underspent on its general revenue contingency budget, council tax reduction scheme and council tax income, which they would ordinarily do in a 'normal year'. These are all non-service budget areas.

Across Social Services, the overall outturn was a £2.824m underspend for both areas. £221k overspend in Children services and £3.045m underspend in adult services.

- Adults social care - community care – (£1.5m) underspend
- Adult In-House residential homes – (£500k) underspend
- Adult Staffing – (£290k) underspend
- Children's in-house residential and respite – £752k overspend
- Childrens Emergency Placements - £638k overspend
- Children's out of area placements – (£330k) underspend
- Youth Offending/Child Protection and Family Support Teams – (537k) underspend

The global pandemic, which lasted throughout 2020/21, had an unprecedented financial impact. Whilst Adult Services was expecting pressures due to increased demand from adults living longer with complex needs, COVID-19 caused a decrease in numbers. Numbers are expected to rise back up to normal levels, however the timeline is uncertain. Welsh Government compensated the additional cost, as a direct result of COVID-19.

However, within Children Services, the pandemic did not affect the numbers of looked after children. Therefore, Children services faced the normal pressures but with the added complication of not being able to carry out as much preventative work. There was also a lack of availability of certain placements/fostering options due to covid-19 restrictions.

The in-house residential services suffered from an unexpected high level of non-covid sickness across all homes. The issues have been addressed and this was hopefully an in year issue only. The alternative residential services project is progressing well which should in time reduce the reliance on external provision. Newport will continue to monitor this in 2021/22.

The council continues to work collaboratively with regional partners to maximise the use of regional resources to develop services within Newport.

The annual budget in 2020/21 for social services was £75.1m. There is a well-developed financial management process in place across service areas that supports the medium term financial plan and enables the identification and management of budget risks.

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 continuing and increasing demand for Social Services will bring unsustainable financial pressures.	H	M	We are maintaining strong financial controls on day to day decision making in the service and also develop services both in-house and in partnership which provide effective options to meet the increasing demand.	Sally Jenkins Director of Social Services/ Mary Ryan Head of Adult and Community Services and the Head of Children and Family Services (post currently vacant)
That users and carers will not continue to have the opportunity to engage and 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	Sally Jenkins Director of Social Services/ Mary Ryan Head of Adult and Community Services and the Head of Children and Family Services (post currently vacant)
That we will need to recruit and retain staff with the skills and experience to deliver on our statutory responsibilities and support the independent and voluntary sector to do the same.	H	M	We continue to invest in our workforce in terms of training and development and work regionally to support the care sector.	Sally Jenkins Director of Social Services/ Mary Ryan Head of Adult and Community Services and the Head of Children and Family Services (post currently vacant)

Links to Council Policies and Priorities

Newport City Council's Corporate Plan 2017 - 22

Options Available and considered

Option 1 - Cabinet endorses the Annual Report of the Director of Social Services for 2020/21

Option 2 – Cabinet does not endorse the Annual Report of the Director of Social Services for 2020/21 and sets out specific reasons and recommendations for action.

Preferred Option and Why

Option 1 as 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

The Director of Social Services annual report gives an overview of the performance of Social Services in 2020/21. There are no financial implications arising specifically from this report

Social Care has been subject to significant challenges over the last 18 months and which are not necessarily manifested in their financial positions outlined in this report. The services have worked, in conjunction with WG to support the care sector and the challenge continue to be significant, stemming from a number of issues, such as recruitment and retention.

The Council has a well-developed process to update and agree its MTFP and annual budget and this ensures that budget issues are identified and considered appropriately.

Comments of Monitoring Officer

The Director of Social Services has a statutory duty under the Social Services and Wellbeing (Wales) Act 2014 (as amended by the Regulation and Inspection of Social Care (Wales) Act 2016) to produce an annual report to the Council, setting out a personal assessment of the performance of Social Services in delivering its social care functions during the preceding 12 months. This Annual report covers the financial year 2020/21 and 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 the Director's assessment of how well 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. The Report confirms that the Director of Social Services is satisfied that the Council continues to make 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 and the corporate well-being objectives. This statutory Annual Report reflects the Director's personal assessment of the performance of Social Services and is, therefore, being presented to Cabinet for information purposes and not for comment or amendment.

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 2020/21 as part of the 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.

Scrutiny Committees

Performance Scrutiny

Wellbeing of Future Generation (Wales) Act

- The importance of having a workforce up to date with all mandatory training courses and understanding the role and influence their services have in the ongoing work to ensure the community is strong and resilient.
- The Social Services and Well-Being Act (2014) ensures that the prevention element that is required within the legislation supports communities to access early intervention for support that offers advice and assistance to maintain independence, improve well being and prevent unnecessary escalation to statutory services.
- Integration: The ongoing work to integrate health and social care service to provide a coherent service response to those in need of support. A strong example of this is the further development of social care within the hospital pathway, now expanded to prevent admission as well as facilitate timely and safe discharge back to independent living
- Collaboration: The work with partners, specialist providers, independent, third sector and nationals who have rallied together throughout the Pandemic to ensure support continues to be available. Supported by the Local Authority in terms of co-ordination of services and distribution of Wels Government funding to ensure they remain sustainable and responsive to changing needs
- 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.

Equality Act 2010 and Socio Economic Duty

This report does not reflect a policy change or decision which would impact disproportionately on staff or communities because of protected characteristics or inequalities arising as a result of socio-economic disadvantage. Therefore, a formal Fairness and Equality Impact Assessment is not required. However, fairness and equality are considered in service delivery.

Welsh Language (Wales) Measure 2011

The service area is mandated by Welsh Government to collect data around this measure to illustrate and monitor need. Information is contained within the report.

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 intelligence that informs the Director’s Annual Report.

Background Papers

Directors Report 2020/21