



City and County of Swansea

## Minutes of the **Scrutiny Performance Panel – Service Improvement & Finance**

Committee Room 5 - Guildhall, Swansea

Wednesday, 10 January 2018 at 10.30 am

**Present:** Councillor C A Holley (Chair) Presided

**Councillor(s)**

P R Hood-Williams  
P Jones  
I E Mann

**Councillor(s)**

L James  
J W Jones  
D W W Thomas

**Councillor(s)**

M H Jones  
C E Lloyd

**Officer(s)**

Bethan Hopkins  
Richard Rowlands  
Ben Smith

Scrutiny Officer  
Strategic Delivery & Performance Manager.  
Head of Financial Services & Service Centre and Section  
151 Officer

Debbie Smith

Deputy Head of Legal, Democratic Services and  
Business Intelligence.

Andrew Taylor

Complaints Manager

**Apologies for Absence**

Councillor(s): P Downing and B J Rowlands

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**7 Disclosure of Personal and Prejudicial Interests.**

None

**8 Quarter 2 2017/18 Performance Monitoring Report.**

- Richard Rowlands attended to present the Q2 PMR focussing on areas showing RED performance.
- In relation to corporate performance against target, most targets have been met but overall performance has declined compared to the same period last year.

**Priority 1 – Safeguarding**

- The Chief Social Services Officers' commentary Officer's overview commentary states that demand for statutory adult and children services remains high.

- CFS16 (initial core group meetings held within 10 days of the initial child protection conference) is the lowest result since records 2015/16 due to the high level of child protection work.
- CFS19 (number of children on the CPR) has increased compared each quarter since last year, which is also attributed to an increase in the amount of child protection work.
- Measure 24 (assessments completed for children within statutory timescales) is showing a declining trend. The decline at Q2 is ascribed to the increase in referrals in Q1 filtering through to the assessment stage.
- Despite some difficulties Social Services has a lot of positive performance on the preventative work being done.
- For example, AS14 (those who had completed reablement that are no longer receiving care or are receiving less care 6 months later), improved by 89% compared to the same period last year.
- Chair explained that there are specific panels for adult services and child services and if members want further information they should refer questions to these Panels
- Cabinet Member Clive Lloyd commented that the measure for members completing the safeguarding training has improved and this was pleasing.

### **Priority 2 – Education and Skills**

- Performance for both primary and secondary school attendance shows the lowest Q2 result since 2015/16 and for primary schools, the lowest overall result since Q2 2014/15. However, performance remains positive when viewed over the 5-year period.

### **Priority 3 – Economy and Infrastructure**

- No significant performance issues to report.

### **Priority 4 – Tackling Poverty**

- Nearly all targets were met.
- HBCT01A/02A – there has been a decline in the speed of processing housing benefit and council tax reduction claims since Q4 last year. For this quarter, a combination of staff shortages and errors were cited in the report as reasons for dips in performance.
- SUSC1 (people's satisfaction with their area as a place to live) and SUSC3 (people agreeing that theirs is a place where people from different background get on) are both showing a downwards trend since Q3 last year – although performance remains better than 2015/16.

### **Priority 5 - Transformation & Future Council**

- CHR002 – staff sickness levels are showing an improving trend.
- CUST5 and CUST6 (customer satisfaction) - these public perception surveys are showing the lowest results since records.

- FINA6 (savings and income) remains a concern; this was addressed by the Section 151 Officer at the last panel meeting.

## **9 Corporate Complaints Annual Report 2016/2017**

- Andrew Taylor came to present the Complaints Annual Report
- This has been the busiest year on record. Complaints are increasing each year with last year seeing an increase of 16% - this is thought to be in large part to the austerity measures which are taking place
- There are specific procedures for following complaints as they come in depending on the subject of the complaint
- There are designated officers dealing with specific queries e.g. social services
- Complaints are different to service requests. Service requests require a service to complete or undertake a task they are supposed to. A complaint looks at the quality of a service or a repeated failure to meet standards. The difference is identified by the team upon contact
- The team have adopted the 'All Wales' complaints model
- There are different stages in the complaints process. Stage 1 aims to resolve the issue within 10 working days via a senior member in the service departments, if this cannot be done to the clients satisfaction then it can be progressed to stage 2 which has a more in depth investigation by the Complaints Team
- Some complaints are complex and take longer than the preferred 10 working days but the client is kept informed of this
- The figures include all complaints made directly to the service departments too as there is a central shared database which everyone contributes to and the data is gathered from there
- The complaints team try and be as independent as possible and work with the departments to try and resolve matters quickly
- There are differences between 'complaints' and 'criticisms' and these are distinguished by the complaints team upon contact
- 43% of complaints are either partially or fully justified
- Stage 2 complaints increased by 37% - the team are small and have had staff losses. If they cannot meet the deadline, the team explain why
- The team also keep records of Welsh language complaints. Whether they be about the use of Welsh language or whether the complaint itself is made in Welsh
- There is a slightly different and specific way of recording Social Services complaints
- The Ombudsman did not investigate any of the issues referred to them from Swansea – this is pleasing
- Compliments are also received and these are reported to Corporate Management Team monthly
- People who make detrimental comments on social media are difficult to deal with but there are circumstances where Swansea Council have got the police involved so any member who has a negative experience should inform the Council
- If anonymous complaints are made about safeguarding, they are not ignored
- Discussed exemptions relating to Freedom of Information Requests

- 3 complaints ended up with the Information Commissioner
- Andrew Taylor is the Freedom of Information reviewing officer
- There are standards of behaviour expected from clients accessing Swansea Council services. This means that staff members are not exposed to abusive or inappropriate behaviour
- Members were reminded that they can refer any complaints they receive to the complaints team too
- The Social Services Annual Complaints Reports for Children's Services and Adult Services were referred into the appropriate Panels
- Complaints are increasing each year

**10 Budget Proposals 2018/19**

- The Convener had sent Ben Smith a list of questions to answer in relation to the draft budget proposals

**11 Work Plan 2017/18**

- The Highways and Transportation Commissioning Review will come to the Panel early February
- The budget scrutiny will take place on 6<sup>th</sup> February

The meeting ended at 12.15 pm

**Chair**