



Report of the Cabinet Members for Children's Services

Scrutiny Programme Committee – 12 November 2018

Key Headlines: Cabinet Members for Children's Services

Purpose: This report outlines notable activities and achievements in terms of ensuring the delivery of key priorities within the Children's Services portfolio. It describes some of the improvements made and the impact of these activities in terms of delivering key activities within the portfolio. The report also identifies objectives, key challenges and decisions which are anticipated for Cabinet over the next 12 months. It also sets out how the Well-being of Future Generations Act (Wales) is being used to achieve positive outcomes

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For Information

1.0 The Portfolio for Children's Services

1.1 Key responsibilities within the portfolio include;

- Best Start in Life (EK)
- Corporate parenting lead (EK)
- Families First (EK)
- Flying Start (EK)
- Play Opportunities (EK)
- Regional Adoption Service (EK)
- Safe Looking After Children (LAC) Reduction Strategy (EK)
- Child & Family Services (EK)
- Continuum of Care (EK)

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- Apprenticeships Support (WE)
 - NEETS reduction (support) (WE)
 - Opportunities for Young People (WE)
 - Promoting Youth Inclusion & Youth Citizenships (WE)
 - Readiness for work (support) (WE)
 - Youth Offending Service (Y.O.S.) (WE)
 - Youth Services (Evolve) (WE)
 - UNCRC (WE)
 - Children & Young People Board Lead (WE)
 - Lead elements of Sustainable Swansea (both)
 - Poverty Reduction (both)
 - Safeguarding (both)
- 1.2 Responsibility for Children's Services is shared between Councillor Elliot King (EK) who leads on Early Years and Councillor Will Evans (WE) who leads on Young People. This clear designation of lead roles reflects the statutory nature of many areas within the portfolio.
- 1.3 The Cabinet vote rotates every three months. During the months when one does not hold the vote, they act as a non-executive member in constituted meetings but maintain responsibility for the areas on which they lead.
- 1.4 The Cabinet members provide strategic direction to departments delivering the services within the portfolio. Their role is to drive the delivery of corporate and political priorities by working closely with senior directors and heads of service. This involves the monitoring of key performance indicators and ensuring appropriate actions are taken, tracking the delivery of planned savings and supporting the identification of any future transformational opportunities. Site visits help the Cabinet members understand the delivery of services from the perspective of frontline staff and service users.
- 1.5 Children's Services is a new portfolio created in June 2018. As a result, the two cabinet members responsible for the portfolio are relatively new to their role. This is reflected in the focus of this report which sets out key highlights relating to portfolio priorities which will be continued moving forward alongside key objectives for the future.
- 1.6 This report highlights the progress made and future areas of focus in relation to key priorities within the portfolio including contributing to and supporting the CIW review of children's services; work with officers in young people's services to monitor and support the number of young people requiring statutory intervention by Child and Family Services and collaborative work to ensure the successful delivery of cross cutting initiatives such as NEETS Reduction, readiness for work and apprenticeships, The report also highlights other notable areas of achievement and focus for the longer term.

2.0 **Contributing and supporting the CIW Review of Children's Services Wales.**

2.1 **Summary of Findings** - The recent CIW Review of Children's Services found good quality practice with positive outcomes achieved for most children and families. The vision was well established and the service was effectively delivered by staff that were dedicated, well supported and enjoyed working for a local authority where there was a culture of support. The children and young people they heard from were generally positive about the support they received and were appreciative of the relationships with their social workers. The report also found there is good support in place for care leavers who were helped with a range of housing options, employment and further educational opportunities and access to benefits.

The report identified a number of areas for improvement and that although some children and young people are achieving good educational outcomes and no looked after children have been permanently excluded from school, there is scope to improve support and opportunities for others. In addition to investment and the reorganisation of education, the Council is in the process of developing a new £8 million purpose-built centre for children educated other than at school (EOTAS) subject to Welsh Government funding.

Child and Family Services have redesigned their supported care planning teams and this is beginning to show results in terms of improving outcomes for children and improved performance in key areas. The residential children's home has relocated to premises which provide a more 'homely' environment for children and young people and a successful ICF bid has provided the opportunity to develop a 'family centre' on the old Ty Nant site. This facility will deliver statutory contact responsibilities in a child friendly environment and provide support to enable more children to remain safely at home in the care of their families. The centre is accessible for disabled children and their families and has a sensory room. A regional service (MAPSS) providing therapeutic support to Looked After Children is now in place to support children recover from the trauma they have experienced.

2.2 **Families First** - A number of prestigious awards have been won for services initiated, developed and funded within the Families First Programme namely the 'Team Around the Family in schools' initiative and the 'Jig-so Service'. These include the Guardian Public Services Award 2017, the Royal College of Midwifery National Award 2018 and the All Wales Continuous Improvement Council/Academi Wales Award 2018 Award.

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During 2017/18, The Families Programme engaged with 6560 cases, closing 84% with a positive outcome. Distance Travelled Evaluations that showed a forward movement of 81%, while families reporting an improvement in family resilience of 78%. 86% of participants benefited from improved emotional/mental wellbeing.

2.3 The integrated **Jig-so Project** has been established and developed to support vulnerable young families from conception and during the child's infant years. This is a multi-disciplinary team of Midwives, National Nursery Examination Board (NNEB) and Parenting and Early Language Development practitioners working closely with wider partners such as core Midwifery and Health Visiting to provide a pathway of support. The Council is working with Health colleagues to develop further the Primary Care Early Years Project expanding to further GP Clusters as funding becomes available.

2.4 **Flying Start** - offers free, high quality part-time childcare for children aged 2 in targeted areas in the more deprived areas of Swansea. The aim is to help them develop so they are ready to start nursery school and to help their families support their children. In 2017/18, 2,955 children benefitted from the Flying Start programme and the childcare attendance average remained on target above the national average at 80%. The Council successfully applied to the Welsh Government for capital grants for Flying Start centres in the City. More than £100,000 will be spent improving pre-school facilities for young children in some of the most deprived areas of Swansea. It will be used to improve and upgrade children's areas, add additional facilities and improve security and safety at seven sites.

Moving forward, the focus is on developing a framework for children with additional learning needs aligned to the ALN system for statutory school aged children.

2.5 The **Continuum of Care** programme is key to embedding the Information, Advice and Assistance service and work to create other clear points of entry is the development of the local family support continuum and early help arrangements, which are also aimed at changing the 'doing for' culture. Timely delivery of this project is critical to the delivery of the strategies to safely reduce the numbers of Looked After Children and improve the financial sustainability of Child & Family Services.

3.0 **Working with officers in the Young People Services to monitor and support the reduction the number of young people requiring statutory intervention by Child and Family Services**

3.1 **Opportunities for Young People** - A new Youth Hub model was introduced following satellite club closures in 2017/18. During this period 1,262 Young People were supported through Youth Club provision.

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However, moving forward further budget savings against youth club provision will be considered.

Gower Activity Centres provide valuable opportunities for young people to develop. 1,887 individuals accessed Gower Activities Centre during 2017/18. Building improvements have been completed at the Borfa House Centre during 2017/18. Rural RDP Funding was secured to undertake a feasibility study for next steps in the centres. This work is currently being undertaken and is due for completion in January 2019.

Info-nation is an Information, Advice and Assistance service available and accessible to young people who are 16 and 17 years based in the City centre, with a wide range of support available. During 2017/18, 3189 young people accessed support through Info-nation. This year also saw the continued embedding of the new co-location of Bays Plus into the model.

- 3.2 **Evolve** is Swansea Council's young people's service, offering a range of services for young people, and their families. This includes support from a lead worker, in times of difficulty, specialist support in areas such as sexual health, domestic abuse, risk taking behaviour, safety online and opportunities for young people that require additional support to get in, and stay in, employment, education or training.

The services contributes to the reduction in numbers of young people and families identified as Child in Need, on Child Protection Register or Looked After. In 2017/18, 508 families were supported with 46, with post 16 Cases being co-worked with Social Services. 244 pre-referral and family consultations took place, 35 referral / step down meetings from Social Services and 40 referrals recommended by Social Services. Results include 134 cases closed with improved well-being and improved school attendance in 223 cases.

Estyn have published guidance on the importance of youth work in providing a support structure around secondary education. Scrutiny is provided by the Corporate Parenting Board.

A new framework has been embedded with aim of improving performance. The continued process of embedding the Signs of Wellbeing Practice Framework across all teams to improve practice and outcomes will go on in 2018. Basic cost analysis work has been undertaken with further work to be taken forward. These calculations indicate potential savings to statutory services.

- 4.0 **Working closely with Cabinet colleagues and others to ensure the successful delivery of cross cutting initiatives such as NEETS Reduction, readiness for work, and apprenticeships**

- 4.1 **NEETS Reduction (Support)** - Programmes are targeted to work with young people who are at greatest risk of being NEET by offering tailored

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support to remove barriers to education, employment or training, including strengthening young people's readiness to engage. The Cabinet members support the portfolio lead for Education improvement, Learning and skills in relation to this and other areas such as readiness for work and apprenticeships.

Robust multi-agency monitoring and tracking continues to take place under the authorities Youth Progression & Engagement Plan, overseen by the NEET (Not in Employment, Education or Training) Board.

The Council has also participated in the Cam Nesa collaboration aimed at reducing the number of NEET young people among 16-24 year olds. Cam Nesa is a regional programme led by Pembrokeshire which commenced work in January of 2018. To date the team has been recruited, and led by our Young People's Services.

Moving forward - The NEETs Board will be carrying out a review of activity, with a view to tweaking our Council and Partnership programmes to achieve further reductions in the numbers of young people who are NEET in Swansea. Cam Nesa will also continue, striving to deliver to the performance profile.

4.2 Readiness for Work (support) - Plans are currently being finalised to provide specific support to our Looked After Children to help them find and secure work under the umbrella of Swansea Working – an emerging programme that aligns employment support to ensure the right support is in place at the right time. This includes ring-fenced opportunities through our apprenticeships programme.

4.3 Poverty Reduction (support) – The Cabinet members ensure a corporate approach is adopted to implementing the revised Poverty Strategy. This includes the adoption of a Cross-Departmental Delivery Plan which sets out commitments across the council ensuring tackling poverty is everyone's business.

The work of Swansea working, including support for NEETs and Looked After Children will impact positively on poverty reduction.

4.4 Apprenticeships (support) - working across Cabinet portfolios achieves integrated results that add value. Collaborative work between Corporate Building Services and Social Services has resulted in significantly improving opportunities for Looked After Children to secure apprenticeships. 55 apprenticeships trained in 2017/18, with 3 apprenticeships being secured by Looked After Children. This is a direct result of promoting and targeting the scheme to Looked After Children.

5.0 Other Activities

5.1 Embedding UNCRC across council services - This teaches young citizens to respect rights, understand responsibilities and be globally

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aware and responsible citizens by continuing to support schools to become UNICEF Rights Respecting Schools as part of our commitment to the UNCRC

We are continuing to roll out our Children and Young People's Rights Scheme in Swansea schools in order to teach children and young people about citizenship, rights and understand responsibilities. During 2017-18, 100% of Swansea's schools were engaged in the process and 75% had achieved Level 1 or above.

Although the contract with UNICEF to deliver the Rights Respecting Schools Award has now ceased, we are working on a sustainable model to 'train the trainers' to become assessors so that the assessment process can continue. In addition, we continue to promote Children's Rights within the Council and through our wider partnerships.

5.2 Promoting **Youth Inclusion and Citizenship** - Children and young people have also been involved in decisions that affect them through the Children and Young People Super Survey and the Big Conversation. In 2017, almost 4,000 children and young people were asked about their views on school, education, their health and well-being and decision-making. Almost 2,500 children and young people took part in the Big Conversation and discussed topics such as homelessness, healthy relationships and the Council's budget. Children and young people who were looked after (LAC) also took part in the process through the LAC forums such as the 123 Forum for 7-10 year olds, the Shout Out Group for 11-17 year olds, activities with Voices from Care and a new 16+ and Care Leavers Forum.

5.3 To develop a route **supporting looked after children/care leavers** into employment within and external to the Council. This builds on readiness for work (support). When a child is looked after by a local authority, the Council becomes a corporate parent with legal and moral responsibility for that child. The aim is for Looked After Children to succeed in school and to have opportunities for further education, higher education, employment or training. Cllr King sits on the Western Bay Regional Adoption Service Board.

6.0 The Well-being of Future Generations Act

The sustainable development principle's five ways of working underpin how the portfolio operates.

6.1 **Prevention** - The Council's Prevention Strategy aims to promote action to intervene earlier in order to support people at greatest risk, change behaviours and prevent the need for costly specialist services. It is anticipated that this will help to make families and communities more resilient, reduce the demand for Council services, lower costs and achieve better outcomes

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Work in the early years of a child's life can help support families and mitigate the effects of deprivation on future life chances and prospects. Early Years provision at the earliest possible stage in a child's life can help prevent the escalation of need into more costly statutory services, support children to achieve at school and break the cycle of poor future outcomes; particularly those caused by Adverse Childhood Experiences. At the same time, key public health messages can be promoted and conveyed helping to improve overall health and well-being.

The premise of the Families First programme is prevention, early intervention and a focus on the long term as opposed to reactive services responding to needs higher up the continuum. There is a strong focus on ACEs in relation to prevention work.

- 6.2 **Involvement** – Looked after children now have an even stronger voice in what matters to them and better life opportunities achieved through a range of high quality services, which is supported by Swansea's Corporate Parenting Board. A new Participation and Coproduction strategy in Child and Family Services seeks to promote a wider range of participation and involvement opportunities for looked after children. Bright Spots, provides 360-degree feedback for children in framework placements, life story work, presentation at reviews, etc.

Best Start events in 2018 showed great public interaction. Twitter impressions from Jan-September 2018 numbered over 145,417.

- 6.3 **Long term** – Flying Start has a focus on the long term as opposed to reactive services responding to greater needs particularly in relation to children's development.

Swansea still has large numbers of people not in work. The detrimental impact of deprivation begins at a very young age and builds up through a person's lifetime. The Council's Youth Progression and Engagement Framework seeks to help break this cycle by providing opportunities to ensure that young people have opportunities to be in education, employment or training so that they can reach their future potential.

- 6.4 **Integration** – Close links have been developed between Flying Start and the Foundation Phase in order to ensure children's readiness for school and to prevent educational disadvantage in later school years. Coordinating work with Health partners ensures that all children access part time Foundation Phase entitlement help from the term following their third birthday.

Evolve Youth Services is working towards the continued integration of work with schools and area social work teams. The contribution of staff member to a new integrated IAA service following Vanguard review should be noted.

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- 6.5 **Collaboration** – This common denominator underpins the portfolio’s services. The extent to which this portfolio supports other Cabinet member’s areas of responsibility is notable. Apprenticeships, safeguarding, NEETS reduction, poverty reduction etc. are very much Team Swansea approaches with the Cabinet members like staff engaging across sectors to improve well-being. Councillor Evans and Cllr King respectively chair and vice-chair the Children and Young People’s Partnership.

An excellent example of collaborative working is the purpose built Mountain View Children’s Centre, GP Surgery and Pharmacy. The co-location of complementary services enables parental engagement to be enabled and maximised e.g. baby massage is offered alongside baby clinic.

Another example is the investment in new NEET provision at Info-Nation located on the Kingsway, which is co-located with a wider range of Post 16 providers.

- 6.6 Examples of where **contribution to the national well-being goals** can be seen include

- *A more Equal Wales* – where children utilise the strengths of families and communities in their own care so that they reach their potential and avoid needing to access or remain in statutory services.
- *A Wales of Cohesive Communities* - Council employees, elected Members and people in our communities feel confident about how to identify, discuss and report safeguarding concerns in respect of children and adults.
- *A globally responsible Wales* – the Council’s safeguarding arrangements are informed by the Council’s commitment to the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC). Each secondary school in Swansea were asked to nominate pupils for the UK Youth Parliament and a Member and Deputy Member were elected in July 2017.
- *Vibrant culture and thriving Welsh Language* - Swansea Museum and the Glyn Vivian art Gallery have undertaken exhibition and project work that has included work with NEET young people and young carers. A regional collaboration with Creative & Cultural Skills offering work placements in Heritage Skills (funded by HLF) for young people who are not in employment, education or training (NEETs) is hosted at our Galleries and Museums. The first cohort begin their placement in September 2018.
- *Cohesive Communities* – The Fusion programme has proved a cost effective way of bringing together the Council and third sector to create more cultural opportunities for more diverse communities. Regular free

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culture sessions are now being provided for vulnerable groups which include looked after children, carers and NEETS.

- *Resilient Wales* – Gower Activity Centres provide valuable opportunities for urban children to experience nature and develop an appreciation for biodiversity.
- *Prosperous Wales* – Swansea Working and efforts to support vulnerable children be the best they can be will enable a well skilled workforce and stronger economy.

7.0 Links to the Public Services Board and Local Well-being Plan

- 7.1 The multi-agency working common to so many of the portfolio's services means that most activity has a link to the Public Services Board's Local Well-being Plan. Best Start in Life is a collaborative work stream led by Public Health Wales with the Early Years Steering Group reporting directly to the Public Services Board.

As a Local Well-being Objective, an action plan is being agreed to implement specific steps which include multi agency support for parents through birth and during early childhood, further integrating Early Years services and earlier intervention. Recent achievements include joining the First 1000 Days Collaborative. Swansea is the first PSB region in Wales where all PSBs are committed to this initiative.

Close connections to Council services such as flying start are implicit within the Early Years Local Well-being objective. While work supporting NEET reduction, Readiness for work, poverty reduction and Evolve (Young People Services) are supportive of the Local Wellbeing objectives of Stronger Communities and Live Well, Age Well.

The Assessment of Local Well-being also plays a key role in providing many services such as NEET Reduction with an evidence base and is central to all work in Evolve (Young People's Services)

- 7.2 **Lead Elements of Sustainable Swansea** - The particular areas relevant to this portfolio are the; the increased focus on prevention and early intervention as a way of managing growing demand effectively, a shift to greater citizen involvement and coproduction; a more multi-agency approach to meeting people's needs and a culture shift from 'service deliverer' to 'service enabler'.

8.0 Financial and Legal Implications

- 8.1 There are no financial implications associated with this report
- 8.2 There are no legal implications associated with this report