

Meeting	The Full Council
Date	28.02.13
Cabinet Member	Councillor Wyn Williams
Title	Annual Report of the Cabinet Member and Portfolio Leader for Social Services
Purpose	To report on the work of the Cabinet Member and Portfolio Leader over the period 2012-2013 and outline the direction of the service from 2013 onwards
Recommendation	That the Council members accept the report.
Author	

1. Purpose of the report

1.1 The main objective of this report is to update the Council on the latest developments in the field of social work and care in Gwynedd over the past year. In addition, the report will outline matters which will require attention over the next year in the wake of national, regional and local developments.

A – 2012-2013

2. Leadership:

2.1 In August 2012 Morwena Edwards was appointed to the post of Statutory Director of Social Services and Head of Housing, Social Services and Leisure, following the departure of the former Director, Gwen Carrington, who was appointed Director in Anglesey. As a Council, we express our thanks to Mrs Carrington for her work over recent years and we welcome Mrs Edwards, and look forward to collaborating with her for the benefit of the residents and communities of Gwynedd. A system has already been established which ensures that ,as the Portfolio Lead and Cabinet Member, I have regular meetings with the Director, and am updated on national, regional and local matters.

2.2 As a first step following her appointment, the Director undertook a “stock take”, visiting offices within the areas and interviewing managers and frontline staff. She also met with statutory partners including those from the third sector, and all were given the opportunity to voice their opinion. Following this, a conference was held for managers, where an analysis of the main findings resulting from the stock take was presented. It was noted that frontline staff were

enthusiastic and anxious to develop services, but were reluctant to act as a result of the strict command and control managerial structures that currently exist. The Director's main message in the conference, therefore, was the need for managers to be leaders, to encourage staff to manage themselves and work towards developing pioneering developments in care in Gwynedd. The overall aim is to develop excellent services.

3. Safeguarding and Protection:

3.1 One could argue that the most critical field within Social Services is that of safeguarding and protecting in relation to children, young people and vulnerable adults. The new Director immersed herself in this field, which included ensuring specialist training and direct contact with and support from NSPCC experts and others.

3.2 Throughout this initial period she needed to respond to the results of audits into child protection issues in Pembrokeshire, and ensure corporate ownership of safeguarding and protection matters. In order to fulfil this, a Strategic Safeguarding and Protection Group was established on a corporate level within the Council and it was agreed that this matter would be a standing item on the agenda of the Corporate Management Group and Team. A structure was also established whereby the Director receives regular, formal performance reports on these matters – this is in addition to the expected feedback from relevant Senior Managers.

3.3 As a Cabinet Member with a leading role in the field, I am a member of the joint **Local Safeguarding Board** between Gwynedd and Anglesey. I am also a member of the Council's **Corporate Parenting Panel** which protects the interests of looked after children. The challenge is to ensure that we as a Council take ownership of the safeguarding agenda on a corporate level, and that we don't view it as an agenda for Social Services only.

4. Inspections:

4.1 During the period two inspections were undertaken by the Care and Social Services Inspectorate Wales including:

- A Fostering Inspection in October 2012. The final report was positive and no recommendations made, or requirements placed on the service. It was noted that the standard of the service was good in terms of leadership and management, in terms of support for foster carers and in terms of the stability of placements, with the stability figure for this year the best in Wales. In terms of improving the service, the main observations related to the need to strengthen consultation practices (with children specifically). The service had already identified and reported on this need.
- An Inspection into the Role of the Statutory Director of Social Services in Gwynedd in December 2012. We are awaiting feedback following the inspection, as it was originally stated that the draft report would be

available in mid-January. No formal feedback has been received to date, but it is understood that the final report will be one which integrates the findings of a series of inspections rather than a report on the situation of individual authorities.

In addition, the Inspectorate published its annual evaluation of social services in Gwynedd. This noted that

“The performance of Social Services in Gwynedd has improved year on year and this has continued during 2011-2012”

In relation to improvements, it was noted that the modernisation of preventative services for adults needed impetus and that changes needed to be achieved. The need to develop further co-working and joint working with health at all levels was also noted.

5 The Service's Performance

5.1 As Portfolio Member I attended the Service's quarterly monitoring meetings where information was submitted on performance against targets in relation to indicators (national and local), and where progress was discussed in respect of agreed improvements for the period. The information submitted was challenged. Following these meetings information was submitted to the relevant Delivery Panel which I chaired.

5.2 It should be noted that the service is developing a method of results-based reporting for these meetings, with indicators allocated to overall results. This made it easier to start assessing which indicators would have a positive effect on the result, thus demonstrating where the service should focus its efforts.

5.3 In the field of **children and families**, progress was seen in the performance in relation to several indicators in 2012-13, including responding to referrals, holding reviews, safeguarding conferences, statutory visits and young carers. It was seen that the indicators/measures at Strategic Plan level were performing positively. The performance in relation to the percentage of statutory reviews for looked after children completed on time, and ensuring that every child has a Personal Education Plan, fell. These matters will be addressed by relevant Service Managers.

5.4 In terms of improvements, there is now a Plan in place for implementing the Integrated Family Service across North Wales. Three teams have been established in the north, with a regional Management Board and Wrexham Council leading. On a local level it was agreed that Gwynedd and Anglesey would collaborate, with Anglesey leading on this development. A Shadow Board has already been established.

5.5 During this period a formal Section 33 Agreement was endorsed by the Betsi Cadwaladr University Health Board and the Council, with the aim of strengthening the collaborative relationship between both bodies in respect of

disabled and ill children and young people – the Derwen Service. As the Portfolio Member, I am a member of the **Derwen Management Board**.

5.6 The **adults'** field saw the opening of the Awel y Coleg Extra Care Housing Unit, Bala which contains 30 units – 20 have been let to tenants. The enablement development continued to perform well, with the Enablement Unit at Plas Gwilym (for users with short-term intensive intervention needs) assisting 75% of service users to return home. Furthermore, the analysis of the older population's needs in the Porthmadog area was completed – the report was presented at a meeting in Porthmadog. (11:02:13)

5.7 In relation to day care for older people Age Cymru developed Ageing Well facilities in both Nefyn and Bala with a host of activities organised for older people. The Department is currently working on developing sustainable day services for the future across adult services. These will need to be flexible and locally based in order to empower individuals and communities whilst maintaining a balance between choice, independence and support. This will entail co-working with partners from the third sector and others in order to ensure a sufficient range of provision.

5.8 The profile of the Carers agenda increased over the period with an emphasis on the need to meet the needs of informal carers. Without a doubt the Gwynedd Carers' Partnership has ensured attention to this particular field and it will be an agenda which will require detailed attention in Social Services Business Plans over the next 12 months. It is a priority for the Welsh Government.

5.9 Needs mapping is currently being undertaken in relation to learning disability and autism and relevant "champions" have been included in the process. In addition, "enablement" is being developed as a practice principle in order to promote independence and assist individuals to achieve their full potential.

5.10 During the period the Arfon Mental Health Team moved to the Hergest Unit site at Ysbyty Gwynedd and established a management structure with one county manager. In addition, the Out of Hours Emergency Service moved to offices on the same site. This has facilitated co- working with health on the front line. Partnership meetings were established with health in order to ensure effective co- working and agreement on a management level.

5.11 As Portfolio Lead I also represent the Council on the **Youth Justice Service Board** (a joint service between Gwynedd and Anglesey), the **Welfare Reform Panel**, the **Mantell Gwynedd Board**, and the **Betsi Cadwaladr Health Board**.

6 Resources

6.1 The last year was difficult in terms of identifying savings and ensuring the least possible impact on frontline services, bearing in mind that this was within the context of an increased demand for services, and the need to develop in accordance with legislative and policy requirements. I can report that the service

is making progress against the savings targets, but that some of the main projects are causing some concern in respect of timetables. The service has proceeded with the plan of transforming older people's services, with increased emphasis on encouraging and promoting independence through extending the range of provision available (by partners such as Age Cymru, and internally through plans such as enablement and telecare). A decrease was seen yet again in the use made of traditional residential home placements.

6.2 It is true to say that the process of transformation is extremely challenging in any field, but perhaps particularly so in the care field where traditionally we have tended to interpret care as "caring for" with the result that our traditional provision mean "doings things for" users. Our users' voice is clear, however, and their message is that we should listen to them and include them in every step of any planning, review or evaluation of services, with an emphasis on supporting them to live as independently as they wish within their own communities. I am convinced as portfolio lead that we can realise our ambition, provided we start by focusing on users' needs as defined by them.

7 Appointment of Champions:

7.1 Champions were appointed to the following fields within the care field during the period:-

- Older People – Councillor Gareth Thomas
- Carers – Councillor Eryl Jones-Williams
- Autism – Councillor Dr. Elin Walker Jones
- Disabilities – Councillor Peter Read

B- 2013 onwards

8. Sustainable Social Services:

8.1 In June 2011 the Welsh Government published a paper on the future of social services in Wales, namely Sustainable Social Services – an Action Framework, which set out the framework for meeting the challenges that are likely to face the social services over the next ten years and beyond. These include

- Change in the social context
- Demography
- Increasing demand for resources
- Lack of consistency between authorities and relevant bodies

8.2. Priorities for action were noted in the document, and the need to redesign and refocus the services was emphasised, thus ensuring that they would be strong enough to respond to the needs and aspirations of citizens in the future.

8.3 In October 2012, the Local Authority Action Plan in respect of the above was published. In January 2013 the first phase of the Social Services Bill (Wales) was launched with the aim of establishing a coherent legislative framework for Social Services in Wales and transforming services.

8.4 The Bill contains six main fields, namely, the need to:

- Promote the well-being of people in need, including carers
- Promote the individual's voice and control in relation to access to services, assessments and competence
- Set a strong national direction and local accountability
- Safeguarding and protection
- Regulation and inspection
- Services (Adoption and transition for disabled children and young people)

8.5 This will mean shifting our emphasis here in Gwynedd from the traditional services and provisions and focusing on

- Ensuring that the voice of the citizen, the user and the carer is central to planning, developing and evaluating services in general in addition to individual care arrangements
- Developing every aspect of commissioning practice and developing our relationship with providers
- Continuously improving performance and practice and focusing on results
- Securing a workforce that has the necessary skills and managers who can lead on changes
- Strengthening the ability to safeguard children, young people and vulnerable adults
- Integrating services, particularly in relation to health, and developing new service models
- Developing the prevention agenda and the agenda of promoting independence

8.6 The above sets the agenda and the challenge for developments in the future. We will have considerable work ahead of us if we are to ensure that we fulfil the agenda. In order to ensure a voice for Gwynedd on a national level in relation to this agenda of change, as a Portfolio Lead I attend the ***Social Services National Policy Group***.

9. Sustainable Communities and Preventative Work

9.1 The need to transform services as a result of demographic changes, an increased demand for services and the need to target diminishing resources have already been explained in this report. The need for the service to develop to be more accountable to citizens, to listen to the users' voice and to collaborate more closely with partners to ensure the best services and to evidence value for money, has also been explained. Undoubtedly, the emphasis will move from focusing solely on users in intensive situations to focusing on the preventative agenda, thus eliminating or reducing the need for formal intervention for as long as possible. The emphasis will be on promoting health and independence within communities. In order to ensure this, we will need to strive to develop and strengthen structures that can support the most vulnerable people within communities. Moving in this direction will be a new experience in the care field, and we will not be able to address the agenda on our own. We will need to

collaborate with health, leisure, local organisations and others to realise this, but in the long term it is believed that we will see a significant and positive effect on the people of Gwynedd.

10Close

10.1 Substantial changes were witnessed over the past year, but the Service succeeded in maintaining performance and continued to offer a high-standard of service. We will certainly see significant changes over the coming years, and I know that expectations of the Service will increase. The ambition is to ensure a service of the very highest standard – an excellent service – with staff self-managing in an effort to achieve the aim, and managers operating as leaders in the transformation process. Most particularly, we will see the service forming a partnership with users, carers and the citizens of Gwynedd in order to plan effectively for the future. The agenda is challenging but I am convinced that the service and the department are ready to face that challenge. I ask the Council to accept this report as an outline of my work over the past year as Cabinet Member and Portfolio Lead for Social Services.