



IMPROVEMENT AND ASSURANCE BOARD

MINUTES

Wednesday 25 April 2018, 14:00 – 17:00

Committee Room A, County Hall, Llandrindod Wells

Present

Jack Straw (Chair)	JS	Independent Adviser
Bozena Allen	BA	Independent Adviser
Geoff Burrows	GB	Welsh Local Government Association (WLGA) Adviser
Cllr Aled Davies	AD	Deputy Leader
Jeremy Evans	JE	Performance Audit Manager, Wales Audit Office
Cllr James Gibson-Watt	JGW	Leader of the Liberal Democrat Group
Cllr Rosemarie Harris	RH	Executive Leader
Phil Hodgson	PH	WLGA Adviser
Reg Kilpatrick	RK	Welsh Government
Emma Palmer	EP	Acting Head of Strategic Policy and Performance
David Powell	DP	Acting Chief Executive
Jaki Salisbury	JSa	Independent Adviser
Jane Thomas	JT	Head of Financial Services & Acting Section 151 Officer
Rachel Thomas	RT	WLGA Adviser
Caroline Evans	CE	Secretariat, PCC
Felicity Llewellyn	FL	Minute Taker

In Attendance – PCC Representative

			Present for Item: -
Louise Barry	LB	Head of Operations for Adult Services	9
Ian Budd	IB	Director of Education	5 – 8
Alison Bulman	AB	Director of Social Services	6 – 9
Cllr James Evans	JE	Portfolio Holder for Corporate Governance	5
Phil Evans	PE	Interim Director of Social Services	6 – 9
Sean Harriss	SH	Adviser, Welsh Government	1 – 4
Cllr Stephen Hayes	StH	Portfolio Holder for Adult Services	9
David Johnston	DJ	Interim Head of Children Services	6 – 8
Dylan Owen	DO	Head of Transformation for Adult Services	9
Cllr Rachel Powell	RP	Portfolio Holder for Young People	6 – 8

<p>1.</p>	<p>Minutes from last meeting and Action Log</p> <p>The minutes of the last meeting, dated 28 March 2018, were agreed as a true record.</p> <p>The Chair expressed the Board’s thanks to Phil Evans for his contribution and efforts whilst in post as Interim Director of Social Services, and welcomed Alison Bulman as the permanent Director of Social Services.</p> <p>Dr. Mohammed Mehmet is joining the authority next week as Acting Chief Executive. Thanks were expressed to David Powell for his contribution whilst undertaking the role of Acting Chief Executive.</p>
<p>2.</p>	<p>Review of short-term support package</p> <p>SH presented key messages from his presentation, which was circulated with the agenda, and requested that the Board particularly refer to the ‘Challenges and Learning’ slides.</p> <p>Politically and managerially, overall, PCC engaged enthusiastically and worked together well to make progress in the vast majority of areas.</p> <p>Progress has been made on identifying the budget priorities for 2019/20 and beyond. The importance of the MTFs over the next three to six months was highlighted, with a particular focus on delivering the plan.</p> <p>There has been an enormous shift in quality and quantity of information, including the format.</p> <p>Recommendation: That the board revisit how the Council intends to rollout the key messages regarding organisation development and change management in the medium-term. Action: Acting Chief Executive.</p> <p>Recommendation: That the Board notes that the introduction of key changes, such as the appointment of a new Acting Chief Executive and a permanent Director of Social Services, has taken longer than hoped. RH explained that it had not been possible for the new Acting Chief Executive to start sooner than 30 April 2018.</p> <p>The involvement of the opposition groups was welcomed.</p> <p>Recommendation: That the Board acknowledge that the authority does not possess the abundance of skills and capacity needed to drive improvements, and the need to ensure that expertise, experience and capacity is available and remains available. Action: Acting Chief Executive.</p> <p>SH commended the willing and capable Senior Officers instrumental in developing the work.</p> <p>The Chair welcomed comments and observations.</p>

	<p><u>Recommendation:</u> That the authority consider producing a one-page list of transformation projects with a simple explanation of how transformation is being progressed. It was noted that the Executive Management Team had discussed this in detail during their morning session.</p> <p>It was discussed that there is a commitment to the Cabinet Secretary in relation to the recommendations, and that it was expected that Dr. Mohammed Mehmet would reflect upon the recommendations and their implementation, negotiating with Welsh Government any changes to the agreed support package.</p>
3.	<p>Review Terms of Reference of Improvement & Assurance Board</p>
	<p>It was queried as to whether this Board ought to report its formal recommendations to Powys County Council's (PCC) Cabinet, and it was confirmed that, should a formal recommendation be needed, a report would be provided to the Leader and Members.</p> <p>The Terms of Reference were adopted.</p>
4.	<p>Advisers Update</p>
	<p>PH noted that Service Managers and Team Managers are very conscious of quantitative data and the need to move to qualitative data, which will come at a later stage.</p> <p>DJ is currently considering MASH and similar multi-agency models.</p> <p><u>Recommendation:</u> To source professional expertise in terms of safeguarding now that the Corporate Safeguarding Board has been created.</p> <p><u>Recommendation:</u> To consider whether one of the two Portfolio Holders for Social Services would consider a safeguarding lead within their portfolio.</p> <p><u>Recommendation:</u> That Team Managers are supported to be more aware of how much money is being spent and what it is being spent on.</p> <p><u>Recommendation:</u> That prevention and early intervention is developed. The Children and Young People's Partnership is not yet showing delivery of focused targeted work to reduce Looked After Children (LAC).</p> <p><u>Recommendation:</u> That future workshops include front door, PPD, Performance and Benchmarking, Transition to Children's Services and Partnership and Integration.</p> <p><u>Action:</u> AB to consider the above.</p> <p><u>Action:</u> Thematic workshops will be developed to identify standard baselines that both services (Childrens and Adults) operate. Staff to have the same understanding of expectations. Key themes have been shared with AB. A pre-meeting has already been set up between AB, PH, Childrens and Adults to ensure data, issues, performance etc. has been reviewed and responses are available to the Board.</p>

	<p><u>Recommendation:</u> That Members engage with the visits to Monmouthshire to encourage a more outward-looking focus. GB highlighted the role and value of scrutiny in the decision making process. This work will continue, with further development training throughout the year.</p>
5.	<p>Corporate Leadership & Governance</p>
	<p>DP explained the new format of monthly performance reporting, which had been included within the agenda. It will continue to develop as PCC moves forward, but is intended to identify early warning indicators, and areas which would benefit from greater challenge (for example sickness absence, which is currently being reviewed). Further information is available to drill-down to on the live system.</p> <p><u>Recommendation:</u> That a quick glance single page of key issues is provided for greater clarity. <u>Action:</u> EP.</p> <p>The progress document was discussed.</p> <p><u>Recommendation:</u> That consideration is given to including stages i.e. stage 1 would be the first three months. This would allow manageable, trackable, progress.</p>
6.	<p>Children’s Services</p>
	<p>The Performance Report had been issued with the agenda, and the Chair invited questions.</p> <p>The Board recognised the efforts in developing both the performance and performance reporting, though noting that there is much done.</p> <p><u>Recommendation:</u> That the ‘early help, prevention and support’ aspect be built into the forward work programme of ‘Thursday’ meetings. <u>Action:</u> AB / IB.</p> <p>BA welcomed the data, particularly the ‘What’s working well?’, ‘What are we worried about’ and ‘What do we need to do?’ sections.</p> <p><u>Recommendation:</u> That there is cross-referencing to the Improvement plan to provide greater clarity. <u>Action:</u> EP.</p> <p>Three key performance indicators have shown significant improvement e.g. assessment, LAC reviews, and statutory visits, but remain below expectations. Supervision remains a significant challenge.</p> <p>It is important that the data is up-to-date and accurate; it was requested that if data is updated a verbal update should be provided to the Board.</p> <p><u>Action JS:</u> The Chair will circulate an appropriate, balanced, message to staff in appreciation of the hard work.</p>

Action CE: To build into the work programme that the Improvement Board will need to meet with the broader regional partnership in relation to safeguarding as there is a collaborative expectation.

Recommendation: That the 'What's working well?', 'What are we worried about' and 'What do we need to do?' sections should be brought to the top of the report, with supporting data behind. The five overriding 'important' items are within the report, but are not clearly indicated within the Executive Summary. Not all items have clear guidelines – for consistency, ensure all have target dates. An indication of the depth and breadth of each issue, and cross referencing to the Improvement plan, would be beneficial.

Action CE: The Overall Progress Report was discussed; it was agreed that this report need not be presented in future if the sentient points were included in the performance report, linked to the Improvement Plan.

7. Children's Services Workforce Structure and Strategy, incorporating agency staff reduction

The Board had previously requested that a basic workforce structure be identified to enable progress in reducing the number of agency staff within the service, but it was clear that this didn't fulfil the request. Meetings with Social Services staff are scheduled over the next fortnight to discuss the current and predicted workflows and workforce requirements.

Action DJ: Report detailed workforce requirements (for the next twelve months) to the Board at the next meeting.

Action DJ, IB and AB: To bring a workforce paper to the next Board.

Statement from DJ on progress made on the Workforce Structure:

"Children's services will continue to use a range of activities to help manage the budget with the support of corporate colleagues to ensure we continue to provide timely and appropriate services to children and their families.

Initially we have put in place an arrangement to manage down the number of agency social work staff as caseloads are further reduced. The proposed timetable for agency reduction is being actively managed and implemented and to date is on track. This is being achieved through closure of a number of wellbeing cases in each team. We are reviewing cases of children who have been open with a care and support plan for more than 6 months to assess if they can be closed. We are also focusing on ensuring the cases which can be managed at the TAF level are "stepped down" to the TAF process.

In addition to this, the authority and Health colleagues are reviewing the function of the MAAP to improve the commissioning of, procurement of, and contract management of placements for children with complex needs.

We have also initiated a review of children in residential social care placements and identified a small number of placements where we have assessed that these placements can come to an end by end of June 2018. The gross savings from these placements will amount to approximately £15K per week but with a net saving of about £10K given that we

will also need to provide a range of other services for these children to help support them wherever they live and to provide leaving care services where that is appropriate.

We will continue to review and “gate-keep” placements for children in residential settings and also review children in IFA and in-house provision with a view to reducing safely the LAC population and the reliance on other providers.

We continue to recruit and approve more carers for Powys and the marketing strategy continues to show dividends and we have also seen a small number (3) of foster carers from other agencies changing to become Powys foster carers, increasing our pool of carers and reducing the costs of the Powys children already in placement.

The workforce strategy is bringing some dividends with the recent open evening being well attended but not yet clear on who will actually apply successfully to Powys children’s services. We have appointed 2 NQSW staff this week in the South of the authority. We continue to build on our advertising and comms strategy to help recruit more permanent staff.

Finally, the significant benefit of having more reliable and current data from BI which the service is using more actively to manage plans and focus us on activity which will help manage the duration of interventions in some cases.”

A provisional finance outturn figure will be available within a week, and a balanced budget position is expected.

The Police have recommended the Welshpool team for an award for their significant work supporting a conviction.

The Corporate Insight Centre Team were thanked for their work on the developing the reports.

There are significant signs of improvement in a number of areas, but it is recognised that there are areas for further development.

8. 90 Day Update to WG – Children’s Services

Written feedback had been received from CIW regarding their recent visit, including a range of tasks to respond to (this is underway); it has to be submitted by 30 April.

A renewed warning notice has been issued by the Minister (i.e. another 90 days); comprehensive 90 day reports have been provided.

9. Adult Services

Action EP: The format of reporting for Adult Services to be aligned with that of the Childrens Service reports as from the next Board meeting.

Adult Services Improvement Plan

	<p>It was acknowledged that there is a need for a considerable reshaping of the Improvement Plan. A response to the inspection outcome will need to be provided within 20 days of the receipt of the report. The authority continues to develop the service and make positive changes.</p> <p>Action AB/EP: It was agreed that the Board would be included within the development of the plan prior to its submission.</p> <p>Action AB/LB: The Chair requested that the Board be sent information regarding the Inspection Report at the earliest possible time.</p>
10.	Financial Overview
	<p>A provisional finance outturn figure will be available within a week, and a balanced budget position is expected.</p> <p>The forward planning for 2019/20 is progressing, and proposals are being presented next week, the development of the Medium Term Financial Strategy continues.</p> <p>The CIPFA FM model phase one is completed; interviews were completed last week, a survey of the whole organisation will now take place, it is anticipated that the concluding report is available in early June.</p>
11.	Corporate Improvement Plan
	<p>No matters arising; not discussed.</p>
12.	Draft Performance Management & Quality Assurance Framework
	<p>No matters arising; not discussed.</p>
13.	Members Training
	<p>No matters arising; not discussed.</p>
14.	Any Other Business
	<p>Date of next Assurance Board: Wednesday 30 May 2018</p> <p>Note: Adult Services will be tabled first on the next agenda.</p> <p>Action CE: Cabinet Attendance It was agreed that Councillor Stephen Hayes, Councillor Rachel Powell and Councillor James Evans will be invited to attend the whole meeting in future.</p>