



Annual Review and Evaluation of Performance 2012/2013

Local Authority Name: Monmouthshire County Council

This report sets out the key areas of progress for the year 2012/13 in Monmouthshire Social Services Department and areas for future improvement

Summary

Monmouthshire County Council has set out a strategic vision and priorities for social care services and continues to progress its ambitious change programme across adult and children's social care in order to achieve this vision. The aim is to shape services in order to focus on prevention, early intervention and supporting people to remain independent. Its strategy seeks to draw on social enterprise, partners and communities to deliver services.

The council has demonstrated a commitment to further collaboration and integration with neighbouring authorities and partners across Gwent to develop and commission services. Strategies have been developed for the delivery of integrated services for adults with learning disabilities and people with mental health needs.

In adult services, integrated health and social care teams deliver reablement services through the Gwent Frailty model. Performance data suggests this is having a positive impact, with more people being supported to remain independent. The council has redesigned how it responds to initial contacts so that people who contact adult social services are spoken to by qualified staff who can facilitate solutions through advice, signposting or referral for further assessment.

In children's services, performance against national indicators has been stable or improved in a number of areas however the council has struggled to maintain performance in some areas. The number of looked after children increased in 2011/12 and has remained at this higher level this year which has created some resourcing pressures.

Considerable progress has been made during 2012/13 in restructuring children's services and redesigning processes to streamline and improve the effectiveness of services. This includes: the delivery of the Joint Assessment Families Framework via hubs located around secondary schools, the development of a new simplified single assessment form and the redesign of the transfer policy to improve decision making, and to ensure cases are progressed appropriately.

The council has taken steps to strengthen its children's safeguarding arrangements within children's services, taking responsibility for all safeguarding matters in relation to education. This has been an important element of the council's response to concerns highlighted in Estyn's review of Monmouthshire County Council's education services in November 2012.

The director's report and supporting heads of service reports set out the direction of travel of social services in Monmouthshire and provide a clear account of performance, and the improvement priorities the council will be working towards for the next year.

CSSIW has identified the following potential risks:

- Ability to implement change at a rate that keeps pace with increasing demand for both adult and children's services.
- Capacity to take forward and implement the modernisation agenda whilst continuing to deliver ongoing operational demands.
- Capacity to develop a quality assurance and performance management framework that will enable the council to assure itself that the service structures and new ways of working are delivering the desired outcomes.

Response to last year's areas of development

Engagement with CSSIW has been positive and the council has responded to some of the areas for development identified last year.

- A corporate parenting group was established in November 2012 and a corporate parenting strategy has been drafted but has yet to be finalised.
- The council has demonstrated a commitment to improving the support offered to carers in Monmouthshire by developing a carer's strategy which includes 10 priorities.
- The delivery of care plan reviews in adults and some aspects of children's services continue to decline. The council reports that this is due to a combination of recording issues, the new ethos of how it works with service users and capacity issues prior to restructuring in children's services. The council will need to assure itself the services delivered remain appropriate and are achieving desired outcomes.

Good practice identified

CSSIW has identified the following areas of good practice:

- The council has a clear vision for the future shape of services in order to meet demand and is proactively taking forward a modernisation agenda in order to achieve its vision.
- In adult services, a fully integrated model of care is supporting the delivery of reablement and the Gwent Frailty model. The number of people supported in the community is stabilising indicating that more people are being enabled to remain independent.
- People find it easier to contact adult services and receive timely and responsive services.

Visits and inspections undertaken during the year

There have been no service inspections this year, however, CSSIW has undertaken site visits to a number of carers groups including:

- The Alzheimer's Society Monmouthshire carers group, Llandogo Millennium Centre and Singing for the Brain Bridges centre, Monmouth. These visits provided the opportunity for CSSIW to hear about work carried out with some carers in need of support and to speak with the users of services. They provided evidence of services that provide opportunities for people with dementia and their carers to participate in a supervised activity and carers have an opportunity to chat.
- Two young carers groups run by Crossroads where we saw young people receiving good support, eg a texting service in schools to enable young carers to contact someone for support, computer safety guidance as well as the opportunity and space to have fun.

Monmouthshire County Council was one of the areas included in CSSIW's national review of the statutory role of the director of social services. This review found that the authority had systems and organisational features in place to support the statutory director of social services, and he had the seniority and professional authority to provide a strategic lead and promote ongoing change, partnership and modernisation on both a local authority and a Gwent wide basis.

These activities were in addition to the annual programme of inspections carried out by CSSIW of regulated services that are provided by the council.

Areas for follow up by CSSIW next year

A number of specific areas for improvement have been identified in the body of this report. The council's progress in relation to these will be the discussed with the

council during regular engagement meetings in the coming year. In addition, CSSIW will review progress in the following areas:

- Services for children with disabilities including transition pathways to adult services.
- Exploring the effectiveness of prevention and early intervention arrangements in Children's services.
- Work with the Wales Audit Office (WAO) to begin a review into the effectiveness of the Gwent Frailty project.
- Effectiveness of the new safeguarding and quality assurance unit.
- National thematic inspection of looked after children.
- National thematic review of commissioning of social care for older people.

PERFORMANCE

Shaping services:

The council demonstrates a clear understanding of the impact that changing demographics and economic conditions will have on demand and future need for support and social care services. Monmouthshire Local Service Board (LSB) brings together the leaders of local public and third sector organisations to plan and deliver effective services for citizens. The LSB has developed a Single Integrated Plan (SIP) which details a vision for sustainable and resilient communities, and includes outcomes for older people and families. These are reflected within the corporate improvement plan and the director's report. The SIP sets out a commitment to reconfigure and co-ordinate services to meet increasing demand and needs. The plan has been developed based on data analysis, engagement and consultation with stakeholders, including members of the community. The council recognises the importance of developing strong partnerships, integration and commissioning arrangements in order to deliver against partnership priorities as set out in the SIP.

Adults

The council is implementing changes to reshape adult services to be fit for purpose in the future. The vision for adult services is underpinned by the principles of prevention, empowerment and independence. Integrated health and social care teams work to support people to remain independent for longer, preventing admissions to hospital and supporting early discharge. Performance data suggests that this is having an impact in terms of a decrease in the numbers of older people receiving support in the community.

Local area co-ordination forms an important part of the council's vision for its citizens to have a good life. This involves local area co-ordinators working with people to build on their strengths and relationships and make links to community resources. A key part of the role is to identify and create opportunities to develop

community resources. In doing so, the need for more traditional social services is avoided or delayed. The council has targeted resources to this initiative with two local area co-ordinators being appointed to take this work forward. It is proposed that these posts will be filled in 2013/14. Successful delivery of this initiative is essential if the council is to achieve its overarching aims for social care in the county.

Further restructuring and review of the adult commissioning team has been completed to improve quality assurance and strategic planning. This is enabling the council to monitor the performance of commissioned services to ensure that where services are not meeting people's needs, action is taken to address issues identified. A comprehensive review of fees for care has been undertaken in consultation with providers with a fair rate for care agreed. A rising population of elderly people over the coming years, and the focus on supporting people to be independent for longer, will result in an increase in the complexity of needs of those people who do require support. The council is responding to this through its work to produce market position statements which will inform its commissioning plans to be finalised at the beginning of 2014.

The council continues to pursue opportunities to collaborate through its partnership with the other local authorities in Gwent and the Aneurin Bevan Health Board (ABHB). The Mental Health and Learning Disability Partnership Board has been established to oversee and direct the development of mental health, learning disabilities and specialist services across Gwent. Strategies have been developed for adults with learning disabilities and mental health services in consultation with service users, their families and staff. They set out a future direction for services focused on integrated person centred services that promote independence and inclusion.

Children

The council recognises the level of need and trends in child protection, domestic abuse, learning disabilities and mental health issues within the county and the impact that economic pressures may have on families. Monmouthshire County Council's SIP includes a desired outcome in relation to supporting families: "*We want all families in Monmouthshire to benefit from positive environments to nurture their children to grow, develop and prosper*",

The council has progressed work to reconfigure children's social care and support services in order that needs can be met. An important aspect of this work has been further developing and building on prevention and early intervention initiatives. In particular, the council has established multi-agency hubs, centred around the four comprehensive schools in the county. There are plans to develop an additional hub in the Acorns Centre in Abergavenny for 0 – 4 year olds. These hubs are the vehicles through which the Joint Assessment Families Framework (JAFF) and Team around the Families (TAF) initiatives are being delivered. The underpinning

principle of these arrangements is local partners working together to support families as part of the Families First agenda.

Local authority children's services have undergone restructuring with a redesign of the process for receiving initial contacts and referrals, and the development of a new transfer policy. The arrangements for safeguarding children have been consolidated through the development of a Safeguarding and Quality Assurance Unit. In October 2012, children's services took over responsibility for coordinating safeguarding matters in education. The head of children's services reports that social care, health and education staff were involved in this work, and the views of children, young people and their families were sought.

Children and their families benefit from the council's collaborative work with statutory partners and neighbouring local authorities. The South East Wales Adoption Service (SEWAS) provides an adoption service to Monmouthshire, Torfaen and Blaenau Gwent. The council has been active in the development of the South East Wales Safeguarding Children Board (SEWSCB) with the director of social services in Monmouthshire County Council taking the role as chair of the partnership.

Areas of progress

- People who receive services and their carers have been involved in developing strategies for future service delivery.
- Development of SEWSCB.
- Refocusing adult and children's services to prevention and early intervention.

Getting help:

Monmouthshire County Council makes information and advice available through a range of media, eg via the council's own website or topic based websites, leaflets, You Tube, Twitter and Facebook. Foster carers in Monmouthshire have a social media platform called Yammer that allows them to privately network as a group, to share tips and opinions on their work, comment on policies and have contact with social care staff. The council's website is undergoing further development to increase the ease of access to information. An information guide for carers provides comprehensive practical advice and information for carers in the county.

Adults

The council operates eligibility criteria at critical, substantial and moderate level of needs which is in line with its focus on prevention and early intervention. In adult services, the council has changed how it receives and deals with initial contacts. This new "front end" is called Finding Individual Solutions Here (FISH) and involves qualified staff dealing with initial contacts. Staff in FISH are encouraged to have "listening to understand" conversations with services users which enables early

professional decision making where people are referred appropriately or solutions can be facilitated upfront. The head of adult services reports a significant reduction in the percentage of new service users who say they find it difficult to contact the authority.

People are benefiting from the integrated adult teams which now include community and long-term conditions nursing services. These teams deliver frailty and reablement services and the head of adult services reports a response time of two to four hours via frailty services. In addition, the number of people experiencing a delay in their transfer from hospital has further decreased in 2012/13.

Monmouthshire County Council's carer's strategy has been developed to sit alongside the carer's information and consultation strategy developed by the ABHB. Carers were involved in developing the themes within the strategy which seeks to support carers to continue caring, discontinue caring if that is in their best interest and support them when their caring role comes to an end. Within the Carer's Strategy, it is identified that 600 carers have registered on the county's database. However, information from other sources, eg 2001 census and the Welsh health survey, indicates that the number of carers in Monmouthshire is considerably higher. The council has developed services via the carer's project to identify and support carers, eg the carer's support and information worker holds regular surgeries in GP practices and hospitals. Given the focus on carers in the Social Care and Wellbeing (Wales) Bill, it will be important to continue to develop work to understand the characteristics and needs of these carers to inform planning for preventative and early intervention services for this group.

Children

As part of the restructure and redesign in children's services, initial contacts are now received by qualified social care staff who can provide advice, signpost and make professional decisions regarding referral for further assessment. Performance data demonstrates that the number of referrals dropped considerably from 728 in 2011/12 to 425 in 2012/13. The timelines on decision making on referrals has remained stable and, in those instances where the initial assessment takes longer than seven days, the number of days taken to complete those assessments has reduced considerably. In addition, the re-referral rate has also decreased, which suggests that the redesigned processes may be having a positive impact.

Following a review of the assessment and referral processes, a new assessment tool has been developed which is now being used across children's services.

In addition, the transfer policy was revised and the head of children's services reports an improvement in decision making and workflow as a result of the new ways of working.

A Safeguarding and Quality Assurance unit has been developed with a dedicated "Safeguarding in Education" post embedded in the team. The head of children's services reports that this team is taking forward work to implement an audit tool and training plan across children's services and education. It will be important to evaluate the effectiveness of these new arrangements in the coming year.

Whilst the number of children on the child protection register has reduced during 2012/13, the number of children who are looked after remains high. This is reported to be due to increased workflow from the referral and support services and a safeguarding audit in May 2012. The latter identified a need to improve decision making in a number of cases where children were then brought into the care system.

Areas of progress

- People find it easier to contact adult services and receive timely and responsive services via the Gwent Frailty model.
- A safeguarding and quality assurance unit has been developed to coordinate and provide assurance for child protection, independent reviewing and safeguarding arrangements in the area.

The services provided:

Adults

The council has used the Vanguard Systems Thinking approach to review and redesign how services are delivered. New processes and ways of working have been designed and, as a result, a new assessment tool has been developed in adult services which seeks to move away from a deficit model to one which focuses on people's strengths and the support they need to live their own lives. This work supports the council's direction of travel in terms of supporting people to remain independent for longer.

Three integrated services teams, two in the North and one in the South, provide integrated services, including the Gwent Frailty model, focused on early intervention and helping people to remain independent. Performance data indicates that this approach is improving performance with a reduction in the rate of people receiving ongoing support in the community. While the rate of people supported in care homes has increased slightly, it remains the lowest in Wales.

The council has played an integral part in the Shared Lives Project in partnership with five other local authorities. This adult placement scheme aims to provide small, domestic placements for adults who are in need of care and support. Senior officers report good progress with a pool of 27 carers established over three years and the council plans to expand these numbers moving forward.

The council commissions a range of care services from independent providers for younger and older adults. These include domiciliary and residential care. The restructuring and review of the adult commissioning team has resulted in the development of a quality assurance framework enabling the council to monitor its contracts with these providers more effectively. The council itself is a registered provider of individual support, domiciliary care and adult residential services in Monmouthshire. CSSIW's inspections of these services found that while some areas for improvement were identified, people were receiving good quality care and service users feedback was positive.

The council provides a range of support services for people with learning disabilities, eg Individual Support Services, Family Aide and Pathways Employment. Many of these services are delivered from a number of centres across the county and the council is taking forward plans to pilot a model for day services for people with learning disabilities that focuses more on social inclusion and drawing on community assets. This will be developed alongside the local area co-ordination work and is in keeping with the priorities and principles set out in the strategy for adults with learning disabilities.

The Monmouthshire carers project provides information and advice to carers and assists them to access support. Through this project carers can access training, carers assessments, information and signposting to carers support groups. There are a number of support groups for carers in Monmouthshire. CSSIW undertook site visits to the Alzheimer's Society Monmouthshire Carers Group, Llandogo Millennium Centre and Singing for the Brain Bridges Centre, Monmouth. The carers we spoke to during these visits reported that they had had access to social workers and had been offered or had had assessment. They were also confident that should they need to contact a social worker or seek advice they would know how to do this. The council has improved its performance in terms of assessment and delivering services to carers. Respite services were made available to 75 people during 2012/13 representing a small increase from 2011/12.

Children

The council has a number of Flying Start areas where targeted early years support is offered to families with children under four years of age in some of the more deprived areas of Monmouthshire. The Acorn Project, funded by Families First, provides additional advice, guidance and support to disadvantaged families in Monmouthshire.

The JAFF and TAF initiatives have been established to enable children and families who require support but do not meet the threshold for social care services to access additional assistance. Work to further develop and embed JAFF and TAF will support multi-agency assessment and intervention at an early stage and help prevent children and families requiring more formal social care input. This will be important in terms of outcomes for children and families, and managing demand

at a time of financial pressures. Full implementation is at an early stage and the council will need to ensure it has robust systems in place to measure the outcomes from these initiatives. CSSIW is interested in exploring the effectiveness of preventative and early intervention in children's services and, in particular, the experiences of those children and families that contact children's services but do not proceed to a full referral.

The inspection of the council's fostering service found there has been some improvement since the previous inspection including the development of support meetings where a placement is undergoing a period of stress. CSSIW identified a number of areas for improvement and the authority is working to address these. The council has agreed a foster carer's payment for skills and allowances policy which aims to improve foster carers skills. It forms part of a support and investment package the council has committed to, providing for foster carers in line with its placement strategy. This initiative may also assist the council to increase the number of foster carers with the skills and abilities to provide homes for adolescents. The council reports that 61% of foster placements are with foster families internal to Monmouthshire.

The council has collaborated with Torfaen County Borough Council and Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council to form the joint SEWAS hosted by Blaenau Gwent. CSSIW inspected SEWAS in February 2012 and found that good progress had been made in bringing the services together and developing cohesive working practices. The inspection concluded that the combined SEWAS service has brought together the experience and skills from the three authorities to inform the development of best practice. A number of positive areas were highlighted, including the introduction of a dedicated birth parent support worker and a buddy system for child care social workers, which facilitates the matching process. Whilst areas were identified as needing to be further developed, for the most part the service was aware of these areas and plans were in place for these to be addressed.

The council reports that it has a range of support packages available for children with disabilities delivered through Action for Children and the Families First programme. It reports difficulties in meeting demand within the children with disabilities team due to capacity issues. CSSIW had previously identified an area for further improvement around understanding the profile of demand for disabled children with complex needs and developing appropriate support. The council was unable to progress this due to capacity issues. The head of children's services has identified the need to take forward this work and plans to reconfigure services for children and young people with disabilities during 2013/14.

Areas of progress

- Foster carer's payment for skills and allowances policy has been developed and agreed.
- Improved decision making in referral and support services.

Areas for improvement

- Understanding the profile of demand for disabled children with complex needs and develop appropriate support.

Effect on people's lives:

Considerable change has been implemented in adult and children's services both in terms of developing integrated services and redesigning key processes, eg assessment. Capturing and monitoring the outcomes of these services is essential to ensure that people's quality of life is enhanced and the council is delivering against its priorities. The council reports that further work is needed to develop quality assurance and performance management systems to ensure the services delivered are effective. This is an area that needs attention.

Adults

The council's focus on reablement and promoting independence seems to be having an impact with more people being enabled to remain independent. In addition, fewer people are experiencing delays in transfer of care and the council reports that 57% of people were fully independent following reablement services in 2012/13. Although the use of direct payments has declined slightly, the council reports that 172 people are receiving these payments giving them more choice and control in the services provided to them.

Arrangements for the protection of vulnerable adults have been strengthened during 2012/13, with additional senior officers made available to manage Protection of Vulnerable Adults (POVA) processes. Performance figures demonstrate that the percentage of adult protection referrals where the risk has been managed has improved. CSSIW has noted good links between POVA and escalating concerns processes and partners have been appropriately engaged.

National guidance recommends that adults receiving a service for longer than 12 months should have a review undertaken to ensure that their needs continue to be met. The council's performance against this measure has consistently declined over the last three years and is now at 54.4%, the lowest in Wales. The council reports that this is due to a combination of recording issues and the new ethos of how it works with service users. The council will need to assure itself that services being delivered continue to meet the needs of the people receiving them.

Children

Following a significant rise in 2011/12, the numbers of looked after children remains high at 102. The number of children in need reduced considerably from 486 to 340 following the introduction of a revised transfer policy. Performance in relation to looked after children and children in need is mixed. Looked after children reviews are undertaken in all cases. However, performance on statutory visits to looked after children declined this year and is well below other local authorities. The council failed to deliver on reviews of children in need plans within the required timescales and performance against this measure is the lowest in Wales at 19.5%. It reports that this is due to pressures arising from high numbers of looked after children and high caseloads prior to the restructure in children's services. CSSIW will wish to monitor and discuss progress on reviews of care plans with officers during the course of the year.

Partnership working is essential in order to ensure effective services are delivered across the spectrum of children's services, eg children and young people with mental health or learning needs and children with disabilities. The introduction of the JAFF and TAF provides evidence of early intervention being delivered in collaboration with local partners including health and education. However, the council reports that reorganisation within the ABHB and increasing financial pressures have, at times, disrupted multi professional working resulting in reduced and inconsistent services to children and young people. The council and its partners will need to discuss how these issues can be addressed.

The new Safeguarding and Quality Assurance unit brings together child protection, independent reviewing and safeguarding in education functions. This team also has a strong audit and quality assurance role. Performance figures for the timeliness of initial child protection conferences and core group meetings has fallen and is below the Wales average. In addition, performance against measures of child protection reviews carried out within timescales has dipped. The council again reports that this is due to a combination of recording issues and resourcing pressures in this area prior to the restructure of children's services at a time of increasing numbers of looked after children. The council will need to assure itself that these important aspects of child protection services are being delivered effectively.

The educational outcomes for children and young people who are looked after have improved each year over the last three years. Looked after children have lost fewer days due to fixed term exclusions and 16 year old looked after children are achieving higher qualifications point scores. However, only two of the eight young people formerly looked after with whom the authority is in contact are in full-time education, training or employment at the age of 19. The council has identified the need to improve the quantity and quality of Personal Education Plans (PEPs) for looked after children.

Areas of progress

- Educational outcomes for looked after children have improved.
- Fewer people are experiencing delays in transfer of care.
- Reablement services are enabling people to remain independent.

Areas for improvement

- Work to measure outcomes needs to progress to ensure the council can assure itself that its services are achieving and improving outcomes for the people receiving services.
- Timeliness of initial child protection conferences and core group meetings, and child protection reviews.
- Completion of adult care plan reviews.
- Completion of children in need reviews in accordance with the statutory timetable.
- Completion of statutory visits to looked after children in accordance with regulations.

CAPACITY

Delivering Social Services:

The WAO's annual Improvement Report 2013 states that the council has a good track record of financial planning and managing with less money and its willingness to innovate and challenge traditional ways of working is supporting it to modernise the ways it works. The director reports that the council supported social services with a year end deficit of £869,000 with additional resource of £1m used from the council's reserves for 2012/13. The council has demonstrated a clear understanding of the fiscal pressures it faces and a commitment to working with its citizens to develop new ways of "changing practice, changing lives". However, increasing demand to support an aging population and looked after children will continue to put pressure on budgets.

The department has undertaken significant restructure both in adult and children's services over the last two years, and this has resulted in staff vacancies at times and lack of capacity to achieve everything it set out to. Changes to assessment processes and ways of working in children's services and, in particular, referral and assessment teams have resulted in more effective decision making which has reduced caseloads to a more manageable level. However, increased numbers of looked after children and court proceedings created pressures in this area. The council supported the team with additional temporary staff and further recruitment of staff to this team. The head of children's services reports an overall increase in staffing levels in children's services.

The council recognises the importance of developing and supporting staff, and this is one of the department's key priorities as set out in the director's report. In January 2013, the council approved a new training and development team structure, and the council has a social care workforce development partnership plan in place for 2013/14 which sets out training and development priorities and opportunities for the coming year. Senior officers acknowledge difficulties in recruiting first line managers and report that work will be taken forward in the coming year to review the recruitment model and improve succession planning.

The council continues to take forward an ambitious change programme both within the authority's social care team and in its work to develop integrated services with neighbouring authorities and partners. As a result, it will be involved in delivering a number of strategies that have been referenced in this evaluation, and it will need to assure itself that it can manage the planning and implementation of these strategies whilst meeting its ongoing commitments in children's and adult services within the resources it has available.

Areas of progress

- Increased resources in children's services.

Areas for improvement

- Ensuring there is capacity to deliver change programmes as well as ongoing service delivery commitments.

Providing direction:

Social services have a strong corporate profile with safeguarding vulnerable people being one of the council's three key corporate priorities. There is strong support from elected members, with significant levels of informal and formal interaction with the relevant portfolio holders in the council. Scrutiny has been developed to reflect the children and young people's agenda and the adult's agenda. The director of social services and the relevant heads of service work effectively with and attend these committees.

There is strong leadership by the chief executive officer, director of social services and heads of adult and children's services. They have demonstrated a commitment to developing and reshaping social care services to ensure they are sustainable into the future and meet the needs of the people of Monmouthshire. They have pursued an ambitious modernisation programme using the Vanguard systems thinking approach, restructuring both adult and children's services accordingly. There is a focus on prevention, early intervention, empowerment and collaborative working. The authority is actively involved in the regional collaborative agenda across Gwent and the development of integrated operational services with partner agencies such as the Gwent Frailty Project and SEWAS.

CSSIW's review of the statutory role of the director of social services found that the council had systems and organisational features in place to support the statutory director of social services to fulfil his role. There was a clear understanding of the significance of the role of the statutory director across the organisation and with members and partners. The director of social services was seen as having the seniority to provide a strategic lead and promote ongoing change, partnership and modernisation on both a local authority and a Gwent wide basis.

Vulnerable people are one of the authority's three key corporate priorities and, together with the acknowledged risks associated with delivering social services, this has ensured that social services has a strong corporate profile. The connectivity of the authority's three key priorities was viewed as promoting a shared ethos and corporate approach that supported the director of social services accountabilities.

In the 2011/2012 annual review, CSSIW identified the role of corporate parenting as an area needing further attention. The council reports that a corporate parenting strategy is being finalised and a corporate parenting group has been in place from October 2012.

Areas of progress:

- Strong corporate profile combined with support from elected members.
- Strong and stable management team.

Areas for further development:

- Completion and implementation of the corporate parenting strategy.