

**Report To:** Partnerships Scrutiny Committee

**Date of Meeting:** 31 May 2012

**Lead Officer:** Corporate Director: Modernisation and Wellbeing

**Report Author:** Corporate Director: Modernisation and Wellbeing

**Title:** Sustainable Social Services: A Framework for Action and the Social Services (Wales) Bill

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### **1. What is the report about?**

The report, via the attachments, explains major policy and legislative change proposed by Welsh Government, which will affect the delivery of social services for the foreseeable future. Delivery through partnerships is a core feature of the proposals.

### **2. What is the reason for making this report?**

2.1 To make members aware of the proposed changes set out in “Sustainable Social Services: A Framework for Action” (SSSFFA) and the Social Services (Wales) Bill

2.2 To seek input to views Denbighshire might express on the consultation report on the Bill

2.3 To seek views on the proposed Modernising Social Services Board to take forward key developments in Denbighshire

### **3. What are the Recommendations?**

3.1 That members comment on proposed provisions in the Social Services (Wales) Bill

3.2 That members comment on the proposal to establish a Denbighshire Modernising Social Services Board

### **4. Report details**

4.1 The presentation attached at Appendix I summarises the content of a major Welsh Government policy document “Sustainable Social Services: a Framework for Action” and proposals in the Social Services (Wales) Bill. Together they set out a radical agenda for the transformation of social services in Wales. Delivery of this agenda forms the heart of Contract 2 within the Compact for Change.

4.2 A consultation document on the Social Services (Wales) Bill has been issued with a closing date of 1<sup>st</sup> June 2012. This offers an opportunity for members to feed into a local government response. The WLGA's briefing on the proposals is available to members as a Background Document.

4.3 Many of the proposals both in SSSFFA and the Bill assume that Councils will deliver services in partnership- whether through close collaboration with other services within the Council, with the NHS, with other Councils or with the community, voluntary and independent sectors. The chart at Appendix 2 sets out current structures for working on an inter-agency, sub-regional and regional basis.

4.4 Some issues will need a particular Denbighshire focus, however, perhaps because particular impetus is needed or there are particular opportunities. It is proposed that a Denbighshire Modernising Social Services Board, across Children's, Adults and Business Services, is established to oversee this work. There will be considerable common areas of work with those to modernise the council generally and the Chart at Appendix 2 illustrates this.

## **5 How does the decision contribute to the Corporate Priorities?**

The Council's efficiency strategy assumes that services will look to deliver services in different, more cost effective ways while not compromising quality. The aim is to continue to deliver good services for residents even though resources are reduced. This is a key objective for social services who are seeing demand for services increase significantly, especially due to an ageing population. The Modernising Social Services agenda is about managing demand in part through wider community and service engagement. This fits well also with the Council's priority of being "close to its community".

## **6. What will it cost and how will it affect other services?**

The attached presentation, and the WLGA briefing, raise significant issues about the WG's Impact Assessment of the proposed changes. The broad argument of the consultation document appears to be that the changes will be self funding as early intervention reduces need, or the intensity of need, at a later stage. However, while we have local evidence that new service models, based on early intervention (eg extra care, reablement, intensive family support), can be successful in reducing or delaying the level of service required, the idea that this strategy will lead to "sustainable" social services does remain an act of faith.

The new "people in need" related duties in the Bill relate to local government generally, not just social services. As such, it is likely that there will be additional demands on services such as Housing, Leisure, Customer Services, Transport, Countryside and Education to support the wellbeing of "people in need".

## **7 What consultations have been carried out?**

The Social Services (Wales) Bill consultation is currently out nationally and is being commented on through professional and sector bodies. The Management Teams of both Children's Services and Adult and Business Services in Denbighshire have discussed the legislative proposals and that for the establishment of a Board to drive work in Denbighshire. The Bill consultation document has been placed on the intranet to enable staff comments to be made. A presentation was made to SLT and a report proposing the establishment of the Modernising Social Services Board was discussed by the Corporate Executive Team (CET) on 14 May.

## **8. Chief Finance Officer Statement**

The Framework or Bill will have cost implications, however it is too early to quantify them at this stage. For example, the Bill suggests money can be transferred around the system to fund more preventative and wider-ranging well being services, but this is a theoretical view and not supported by any specifics. Also, other proposals such as the introduction of a national eligibility criteria, enhanced support to carers, work force registration and the extension of regulation all have the potential to increase costs. Whether these potential extra costs can ever be recouped on a national basis through investment in preventative and other measures will remain a key question. The impact on local authorities in terms of finance and service delivery is likely to be significant.

## **9. What risks are there and is there anything we can do to reduce them?**

The main risks at this stage relate to

- resources to deliver- as set in paragraph 6. It will be important to continue to press WG for adequate recognition of this.
- governance. The Bill proposes a complex set of national, regional and local relationships to ensure delivery. Clarity and understanding of how these will work, respecting local democratic decision-making, will be essential
- dealing locally with the scale of the agenda. SSSFFA and the Bill set out a major change agenda at a time when services are profoundly challenged to meet day to day demands. This will require careful planning and phasing of work using project management disciplines.

## **10. Power to make the Decision**

Article 6.3 Denbighshire County Council Constitution

s2 Local Government Act 2000 - the Council has power to do anything which it considers likely to achieve the promotion or improvement of the social well being of the area

**11. Contact Officer**

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