
Local Authority Arrangements to support Safeguarding of Children –
City and County of Cardiff Council

Reason for the Report

1. The Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee is responsible for scrutinising the performance of Children’s (Social) Services. This report provides a copy of the Inspection Report resulting from an inspection undertaken between March 2014 and May 2014 by the Wales Audit Office. A copy of the Audit Report is attached at **Appendix A**, together with the draft Cabinet report responding to the Wales Audit Office report’s recommendations attached at **Appendix B**.

Issues

2. The focus of the study was to answer the question “Does the Council’s Governance and management arrangements provide assurance that children are safeguarded?”. As a result the review sought to answer the following questions:
 - a. Are there clear governance, accountability and management arrangements for overseeing whether the Council is meeting its safeguarding responsibilities to children?
 - b. Is the Council monitoring and evaluating appropriate information, which provides assurance that it is meeting safeguarding responsibilities to children?
 - c. Are assurance systems operating effectively?

3. The report provides six proposals for improvement, namely:
 - (i) Ensure the Council develops effectively arrangements to monitor, evaluate and challenge information and performance of safeguarding;
 - (ii) The Council should clarify who designated officers with responsibility for Safeguarding are;
 - (iii) Improve the range, quality and coverage of safeguarding performance reporting to provide adequate assurance that corporate arrangements are working effectively;
 - (iv) Improve the work of the Council's Scrutiny Committee's to ensure it is providing assurance on the effectiveness of the Council's corporate safeguarding arrangements;
 - (v) Ensure all elected Members and staff who encounter children on a regular basis receive training on safeguarding and child protection issues and the Council's corporate policy on safeguarding; and
 - (vi) Identify and agree an appropriate internal audit programme of work for safeguarding across the Council.

4. The Inspection Report, published in October 2014, highlights a number of positives as well as areas for improvement. In response the Director of Children's Services has drafted a report for Cabinet setting out the Directorate's actions to address the recommendations identified in the report. A copy of the draft Cabinet report is attached at **Appendix B**. The report also includes the proposed arrangements to strengthen Corporate governance in relation to safeguarding requirements.

Scope of Scrutiny

5. The scope of this scrutiny is to consider the proposed Draft Cabinet report, including the response to the specific Scrutiny-focussed recommendation, and to pass on any observations, comments or recommendations to the Director of Children's Services.

Way Forward

6. Members are invited to consider the information set out in the attached report and to identify any issues on which they would wish to receive further information.

7. Councillor Sue Lent (Cabinet Member for Early Years, Children & Families) has been invited and may make a statement. Tony Young, Director of Children's Services and Alison Davies (Operational Manager, Safeguarding) have been invited to comment on the Audit Report, and to explain the actions being developed to address the areas for improvement.

Legal Implications

8. The Scrutiny Committee is empowered to enquire, consider, review and recommend, but not to make policy decisions. As the recommendations in this report are to consider and review matters there are no direct legal implications. However, legal implications may arise if and when the matters under review are implemented with or without any modifications. Any report with recommendations for decision that goes to the Cabinet/Council will set out any legal implications arising from those recommendations. All decisions taken by or on behalf of the Council must (a) be within the legal powers of the Council; (b) comply with any procedural requirement imposed by law; (c) be within the powers of the body or person exercising powers on behalf of the Council; (d) be undertaken in accordance with the procedural requirements imposed by the Council e.g. Scrutiny Procedure Rules; (e) be fully and properly informed; (f) be properly motivated; (g) be taken having regard to the Council's fiduciary duty to its taxpayers; and (h) be reasonable and proper in all the circumstances.

Financial Implications

9. The Scrutiny Committee is empowered to enquire, consider, review and recommend, but not to make policy decisions. As the recommendations in this report are to consider and review matters there are no direct financial implications at this stage in relation to any of the work programme. However, financial implications may arise if and when the matters under review are implemented with or without any modifications. Any report with recommendations for decision that goes to Cabinet/Council will set out any financial implications arising from those recommendations.

RECOMMENDATION

The Committee is recommended to consider the contents of the Report attached at **Appendices A & B** and provide the Cabinet Member and Director of Children's Services with any comments or concerns, prior to the Cabinet's consideration of the report.

MARIE ROSENTHAL

County Clerk and Monitoring Officer

5 May 2015