

CITY OF CARDIFF COUNCIL CYNGOR DINAS CAERDYDD

CABINET MEETING: XXXX JUNE 2015

CORPORATE SAFEGUARDING GOVERNANCE AGENDA ITEM:

**PORTFOLIO: CORPORATE SERVICES AND PERFORMANCE -
COUNCILLOR HINCHEY
PORTFOLIO: DEPUTY LEADER & CABINET MEMBER FOR EARLY YEARS,
CHILDREN & FAMILIES - COUNCILLOR LENT**

Reason for this Report

1. The purpose of this report is to enable Cabinet to:
 - a) Consider proposed arrangements to strengthen Corporate governance in relation to safeguarding requirements.
 - b) Respond to the findings and recommendations of a Welsh Audit Office (WAO) report concerning the effectiveness of the City of Cardiff Council's corporate safeguarding governance arrangements.

Background

2. An established 'Corporate Safeguarding Group' had been operating up until March 2013. Until that time the group had been chaired by either of the Chief Officers in Adult Services or in Children's Services. These arrangements held good for some time but struggled to maintain continuity as the result of a number of changes to senior management in the social care Directorates during 2012-13. The last full meeting under those arrangements took place in March 2013.
3. In 2014 the Welsh Audit Office (WAO) commissioned an all Wales 'study' of the effectiveness of safeguarding governance arrangements in relation to children across all councils. This was undertaken in Cardiff during March to May 2014. The WAO is due to publish a national thematic report for public consumption but has already provided each council with a separate confidential report setting out the findings of the study in relation to the respective councils. A copy of the report concerning the City of Cardiff Council (October 2014) is attached at Appendix I.

Welsh Audit Office (WAO) Study

4. By the autumn of 2013 it had already been acknowledged by key internal stakeholders, including the Chief Officer for HR and the newly incumbent Statutory Director of Children's Services, that a review and re-energising of arrangements to discharge effective Corporate Safeguarding and Scrutiny obligations was necessary.

5. This, and a significant shift throughout the Council towards a much more effective focus on key delivery and performance improvement requirements, was recognized by the WAO in their report concerning Cardiff's safeguarding assurance arrangements –

“The Council’s Corporate Plan sets a range of key actions for its Children’s Social Services to continue to develop and strengthen the role and responsibilities of the Council’s safeguarding and corporate parenting.....” (WAO Report, para 7, p 5) Also that *“...the Council was in the process of developing new systems for governance and scrutiny of safeguarding but these had not yet become fully embedded”* (WAO Report, para 12, p 6)

And

“..at the time of our review, the Council was undergoing significant management change.....we are aware that the Council is planning to create a Designated Officer post in Education to comply with Welsh Government (WG) guidance on Safeguarding in Education.” (WAO Report, para 8, p 5)

And

“...a significant role of the new operational manager safeguarding will focus on developing an independent Council-wide safeguarding function, designed to provide a source of advice, support and independent challenge to safeguarding practice. At the time of our assessment, however, these arrangements were not in place.” (WAO Report, para 12, p 6)

6. The report also noted that:

“The Council has a local Child Protection Policy that outlines the key principles of child protection in the city.” (WAO Report, para 8, p 5). And that *“The Council has a comprehensive risk management approach to support how it meets its children safeguarding responsibilities.”* (WAO Report, para 11, p 6). Also that *“The Council has systems for the safe recruitment of staff and volunteers.”* (WAO Report, para 14, p 7)

7. Similarly, changes in the key external statutory body – the Local Safeguarding Children Board which were at that time very recent, were acknowledged in the report –

“The recently created Cardiff and Vale of Glamorgan Local Safeguarding Children Board provides the overview for safeguarding in the city.” (WAO Report, para 7, p 5)

8. Although there is clearly a measure of encouragement and assurance to be derived from these findings both in terms of fundamental systems and in terms of an overall improvement agenda, the study also identified some further areas for improvement.

9. The areas identified for improvement derive in the main from the outcome of a WAO survey issued to “..elected members, senior managers, education, schools and leisure staff”, in all Councils across Wales. The total number of Cardiff respondents to each of 11 questions was 41. In relation to the improvement areas identified, Cardiff responses contrasted unfavourably in percentage terms with the All Wales responses (based on 1996 individual respondents). Although the numbers in the Cardiff survey were somewhat low, the messages are not inconsistent with what we would have expected, given the need to re-energise governance arrangements.

10. The key improvement areas identified by the WAO study are largely concerned with performance monitoring; training and awareness; and overall governance as follows:-

P1 Ensure the Council develops effective arrangements to monitor, evaluate and challenge information and performance of safeguarding.

P2 The Council should clarify who designated officers with responsibility for safeguarding are.

P3 Improve the range, quality and coverage of safeguarding performance reporting to provide adequate assurance that corporate arrangements are working effectively.

P4 Improve the work of the Council’s scrutiny committees to ensure it is providing assurance on the effectiveness of the Council’s corporate safeguarding arrangements.

P5 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.

P6 Identify and agree an appropriate internal audit programme of work for safeguarding across the Council (WAO Report, para 22, p 8)

11. It is important to note finally that the WAO findings reflected an effective programme of ongoing training for staff in Health & Social Care, Children’s Services and Education Directorates. The report emphasised the need to broaden the exposure of a wider cohort of ‘customer-facing’ staff and of members to an appropriate level of awareness.

“However, not all those who would benefit from this training have received it and the Council needs to ensure all those outside of education and social care who come into contact with children on a regular basis receive this training. A series of learning events for elected members on specific aspects of safeguarding children have been provided on a monthly basis since November 2013. To date, 37 attendances have been recorded at these evening briefing events. Because this training is not mandatory, attendance has been low” (WAO Report, para 17, p 7)

Proposed Corporate Safeguarding Governance Arrangements

12. A set of arrangements to take forward a more effective overall approach to corporate safeguarding is set out in Appendix II (Corporate Safeguarding Governance Structure) and Appendix III (Corporate

Safeguarding Board Terms of Reference). These are concerned principally with establishing a new internal governance function, strengthening awareness and training and securing stronger performance monitoring, audit and compliance.

13. These new arrangements will enable a comprehensive response to each of the areas for improvement identified by the WAO study.
14. It is important to note that:
 - 14.i These proposed arrangements focus principally on corporate safeguarding governance. Aside from HR related processes, the proposals have no direct implications for the delivery of adult or children's social care practice. This is due to the fact that the governance arrangements for child protection arrangements and for the protection of vulnerable adults are provided for separately via the Director of Social Services - through the "Annual Council Reporting Framework" (i.e. Annual Report of the Director of Social Services); by the Local Safeguarding Children Board as the statutory body for children and by the Adult Safeguarding Board on a similar basis.
 - 14.ii The WAO study did not consider or identify proposals in relation to any of the operational practice referenced in i) above.
 - 14.iii Whilst the WAO report focused solely on corporate safeguarding arrangements in relation to the protection of children, the proposals set out in Appendix II and III also encompass vulnerable adults since it makes little sense to have separate corporate governance arrangements in respect of adults and children.
15. The diagrammatic summary of the arrangements are designed to provide an 'at a glance' view of the overall structure. This diagram also illustrates how the newly recommended structure will align with the WAO Proposals for Improvement. Amongst the main features of the recommended arrangements are:
 - 15.i The establishment of a more formalised 'board' level function – the 'Corporate Safeguarding Board (CSB)'. The 'board' is currently operating on a shadow basis pending the consideration of this report by Cabinet.
 - 15.ii The submission by all Directors of an annual 'compliance' report/return to the CSB detailing compliance with HR related vetting requirements, staff induction and training programmes and the identification of in-year thematic concerns that may have arisen in a given Directorate.
 - 15.iii The production of an Annual Corporate Safeguarding Report subject to Scrutiny and consideration by Cabinet.
 - 15.iv The incorporation of that report into the Annual Report of the Director of Social Services, thereby subject to agreement in full Council.
 - 15.v The development of a more comprehensive safeguarding training and development programme for members.

- 15.vi The development of a more comprehensive safeguarding training programme for staff other than those in education or social services.
 - 15.vii The development of clear and effective corporate safeguarding performance measures, facilitated by the submission of annual Directorate compliance reports/returns, cited at ii above.
16. **Action Plan** – an Action Plan setting out how the newly recommended corporate safeguarding arrangements are being progressed and how each of the WAO Proposals are being addressed, is set out in Appendix IV.
17. It is to be noted that the WAO study also indicated that there was some level of concern that the Council should do more to ensure that parents are better informed about how their children are safeguarded when using services and schools. Although this is based on the perception of a very small cohort of survey respondents, this is an issue that the recently established joint management arrangements between Education and Children's Services will consider and action further, as appropriate, in collaboration with the LSCB.

Reasons for Recommendations

18. To enable Cabinet to:
- a) Consider proposed arrangements to strengthen Corporate governance in relation to safeguarding requirements for vulnerable adults and children.
 - b) Respond to the findings and recommendations of a Welsh Audit Office (WAO) report concerning the effectiveness of the City of Cardiff Council's corporate safeguarding governance arrangements.

Legal Implications

19. To follow.

Financial Implications

20. To follow.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Cabinet is recommended to agree the proposals to strengthen Corporate Safeguarding governance, including the establishment of a Corporate Safeguarding Board.

The Cabinet is recommended to agree the Action Plan to support the implementation of the new governance arrangements and to respond to the WAO Proposals for Improvement.

The Cabinet is recommended to agree the Terms of Reference for the Corporate Safeguarding Board.

The Cabinet is recommended to agree the response to each of the WAO proposals for improvement as follows:-

P1 Ensure the Council develops effective arrangements to monitor, evaluate and challenge information and performance of safeguarding.

This improvement proposal is agreed. A Corporate Safeguarding Action plan has been developed to ensure effective monitoring, evaluation and challenge in relation to safeguarding performance. Strengthened governance arrangements are now in place and will support annual reporting to relevant Scrutiny Committees; this will be facilitated by a suite of specifically designed safeguarding indicators. (See Corporate Safeguarding Action Plan points 1.1, 1.3, 3.4).

P2 The Council should clarify who designated officers with responsibility for safeguarding are.

This improvement proposal is agreed. Corporate Safeguarding Action Plan priority 2.3. will ensure the production of a clear Safeguarding Policy and Protocol for members and officers and which will define, identify lead roles and responsibilities.(See Corporate Safeguarding Action Plan 2.3).

P3 Improve the range, quality and coverage of safeguarding performance reporting to provide adequate assurance that corporate arrangements are working effectively.

This improvement proposal is agreed. A Corporate Safeguarding Action plan has been developed to ensure effective monitoring, evaluation and challenge in relation to safeguarding performance. (See Corporate Safeguarding Action Plan 3.5).

P4 Improve the work of the Council's scrutiny committees to ensure it is providing assurance on the effectiveness of the Council's corporate safeguarding arrangements.

This improvement proposal is agreed. Strengthened governance arrangements are now in place and will support annual reporting to relevant Scrutiny Committees (see Corporate Safeguarding Action Plan point 1.3).

P5 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.

This proposal agreed. Safeguarding awareness and reporting readiness will be significantly improved through the modernization and redevelopment of a more effective member and staff

safeguarding training and development programme on a rolling basis. (See Corporate Safeguarding Action Plan points 2.1 and 2.2).

P6 Identify and agree an appropriate internal audit programme of work for safeguarding across the Council

This proposal agreed. The Corporate Safeguarding Action Plan sets out significant audit activity during 2015/16 and identifies the development of a future audit programme for 2016/17. (See Corporate Safeguarding Action Plan points 3.1, 3.2, 3.3 and 3.4).

TONY YOUNG
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April 2015

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