

The Vale of Glamorgan Council

Cabinet Meeting: 31 July, 2017

Report of the Leader

Corporate Safeguarding Annual Report 2016/17

Purpose of the Report

1. To update Cabinet members on the work that has been undertaken to improve corporate arrangements for safeguarding and protecting children and adults who require specific Council services and to ensure that these arrangements are effective.

Recommendations

1. That Cabinet notes the work that has been undertaken to improve corporate arrangements for safeguarding and protecting children and adults.
2. That Cabinet continues to receive six-monthly reports on work carried out to improve corporate safeguarding arrangements and the effectiveness of relevant policies.
3. That the report is referred to the Social Care & Health, Learning and Culture and Corporate Performance and Resources Scrutiny Committees for consideration.

Reasons for the Recommendations

1. To ensure that Cabinet is aware of recent developments in corporate arrangements for safeguarding.
2. To allow Cabinet to exercise effective oversight of this key area of corporate working.
3. To respond to requests that each Scrutiny Committee is provided with update reports.

Background

2. The Corporate Safeguarding Working Group was established in this authority to learn lessons from the 2011, CSSIW and Estyn joint report following their investigation into the way Pembrokeshire County Council was managing allegations of professional abuse and its arrangements for safeguarding and protecting children in education.
3. The group has been working through an action plan to improve safeguarding across the Council. This year it has developed and implemented the Corporate Safeguarding Policy and members have been offered training on this important policy.

4. Cabinet agreed a Safer Recruitment Policy for the Council and Schools (January 2013). The Policy has been in place since April 2013. It has been adopted by all Vale of Glamorgan schools and throughout the Council. The attached [Appendix](#) clearly outlines the sustained improvements for safer recruitment policies across the Council, including education and clearly demonstrates that practice continues to improve.

Relevant Issues and Options

5. In the past, safeguarding activity by different parts of the Council has been reported separately to Cabinet, relevant Scrutiny Committees and Corporate Management Team. Attached at [Appendix 1](#) is the annual report that brings together safeguarding activity undertaken by the Resources, Learning and Skills and Social Services Directorates. This provides a more holistic representation of safeguarding activity across the Council.
6. The Social Services and Wellbeing (Wales) Act 2014 was implemented in April 2016. This has brought about changes in particular relating to the introduction of a 'Duty to report' which has meant a revision of the corporate safeguarding policy to bring staff's attention to this duty.
7. The new 'Working Together to Safeguard People Guidance' under Part 7 of the new Act is now published. Guidance on handling individual cases (volumes 5 and 6) to protect children and adults at risk was launched for public consultation by Welsh Government on 31st January 2017. The guidance provides advice on what should happen if an individual has concerns about the well-being or welfare of a child or an adult at risk. The consultation closed on 25th April 2017. Publication is due autumn 2017.

Resource Implications (Financial and Employment)

8. There are no direct resource implications arising from the Corporate Safeguarding work. However, the increased awareness of safeguarding and the responsibility to respond to concerns to those who may not be eligible for our services has brought about significant pressures within social services teams, and consequently we need to review processes to ensure clarity for people raising concerns and whom responds to these enquiries/notifications about individuals who are considered 'at risk', but are not known or eligible for our statutory services.

Sustainability and Climate Change Implications

9. There is no sustainability or climate change implications arising directly from this report.

Legal Implications (to Include Human Rights Implications)

10. The duties of the local authority to ensure that children are properly safeguarded and protected from harm are set out in legislation. Section 175 of the Education Act 2002 imposes a duty on a local authority to make arrangements for ensuring that their education functions are exercised with a view to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children. Section 28 of the Children Act 2004 imposes a duty on local authorities to make arrangements for ensuring that their functions are discharged having regard to the need to safeguard and promote the welfare of children. In fulfilling its responsibilities, the local authority should have effective quality assurance

systems in place to ensure that the necessary checks and balances are in place to safeguard and protect children.

11. The Wales Interim Policy and Procedures for the Protection of Vulnerable Adults from Abuse is intended to guide the safeguarding work of all those concerned with the welfare of vulnerable adults. These Procedures are based on certain principles of the European convention of Human Rights and the Human Rights Act. The provision of the Social Services and Well-Being (Wales) Act 2014 provide a new statutory framework for the protection of adults at risk.
12. The Welsh Government Guidance, Safeguarding Children; Working together under the Children Act 2004 has been issued in accordance with the Children Act 2004 and under Section 7 of the Local Authority Social Services Act 1970 provides the working basis for the All Wales Child Protection Procedures. The All Wales Child Protection Procedures reflect the values and principles enshrined in the UN Convention on the rights of the child. The Welsh Government developed these values and principles in Children and Young People: Rights to Action 2004, and adopted core aims and outcomes through which it is committed to work with all children and young people. The key outcome for improving the well-being of children includes the requirement that children live in a safe environment and be protected from abuse and harm. The All Wales Child Protection Procedures take account of various legislation, guidance, research and reports.
13. In relation to DBS arrangements, key elements of the Protection of Freedoms Act 2012 have been implemented.

Crime and Disorder Implications

14. Any application for employment for those posts included within the definition of regulated activity by candidates who are included on the relevant barred list will be considered a criminal act and reported to the Police and relevant registration body (if appropriate).

Equal Opportunities Implications (to include Welsh Language issues)

15. The Safer Recruitment policy legitimately excludes consideration for appointment of all applicants for posts within regulated activity whose criminal actions/convictions mean that they are deemed unsuitable or who are included within the barred list.

Corporate/Service Objectives

16. The work of the Corporate Safeguarding Group assists the Council in meeting the following corporate objectives:

Well-being Outcome 4: An Active and Healthy Vale

Objective 8: Safeguarding those who are vulnerable and promoting independent living:

- develop and implement a corporate policy on safeguarding to provide a clear strategic direction and lines of accountability across the Council.

- work with partners through the Cardiff and Vale Local Safeguarding Children's Board to develop a Child Sexual Exploitation Strategy.

"We have a responsibility to safeguard our vulnerable residents and we will continue to work with partners to improve the wellbeing of our most vulnerable residents, their families and carers."

Policy Framework and Budget

17. This is a matter for Executive decision by the Cabinet.

Consultation (including Ward Member Consultation)

18. This is an issue which affects all areas of the Vale of Glamorgan.

Relevant Scrutiny Committee

19. Social Care and Health, Learning and Culture, and Corporate Performance and Resources.

Background Papers

The All Wales Child Protection Procedures (2008)

The All Wales Protection of Vulnerable Adults Interim Procedures (2013)

Working Together to Safeguard People Guidance under Part 7 of the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014.

Contact Officer

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Officers Consulted

Corporate Safeguarding Group

Responsible Officer:

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