



SOCIAL SERVICES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE – 22ND OCTOBER 2019

**SUBJECT: WALES AUDIT OFFICE REVIEW OF THE COUNCIL'S
CORPORATE SAFEGUARDING ARRANGEMENTS**

REPORT BY: CORPORATE DIRECTOR FOR SOCIAL SERVICES AND HOUSING

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To advise Scrutiny Committee of the Wales Audit Office (WAO) Review of Corporate Safeguarding Arrangements within Caerphilly County Borough Council undertaken in May 2019 and report on the implementation of an action plan in response to the recommendations made by the Review.

2. SUMMARY

- 2.1 The WAO undertook a follow up review of Corporate Safeguarding Arrangements for Children in Caerphilly in May 2019. The subsequent report was presented to Corporate Management Team for approval in June 2019 and the Performance Audit Manager from WAO also presented the report findings to the Corporate Safeguarding Board in June 2019.

- 2.2 The Review report is attached as Appendix 1 and concluded that;

Although the Council has made some progress in addressing our previous recommendations, the Council needs to further strengthen its corporate safeguarding oversight and assurance arrangements

- 2.3 In response, the Council was required to complete a Management Response and this is attached for information at Appendix 2. This document refers to the strategic recommendations made in the Review. The Corporate Safeguarding Board has developed an action plan to address both the strategic recommendations made and the areas of good practice for consideration identified in the Review and this is attached as Appendix 3. The WAO Auditor acknowledged that there were many positive developments in place and planned to address the areas for improvement but because some of them were yet to be fully realised, their conclusion was that further work is needed to strengthen corporate governance and oversight.

- 2.4 It is really important to note that this was a review of the corporate governance of safeguarding arrangements and did not consider safeguarding children practice and

procedure.

- 2.5 The content of this report was considered and approved by Cabinet on 18th September 2019.

3. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1 Scrutiny Committee are requested to note the content of the WAO Review report and the progress made in implementing the recommendations detailed in the Council's Action Plan.

4. REASONS FOR THE RECOMMENDATIONS

- 4.1 To ensure Scrutiny Committee is fully aware of the findings of the WAO Review and supports the Corporate Safeguarding Board to oversee implementation of the Action Plan.

5. THE REPORT

- 5.1 The full WAO Review Report is attached as Appendix 1 for information.
- 5.2 The Review identifies 5 areas for improvement in line with the National Recommendations published in 2015. The Council's Management Response to the Review is attached for information at Appendix 2.
- 5.3 However, in addition, the Review identified good practice that the council could consider and the Corporate Safeguarding Board agreed to include all these good practice areas in the detailed Action Plan that is attached as Appendix 3.
- 5.4 Committee Members will be able to note that many of the actions identified are relatively straight forward to implement and achieve and as a result the timescales set are within the current financial year.
- 5.5 The key findings fall into the following themed areas:

Corporate Safeguarding Board:

- increased frequency of meetings
- increased performance reporting
- development of a Training Framework for all service areas
- development of a self assessment tool
- consider the inclusion of Corporate Safeguarding on Risk Registers
- improved access to the policy and the Annual Report

Designated Safeguarding Officers:

- complete the self-assessment tool
- implement the Training Framework

Human Resources:

- implement the Safer Recruitment Policy
- develop a tracking system for DBS checks for all staff who require them
- support the implementation of the Training Framework through the use of

ITrent or an alternative Learning Management System (LMS).

Procurement and Contract Monitoring:

- ensuring contractors and volunteers have received appropriate training and DBS checks

Internal Audit:

- Staff to be trained
- Role to be clarified

5.6 The Corporate Safeguarding Board will oversee the implementation of the Action Plan and will report progress made in their 2019/20 Annual Report.

6. ASSUMPTIONS

6.1 There are no assumptions made or presumed in this report.

7. LINKS TO RELEVANT COUNCIL POLICIES

7.1 Social Services & Well Being (Wales) Act 2014

7.2 Cabinet Commitment – to protect the most vulnerable people in our society and make safeguarding a key priority

7.3 **Corporate Plan 2018-2023.**

The content of this report contributes towards Well Being Objective 6: Support citizens to remain independent and improve their well-being

8. WELL-BEING OF FUTURE GENERATIONS

8.1 The content of this report contributes to the following Well Being Goals:

- A resilient Wales
- A more equal Wales
- A Wales of cohesive communities

The report is consistent with the five ways of working as defined within the sustainable development principle in the Act as follows:

- Long Term – safeguarding children, young people and vulnerable adults is and always will be a priority for the Council and it is essential that all employees, volunteers and contractors fully understand their personal and professional responsibility to safeguard vulnerable individuals.
- Prevention – robust Corporate Safeguarding arrangements should help prevent the escalation of need and subsequent demand on higher tier statutory services
- Integration – Caerphilly’s Corporate Safeguarding Policy reinforces that safeguarding children, young people and vulnerable adults is everybody’s business within Caerphilly
- Collaboration – the Corporate Safeguarding Board and the Designated Safeguarding Officers (DSO) Development Group ensures that every service area is represented, has a DSO identified and provides training and support to those DSO’s to fulfil their corporate safeguarding responsibilities.

- Involvement – the Corporate Safeguarding Board consists of representatives from key service areas to ensure that there is a whole Council approach to safeguarding.

9. EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

- 9.1 This report is for information purposes only, so the Council's full Equality Impact Assessment process does not need to be applied.

10. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 10.1 There are no funding implications arising from this report.

11. PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS

- 11.1 There are no personnel or HR implications arising from this report.

12. CONSULTATIONS

- 12.1 The report is for information purposes and reflects the views of consultees.

13. STATUTORY POWER

- 13.1 Social Services & Well Being (Wales) Act 2014

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Appendices:

1. Wales Audit Office – Follow-up Review of Corporate Arrangements for the Safeguarding of Children – Caerphilly County Borough (June 2019)
2. Caerphilly County Borough Council – Management Response (June 2019)
3. Caerphilly Corporate Safeguarding Board Action Plan (June 2019)