

**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE HEALTH AND CARE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
HELD AT BY ZOOM ON FRIDAY, 31 MARCH 2023**

PRESENT: County Councillor A Jenner (Chair)
County Councillors J Ewing, G E Jones, G W Ratcliffe, L Rijnenberg, C Robinson,
E Vaughan and C Walsh

Cabinet Portfolio Holders in Attendance: County Councillors S Cox (Cabinet Member for a Caring Powys) and R Church (Cabinet Member for a Safer Powys)

Officers: Wyn Richards (Scrutiny Manager and Head of Democratic Services), Lynette Lovell (Director of Education and Children) and Nina Davies (Director of Social Services and Housing).

1. APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from County Councillor G Morgan, G Preston, and C Keyon-Wade (other Council business).

An apology for absence was also received from Cabinet Member S Davies (Cabinet Member for Future Generations) and Dr C Turner (Chief Executive).

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no Declarations of Interest from Members relating to items to be considered on the agenda.

3. DISCLOSURE OF PARTY WHIPS

The Committee did not receive any disclosures of prohibited party whips which a Member had been given in relation to the meeting in accordance with Section 78(3) of the Local Government Measure 2011.

4. MINUTES

The Chair was authorised to sign the minutes of the previous meeting held on 15-12-2022 as a correct record.

5. CORPORATE SAFEGUARDING REPORT AND ACTION PLAN

Documents Considered:

- Audit Wales report regarding Corporate Safeguarding
- Council's Action Plan

Issues Discussed:

Cabinet Member for a Safer Powys:

- There was an Audit Wales review of Safeguarding in 2022 which reported to Council in December. The review made a number of recommendations which were included in the report regarding how corporate safeguarding arrangements could be improved.
- Before the report became public work had commenced on implementing a number of the recommendations including agreeing a Corporate

Safeguarding policy which had been approved by the Cabinet following comments from the scrutiny committee.

- The recommendations regarding training had been noted and a training campaign had been implemented to improve the level of training of both staff and Members. There had been a significant improvement in training, with Member training being at 98%.
- There was a need to embed corporate safeguarding in everything that the Council did and as a key consideration of everything moving forwards. Corporate safeguarding would be considered as part of the corporate self assessment process for all services.

Director of Social Services and Housing:

- Audit Wales published the final report on corporate safeguarding on 19 December, 2022. The report and corporate action plan was also discussed at the Governance and Audit Committee on 9 February 2023 and the Corporate Safeguarding Group in March.
- It was clear that there was much work to do and actions to be completed. An action plan was drafted and work to implement the action plan commenced working corporately across all services. The engagement from across the Council including the Cabinet, and the scrutiny committee had been positive and supported by a cross service working group.
- The Council welcomed and accepted all the recommendations outlined in the report.
- Progress had been made against all of the recommendations before the report became public.
- Many of the actions had been completed or have had significant progress achieved against them.
- All of the recommendations have been added to the corporate regulatory tracker, so that they would be monitored through the quarterly monitoring governance arrangements as well as through safeguarding channels.
- The Committee was reminded that the Audit Wales report related to the Council's overall corporate safeguarding arrangements and did not refer to those arrangements for any individual service.
- Action Plan highlights:
 - Corporate Safeguarding policy – it was recognised that the Council did not have an overarching corporate safeguarding policy in place. A policy was drafted and was approved by the Cabinet on 13 December 2022. Also created was a one page summary showing the key information on one page. The policy was on the central repository together with a refresh date.
 - The Terms of Reference for the Corporate Safeguarding Board was reviewed, refreshed and improved on 5 December 2022.
 - Communication of safeguarding was an area needing improvement. The landing pages on the intranet and public web pages went live in February and corporate communications had been issued.
 - Following the feedback from scrutiny about a safeguarding theme per month, the Corporate Safeguarding Board had agreed this in principle and would be considering a programme of monthly themes at its meeting in June. Feedback from the scrutiny committee had been included on Corporate Safeguarding Board agendas.
 - Internal Audit was coming to the end of its work on Safer recruitment. That work commenced in November 2022.

- The Director had met with SWAP to agree a rolling programme of work to ensure that safeguarding was included in future audit work. That programme would be provided for the information of scrutiny.
- Corporate Safeguarding was being incorporated in all service self evaluation work to ensure that there was a robust reporting mechanism in place. This would assist in gathering the information for the Council’s annual report.
- The self evaluation process was being undertaken currently and those workbooks would be considered by the Cabinet and the Executive Management Team.
- Previously the Council had two DBS (disclosure and barring scheme) policies. This had been reviewed and reduced to one policy (Recommendation 5),so the recommendation and action was completed.
- Recommendation 6 was to produce guidance on the recruitment of volunteers. A Corporate Volunteering Policy was being developed for adoption. This would be presented to the scrutiny committee in future.
- Recommendation 7 - Contract management. A new approach was being developed which would set out how the Council would manage its contracts with regard to contract performance which would include ensuring safeguarding practices and controls were in place.
- Recommendation 8 - Mandatory Training. There had been an improvement in the completion of mandatory safeguarding training by staff and Members.
- Recommendation 9 – Providers to be expected to provide safeguarding training to employees in accordance with CWMPAS guidelines. The Council would be reconfirming this expectation and monitoring it through the new contract management framework.

Questions:

Question	Response
98% of Councillors had undertaken the Corporate Safeguarding training. What is the percentage figure for staff.	Officer Response: It was 78% a few weeks ago but it had improved since.
What is happening about the provision of training in more accessible formats for individuals that do not have access to computers	Officer Response: This was discussed at the last Corporate Safeguarding Board and consideration was being given as to how to reach front line staff who do not have access to computers or work with computers. An update would be provided in the next update to the Committee. ACTION: Director to provide update on the training of staff in front line services that do not have access to computers.
This was a corporate review rather than about individual services. Page 24 (of the document pack) – What We Found. There is a statement under point 5, – “concerningly the Council still	Officer Response: The opinion of the Director was that the statement was no longer true. A significant amount of work had been undertaken across all services since the Summer of 2022. This had been a

<p>does not have proper control of its Corporate Safeguarding arrangements which exposes both the Council and its residents to risk”.</p> <p>Is that statement now still true. Can you provide reassurance that this situation has changed.</p>	<p>corporate response. The Council had not only taken immediate steps but also was ensuring that safeguarding was embedded and sustained in the Council's activities including ensuring that corporate safeguarding was included in the annual self evaluation work.</p>
<p>There needs to be a review of accountability arrangements as the report goes back to 2014-15. The Council and the Corporate Safeguarding Group needs to reflect and learn lessons from past mistakes to make sure we do not get this type of report again.</p> <p>The review of the policy is currently three years following publication. Is this best practice in terms of safeguarding and reviewing policy. Hope it will be reviewed more frequently.</p>	<p>Officer Response: The Audit Wales report highlighted that the Corporate Safeguarding Board was not following its own Terms of Reference. The Council had also come to that conclusion and the Terms of Reference were reviewed and updated.</p> <p>The Director would take back the issue of learning lessons to the Corporate Safeguarding Board with the suggestion that this work be undertaken.</p> <p>In terms of the three year review of the policy, policies can be reviewed at any point in that three year period with three years being the maximum time limit. The Corporate Safeguarding Board could consider reviewing the policy more frequently. The review date was set following the Council's guidance and considering best practice by other authorities.</p> <p>Cabinet Member Response: It was not possible to completely eliminate the risk of corporate safeguarding being breached as there will always be an element of risk. The risk has been managed to substantially reduce it, but the work is never completed due to changes in circumstances and staff changing in the organisation. The role of the Cabinet Member was to continually remind others and highlight the importance of Corporate Safeguarding.</p>
<p>How long ago had the Corporate Safeguarding Group been established, and was it in place before the CIW (Care Inspectorate Wales) inspection in 2017.</p> <p>How was the governance for the group</p>	<p>Officer Response: A response will be provided to the Committee.</p>

<p>established and that may have been after the CIW inspection report so the group may not have been in existence for a long time.</p>	
<p>At the beginning of the report there is a table regarding key features and scrutiny. The risk elements are not ticked in the table which they should be.</p> <p>Does the work to be undertaken by services include the schools delegated budget and what areas of volunteering are included in the Volunteers policy e.g. Rights of Way volunteers.</p>	<p>Officer Response: The volunteers policy would be corporate so would include all volunteers across all service areas. There was already a service policy for Rights of way volunteers and this would be an overarching corporate policy.</p> <p>In terms of schools delegated budget all schools have to have a safeguarding policy approved annually by the governing body. This is checked annually by the school improvement advisors. School safeguarding policies were also available on school websites. In the safeguarding audit report Education and Social Services as individual service areas were not identified as areas of concern.</p>
<p>Does the 78% of staff that have undertaken the mandatory training include schools staff.</p> <p>All requirements for volunteers should also include school governors and those that undertake extra curricular activities in schools.</p>	<p>Officer Response: No they are not included. All corporate training is undertaken separately in schools including safeguarding training and that is at 100%, but they are not included in the corporate figures.</p> <p>All school volunteers are DBS checked and that information is held by the Education Service.</p> <p>ACTION: (i) the numbers of staff who have undertaken the mandatory safeguarding training should include school staff. (ii) Mandatory training should also be available to volunteers such as governors and all individuals who volunteer with schools and come into contact with children.</p>
<p>There is a statement in Audit Wales report (Page 36) "Safeguarding does not feature on the Education Risk Register, but the Council has stated there are regular meetings with the designated lead for safeguarding."</p> <p>This relates to corporate culture and the</p>	<p>Officer Response: The designated lead for safeguarding in Education was a regular attendee at the Corporate Safeguarding Board. There was assurance that Education and schools were included on the agenda as far as Corporate Safeguarding work was concerned.</p>

<p>acceptance of managing risk and safeguarding activity. By training staff you start to mitigate risk issues. Has this been corrected and is a considered risk by the Education Service.</p> <p>In terms of WCCIS is there any update as to whether this is going to be replaced or not.</p>	<p>In terms of WCCIS a digital transformation project was being undertaken to review potential options. An options report would be coming forward for consideration in the next few months.</p> <p>Risk was identified in the service risk register. There was a designated safeguarding lead who actively worked with schools.</p>
<p>On recommendation 3 there is an action to improve communications. Could more detail be included against that recommendation.</p> <p>There had also been improvements to the website since the action plan was written so needed to be included.</p>	<p>Officer Response: The website information became live in February 2023. The information provided in relation to recommendation 3 will be increased.</p>
<p>The safeguarding responsibilities for staff and Members had changed since the previous reports in 2014 and 2015. Has anyone reflected why the previous recommendations were not completed.</p>	<p>Officer Response: The Director agreed to take the challenge back to the Corporate Safeguarding Group with the suggestion that the Group should reflect on why the previous audit reports were not responded to.</p> <p>ACTION: The Committee to be advised of the outcome of the reflection as to why previous recommendations were not completed.</p>
<p>What is next for the committee. The Chair was interviewed as part of the audit. There was a need for clearer terms of reference for the committee with corporate safeguarding included in its Terms of Reference.</p> <p>What is the committee's role in reviewing this matter on an ongoing basis.</p>	<p>Officer Response: The Committee had a key role. Following each Corporate Safeguarding Board meeting there would be an update provided to the Committee. If there were any policies being proposed it would be recommended that scrutiny should review these before approval by the Cabinet.</p> <p>There was also the annual self evaluation report which included safeguarding and it was hoped that the safeguarding information could be considered by the committee. Safeguarding would in addition, be included in the Annual Director of Social Service's report which the committee considered.</p>

Outcomes:

- Noted
- Actions as detailed above

6.	JOINT LEISURE WORKING GROUP
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RESOLVED that County Councillors G E Jones and L Rijnenberg be appointed as the Committee's representatives on the Joint Leisure Working Group.

7.	WORK PROGRAMME
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The Committee noted the Work Programme as set out on the agenda.

County Councillor A Jenner (Chair)