

BARNSLEY METROPOLITAN BOROUGH COUNCIL

This matter is not a Key Decision within the Council's definition and has not been included in the relevant Forward Plan

**Report of the Director of Human Resources,
Performance and Communications,
and the Executive Director of the People Directorate.**

REVIEW OF THE SAFEGUARDING SCRUTINY COMMITTEE (SSC)

1.0 Purpose of report

1.1 To review the arrangements for the Safeguarding Scrutiny Committee.

2.0 Recommendations

2.1 That the arrangements outlined in the report be agreed;

That the work programme of the former Safeguarding Scrutiny Committee be subsumed into that of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee, but with a separate stream of work to be considered on the dates originally scheduled for the Safeguarding Scrutiny Committee.

3.0 Background

- 3.1 The Children's Scrutiny Sub-Committee was established as part of the overall governance review in October 2012. The intention was that it would give a greater focus to the scrutiny of Children's Services issues in response to the adverse Ofsted report, including scrutiny of the progress against the Ofsted action plan. It subsequently became a committee in its own right at Annual Council in May 2013, but still with a small membership of six Elected Members.
- 3.2 Following Ofsted's judgement that the Council had met all of its obligations arising from the report, the arrangements for scrutiny were also reviewed. Consequently, in May 2015, the current Safeguarding Scrutiny Committee was established to focus more Member attention on the Council's safeguarding responsibilities, partly in response to the new duties arising from the Care Act 2014 as well as the Jay and Casey reports in relation to Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council (RMBC). The number of Members of the Committee was also increased to 10 to reflect the need for wider Member involvement.
- 3.3 A key role of the Safeguarding Scrutiny Committee has been to challenge Children's Social Care Services about how they deliver the best outcomes for Looked After Children (LAC). In view of the confidential nature of the information to be considered to support this activity, the Committee has done this as a private workshop session, rather than as a part of its formal agenda.

4.0 Review

- 4.1 It is acknowledged that the Safeguarding Scrutiny Committee has made good progress, in both its current and previous form. The Committee has developed a highly focussed work programme and achieved greater engagement from Elected Members than in the past. However, the small size of the Committee has occasionally resulted in relatively few Members being available for the workshop session at the end of formal business.
- 4.2 In addition, although the Committee has undoubtedly challenged the service in the private workshop, there is a lack of transparency in this work. The absence of an item on a formal agenda, or any outline minute of the issues discussed and further work identified, weakens the Council's assertions that the challenge is effective.
- 4.3 It was therefore felt appropriate to consider refinements to the arrangements for the Committee that still retained a clear focus on safeguarding issues. This was identified by Annual Council on 20th May 2016 when it made an interim decision not to appoint the Committee, pending a review.

5.0 Proposal

- 5.1 It is proposed that the business of the Safeguarding Scrutiny Committee be subsumed into that of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee. This will secure the involvement of a greater number of Elected Members in the scrutiny of safeguarding, with all 26 Members able to attend for this business, but without the complexity of appointing a larger committee in its own right. Effectively, there will be two meetings of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee in each cycle (12 each year), with the dates already scheduled for both committees.
- 5.2 Although the business of the Safeguarding Scrutiny Committee will be subsumed into that of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee, the work programme for safeguarding will retain its own distinct identity and focus, separate from that of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee. The slots provided in the Council Diary for meetings of the Safeguarding Scrutiny Committee will be used specifically for that business. However, any meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee could be used for safeguarding business, if this allowed more timely consideration of that business.
- 5.3 The business previously considered in the private workshops will be formalised as part of the published agenda for the meetings considering safeguarding issues. However, the relevant powers under the Local Government Act 1972 will be invoked in respect of the non-publication of those papers, which will be printed on yellow papers in line with normal practice, and the press and public formally excluded from the meeting. That part of the meeting will be formally minuted, but in a way not to disclose exempt information under the terms of the 1972 Act, and so will provide greater transparency in terms of the challenge to the service.
- 5.4 It is considered that these arrangements will engage more Members in the scrutiny of safeguarding in a more transparent way. In addition, the programme of Member Development activity, aimed at reinforcing with Members their

corporate parenting and safeguarding responsibilities, will continue, together with supplementary All Member Information Briefings where appropriate. These arrangements will be reviewed after 9 months' operation, with a view to making any further revisions for May 2017.

6.0 Financial implications

6.1 There are no direct financial implications arising from this report.

6.2 It is noted however that the work of Scrutiny helps to ensure the delivery of value for money services across the Borough.

7.0 Employee implications

7.1 There are no direct employee implications arising from this report.

8.0 Communications implications

8.1 It is noted that the work of Scrutiny keeps under review the performance of the Council and other relevant organisations in providing safeguarding and other services to Barnsley communities. Proactive communication about these services and activities takes place on a regular, planned basis as part of the communication strategy for each directorate.

9.0 Consultations

9.1 The Cabinet Spokespersons for People (Safeguarding) and (Achieving Potential), and the Chair of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee have been consulted in this review, together with the Director of Human Resources, Performance & Communications and the Executive Director, People. They support the proposals, subject to the proposed further review.

10.0 The Corporate Plan and the Council's Performance Management Framework

10.1 Children's and adults' services, in particular to those who are vulnerable, are a high priority for the Council and the work of Scrutiny promotes this emphasis and contributes to performance improvement.

10.2 The work of Scrutiny also contributes to the achievement of and improvement in services in relation to a number of outcomes identified in the Council's Corporate Plan Performance Report and consideration of quarterly performance reports are annually scheduled into the Overview and Scrutiny Committee work programme.

11.0 Tackling health inequalities

11.1 Ensuring the wellbeing and safeguarding of our adults and children continues to be a priority for the Council and its partners. The work of Scrutiny contributes to this work in highlighting issues and ensuring appropriate plans are in place to address them.

12.0 Risk management and health & safety issues

- 12.1 Currently, the Safeguarding Scrutiny Committee is responsible for reviewing performance in relation to services for children and adults in the Borough with a particular focus on safeguarding. This contributes towards the effective control and mitigation of risks relating to the delivery of these services and protection of vulnerable adults and young people in the Borough.
- 12.2 By subsuming the work of the Safeguarding Scrutiny Committee into that of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee will allow for an increased number of Members to be involved in the scrutiny of safeguarding. Also, by formalising the private element of the meeting as part of the published agenda will enable this to be undertaken in a more transparent way.

13.0 Promoting equality & diversity and social inclusion

- 13.1 The work of Scrutiny promotes equality and diversity and social inclusion throughout all its work in considering the performance of and improvement in services.


14.0 Reduction of crime & disorder

- 14.1 As part of Scrutiny's role in performance management and service improvement, work is specifically undertaken in relation to the reduction of crime and disorder through the consideration of particular services and work with partners.

15.0 Background Papers

- 15.1 Cabinet reports relating to the revised Scrutiny arrangements are available on the links below:
- Member Governance arrangements Cab.10.10.2012/6:
<http://barnsleymbc.moderngov.co.uk/Data/Cabinet/201210101000/Agenda/cab%2010%2010%202012%20c6.pdf>
 - Revised arrangements for scrutiny of Children's Services / Safeguarding Cab.20.5.2015/10:
<http://barnsleymbc.moderngov.co.uk/Data/Cabinet/201505201000/Agenda/item%20j10.pdf>

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Financial Implications / Consultation (To be signed by senior Financial Services officer where no financial implications)	 3/6/16 JOSHUA AMAHWE
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