

BARNSELEY 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 Executive Director Core Services and the Executive Director People Directorate

REVIEW OF THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE (OSC) SAFEGUARDING WORKSTREAM

1.0 Purpose of report

- 1.1 To review the arrangements for the Overview and Scrutiny Committee (OSC) following the work programme of the former Safeguarding Scrutiny Committee (SSC) being subsumed into its work programme during 2016/17.

2.0 Recommendations

- 2.1 That the arrangements outlined in the report be agreed:
- 2.2 **That meetings continue to be set aside on the OSC work programme to consider safeguarding business.**
- 2.3 **That minutes from the most recent OSC meeting feed directly into the following meeting rather than the current arrangement of separate streams of general and safeguarding business.**
- 2.4 **That the public minute for the private part of the OSC agenda is expanded to provide further information and transparency.**

3.0 Background

- 3.1 As part of an overall governance review in October 2012 a Children's Scrutiny Sub-Committee was established to give greater focus to the scrutiny of Children's Services in response to an adverse Ofsted report. 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, a Safeguarding Scrutiny Committee (SSC) was established to focus more Member attention on the Council's safeguarding responsibilities, partly in response to 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 SSC had been to challenge Children's Social Care performance information. In view of the confidential nature of the information to be considered to support this activity, the Committee did this as a private workshop session, rather than as a part of its formal agenda.
- 3.4 At Annual Council on 20th May 2016 an interim decision was made not to appoint the SSC, pending a review to address concerns regarding the small number of Members on the committee as well as a lack of transparency regarding there being no public record of the challenge to Children's Social Care performance information.
- 3.5 In June 2016, a review was undertaken of the committee and it was agreed that its work programme be subsumed into that of the OSC. During the review, it was also agreed that the business previously considered in the private workshops be formalised as part of the published agenda for the meetings considering safeguarding issues. However, the relevant powers under the Local Government Act 1972 have been invoked in respect of the non-publication of those papers and the press and public formally excluded from the meeting.

4.0 Review

- 4.1 During the last Municipal Year, the OSC has continued to make good progress and the arrangements have secured more engagement from Members in the scrutiny of safeguarding in a more transparent way, with all 26 Members able to attend for this business but without the complexity of appointing a larger committee in its own right.
- 4.2 Within these arrangements, the work programme for safeguarding has retained its own distinct identity and focus within the overall OSC work programme. Slots provided in the Council Diary for meetings of the SSC have been used specifically for that business. However, any meeting of the OSC has also been used for safeguarding business, if this allowed more timely consideration of the topic.
- 4.3 The OSC Chair, Cabinet Spokesperson for People (safeguarding), Executive Director for People and Scrutiny Officer have met regularly regarding the OSC work programme to ensure the timely consideration of safeguarding topics. The fluid approach taken has ensured challenge to the work of for example the Barnsley Safeguarding Adults Board, Barnsley Safeguarding Children Board and Corporate Parenting Panel as well as broader consideration of safeguarding being everyone's business by ensuring services look after the vulnerable, provide early help and are accessible to all, for example through the Adult Social Care Target Operating Model.
- 4.4 The private part of the OSC meetings to consider Children's Social Care performance information has been formally minuted, but in a way not to disclose exempt information under the terms of the 1972 Act, and so providing greater transparency in terms of the challenge to the service.

4.5 To assist Members in effective challenge of information covered in the private part of the OSC meetings, training and creation of a supporting document have been provided. In addition, the programme of Member Development activity, aimed at reinforcing with Members their corporate parenting and safeguarding responsibilities, has continued, together with supplementary All Member Information Briefings where appropriate.

5.0 Proposal

5.1 It is proposed that meetings continue to be set aside on the OSC work programme to consider safeguarding business, however that a fluid approach will be taken to allow for timely consideration of topics; therefore sometimes both meetings in the cycle will cover safeguarding business.

5.2 Due to the fluid approach to the work programme, the minutes from the most recent OSC meeting should feed into the following meeting for approval no matter what the previous topic, rather than the current bi-monthly arrangement where minutes from safeguarding topic meetings are reported in two meetings' time.

5.3 Work will continue to be undertaken to improve the accessibility of performance reports as well as facilitate deep-dives on specific areas of performance. Member development activity will also continue, to facilitate the committee in the effective challenge of all services.

5.4 To provide further transparency and assertion that effective challenge is provided to Children's Social Care performance information, the public minute for the private part of the OSC agenda will be expanded. This will provide further information regarding the summary of the discussion which takes place, whilst still maintaining appropriate confidentiality of specific information.

5.5 These arrangements will again be reviewed after 9 months' operation, with a view to making any further revisions for May 2018.

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), the Cabinet Spokesperson for Corporate Services and the Chair of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee have been consulted in this review, together with the Senior Management Team.

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 OSC 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 Over the last municipal year, by subsuming the work of the SSC into that of the OSC has enabled an increased number of Members to be involved in the scrutiny of safeguarding. The scrutiny of this business 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 Additionally, by formalising the private element of the meeting as part of the published agenda has allowed this to be undertaken in a more transparent way. Going forward, by amending the format in which the private part of the agenda is minuted will enable further transparency in governance, risk management and challenge of services.

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>
- Safeguarding Scrutiny Committee - Review of Arrangements Cab.15.6.2016/14:
<http://barnsleymbc.moderngov.co.uk/documents/s10571/Safeguarding%20Scrutiny%20Committee%20-%20Review%20of%20Arrangements.pdf>

Officer Contact: Anna Marshall **Telephone No:** 01226 775794 **Date:** 20th April 2017