



| <u>Committee and Date</u> |
|---------------------------|
| Council |
| Date: 24 June 2010 |
| Time: 10.00am |

| <u>Item</u> |
|-------------|
| 18 |
| Public |

Responsible Officer Kim Ryley

e-mail: kim.ryley@shropshire.gov.uk

Tel: 01743 252702

Fax: 01743 252390

REPORT FROM THE COUNCIL LEADER AND CHIEF EXECUTIVE IN RESPECT TO SAFEGUARDING

Summary

This report from the Leader and the Chief Executive is provided in relation to the required annual review of Safeguarding activity across Shropshire Council.

Recommendation

1. That Council note the contents of this report.

REPORT

Corporate Responsibility

1. It is the responsibility of the Council to ensure that all vulnerable people are effectively protected. Although there are specific responsibilities for the Director of Children's and the Director of Adult services and the respective Portfolio holders there is a wider obligation for all parts of the Council to contribute to this goal.
2. The role of the Leader and the Chief Executive is to hold the respective individuals accountable and to undertake an annual assessment of how effectively the duty to safeguard vulnerable individuals is being discharged.
3. Safeguarding is a corporate priority and all Directorates are represented at the Safeguarding Task and Finish Group which has been in place since May 2009. All Directorates have been undertaking safeguarding audits in relation to both vulnerable adults and children (based on Children Act

Section 11 requirements). Directorates have identified priority areas for action which are being monitored by the STFG. The life of the group was extended in January 2010 in order to ensure that key action areas have been progressed. Work on a basic awareness training pack safeguarding has been completed and an e-learning package is being developed for introduction in the autumn 2010. There has been extensive work in relation to contracts: safeguarding clauses have been revised and guidance to procurers updated. Many complex safeguarding issues are being brought to the group. A full report will be considered by CMT in June 2010.

4. All Members have been given the opportunity of safeguarding training in 2009/2010 and further sessions will be provided. In addition the Corporate Parenting Training is provided for all members and full take-up is expected. The responsibilities of members in relation to Children in the Public Care clearly include duties in relation to the safeguarding and protection of this important group of children.
5. In respect of Children's Services, following on from the events at Haringey and Lord Laming's report, Safe guarding duties are encapsulated within statutory guidance.
6. OFSTED the regulatory body for all Children's Services now undertake an annual unannounced inspection of Safeguarding arrangements in relation to referral and assessment services. This was undertaken in Shropshire on 7 and 8 April 2010. A copy of the recently published report may be found at on the Ofsted website at:
[http://www/ofsted.gov.uk/oxcare_providers/la_download/\(id\)/5872/\(as\)/UAV/uav_2010_893.pdf](http://www/ofsted.gov.uk/oxcare_providers/la_download/(id)/5872/(as)/UAV/uav_2010_893.pdf) Unlike other inspections these are not graded, but the outcome focuses on areas of strength and areas for development. There were no priority areas for action and the areas for development are already being addressed. Cabinet will be considering the report and improvement plan in July 2010.
7. Within the Council there are regular arrangements in place for the Chief Executive, Lead Member DCS and AD Social Care and Safeguards to routinely consider safeguarding services, performance and issues.
8. CYPSP Scrutiny Committee has been provided with twice yearly reports on governance, performance, staffing and audit arrangements.
9. Members' involvement in safeguarding work is notable: groups of members are regularly involved in case file audits and in safeguarding activities relating to Looked After Children. Their increased involvement is currently being explored in line with April Scrutiny Committee recommendations.

Adult Services – Inspection and Monitoring

10. Adult Services were subject to an announced “Inspection of Adult Social Care Services” during October to December 2009, which focused on two specific areas of social care delivery, one being safeguarding. The inspection was very thorough and looked at all aspects of Adult Social Care safeguarding, both in relation to Shropshire Council direct services provision and Shropshire Council’s role in the adult safeguarding partnership and adult safeguarding across the county. The inspection found that in their view Shropshire Council was performing well in relation to safeguarding. Currently Shropshire is the only authority across the West Midlands to have achieved this rating. An action plan has been approved by Cabinet to address areas of development identified within the inspection and this is being monitored through Community Services Scrutiny processes. A copy of the report can be found at: <http://www.cqc.org.uk/guidanceforprofessionals/socialcare/councils/councilinspectionreports.cfm>

Service Delivery

11. It has been a very difficult year for Children’s Services nationally. The reaction to the Baby Peter tragedy in Haringey has led to a significant rise in referrals in respect to vulnerable children and this has been reflected in a 25% rise in numbers subject to safeguarding plans. This rise has been reflected in Shropshire with the numbers of Children in Care increasing by 29 to 223 and those subject to safeguarding plans by 173 at end March 2009 to 260 at end of March 2010 (a rise of 50.3%)
12. At the same time as there has been this dramatic rise in work, there has been a huge problem recruiting suitable trained and experienced Social Workers. Partially this reflects the difficulties in recruiting sufficient numbers for training but there is also evidence of experienced staff leaving this area of work due to the attendant pressures and risks. In rural areas such as Shropshire, this has not been helped by the slowdown in the housing market and the higher remuneration that Social Workers can receive in urban settings. The Council is ensuring that this is a priority area for attention and a full recruitment and retention strategy is in place. The recent Ofsted inspection confirmed our priority areas for action which included staffing levels and caseloads. A further critical area relates to data capture and reporting ie simplifying the system that underpins the work of frontline staff and ensuring that the data is accurate and timely.
13. Adult Social Care Services introduced new recording and reporting of adult protection referrals linked to the current social care record system (CareFirst). The process for monitoring, managing and evaluating was strengthened throughout the year and reported through the corporate management reporting process. We are pleased to see a significant improvement across all areas of adult protection work.

14. Adult protection remains a key focus for Adult Social Care Services. There continues to be an increase in the total number of adult protection referrals, rising from 399 in 2008/09 to 531 in 2009/10.

Shropshire Safeguarding Children Board (SSCB)

15. Despite these difficulties we have made good progress in safeguarding vulnerable children in the County. The Local Safeguarding Board which brings together the key agencies, including Police and Health, has been a highly effective body currently chaired by the Director of Children's Services. The Board is responsible for ensuring that all Agencies meet their statutory safeguarding duties. Following the revised Working Together Guidance 2010 the Lead Member for Children's Services is able to sit on the Board, which SSCB has long been promoting. The Board will take on an increasing role in respect of scrutiny of practice. The Shropshire Children's Trust and Local Strategic Partnership will be informed of any areas of concern so that these can be swiftly addressed and the outcome reported back to the SSCB.
16. A number of subgroups report to the Safeguarding Board: these include the Serious Case Review subgroup and the Training Subgroup. In addition the Child Death Overview Panel reports to the Board : this is a multi agency team considering all deaths of Children and young people in the County which identifies areas of practice that might reduce mortality.
17. Arrangements have been put in place to ensure that statutory and voluntary bodies are recruiting safely and that those who should not work with vulnerable children are excluded. There have been significant levels of training for a range of agencies in respect to safeguarding with particular attention to schools and also voluntary settings.

Shropshire (and Telford & Wrekin) Adult Safeguarding Board

18. The Adult Safeguarding Board, covering Shropshire/Telford & Wrekin, was created in April 2009, building upon existing Adult Protection Committee arrangements. The Safeguarding Board set out an ambitious programme of work for 2009/10, including the development of a comprehensive adult safeguarding strategy, with supporting programmes of work linked to training and development, policy development, awareness raising, etc. The work of the board was identified as positive and challenging within the Adult Social Care Inspection, and will continue to strengthen throughout the course of the next year. The government confirmed their plan to place Adult Safeguarding Boards within a statutory framework and we are waiting further guidance as to how and when this will come into being. The Safeguarding Board has overseen a number of significant operational developments such as the development of a pressure sore tool that aids decision making linked to clinical processes and adult protection processes, which has received regional and national interest, the development of decision tools linked to medication errors within care

homes and training resources for people with a learning disability linked to the adult protection process.

List of Background Papers (This MUST be completed for all reports, but does not include items containing exempt or confidential information)

Human Rights Act Appraisal Responding to concerns regarding child and adult welfare and safety inevitably raises issues such as the right to privacy and family life. Our responses at all times should be 'proportionate' with the main focus always on the safety and welfare of the child or vulnerable adult.

Environmental Appraisal There are no environmental appraisal issues arising from this report

Risk Management Appraisal

The authority has a very considerable responsibility in respect of children at risk and the safeguarding of vulnerable adults. It must keep under regular review its capacity to deliver these duties effectively.

Community / Consultations Appraisal

Cabinet Members

Keith Barrow Leader of the Council

Cecilia Motley Lead Member Children's Services

Simon Jones Lead Member Adult Services

Local Member

Applicable to all members

Appendix

None