



RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

18th September 2024

LOCAL AUTHORITY ARRANGEMENTS TO SAFEGUARD CHILDREN AND ADULTS AT RISK

REPORT OF THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE

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1 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to provide an overview of the progress being made in the delivery of the Council's Corporate Safeguarding responsibilities, overseen by the Corporate Safeguarding Group, chaired by the Chief Executive.

2 RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that the committee:

- 2.1 Scrutinise the Council's corporate arrangements for the safeguarding of children and adults at risk, including the progress against the delivery plan for 2023-24.

3 REASONS FOR RECOMENDATIONS

- 3.1 The safeguarding of children and adults at risk is a priority for the Council. Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility, whether they work for or on behalf of the Council. Everyone should have the ability to identify a potential safeguarding issue and know how to raise a concern.
- 3.2 Members must be confident that there are effective safeguarding arrangements in place across the Council, and that our governance arrangements are robust.

4 BACKGROUND

- 4.1 The Council's Corporate Safeguarding Policy underpins the arrangements in place across the Council to safeguard vulnerable adults and children. The

Policy, approved by Cabinet on 21st February 2024, provides a framework setting out how we can be assured that we are fulfilling our duties to safeguard the people that live across our communities.

- 4.2 A Corporate Safeguarding Group, chaired by the Chief Executive, is responsible for ensuring that the Council carries out its responsibilities for the safeguarding of children and adults at risk, as set out in its Corporate Safeguarding Policy.
- 4.3 The Group ensures that robust arrangements for safeguarding are in place across the Council. This includes seeking assurances that the Council has effective performance management processes in place to fulfil its duties corporately and in partnership with other statutory agencies. The Council's corporate safeguarding arrangements compliment the statutory requirements within the Education and Social Care Sector.
- 4.4 As clearly set out within the Corporate Safeguarding Policy '*Safeguarding is everyone's business whether they work for, or on behalf of, the Council*'.
- 4.5 At its meeting held on [29 January 2024](#) the Overview and Scrutiny Committee considered a report that summarised the work delivered in respect of the Council's corporate safeguarding arrangements for 2022/23. The report considered by the Committee concluded that *the Council continues to make progress in delivering its Corporate Safeguarding responsibilities*. The report was presented later than planned, and a commitment was given at that stage to present the 2023/24 summary report sooner in the 2024/25 Municipal Year.
- 4.6 The Council's responsibilities for corporate safeguarding add to and compliment the work of the Cwm Taf Morgannwg Regional Safeguarding Board, which is the multi-agency statutory partnership that has the responsibility for safeguarding across the region. Each agency must ensure that there are adequate arrangements in place to safeguard children and adults at risk.
- 4.7 This report provides a summary of the work delivered during 2023/24 and presents the new delivery plan for 2024/25.

5 DELIVERY OF THE COUNCIL'S CORPORATE SAFEGUARDING POLICY

- 5.1 At its meeting on [29 January 2024](#), the Overview and Scrutiny Committee considered and pre scrutinised the updated Corporate Safeguarding Policy, following a review of our arrangements in the light of the [Corporate Safeguarding Good Practice Guidance](#) commissioned by the Welsh Government in partnership with the Welsh Local Government Association. The new Corporate Safeguarding Policy was subsequently considered and approved by Cabinet on [21 February 2024](#).
- 5.2 Our positive progress in respect of delivering the [Corporate Safeguarding Policy](#) included developing a Delivery Plan for 2023/24, including actions relevant to corporate safeguarding risks across the Council. The group

membership was expanded to include a wider range of functions to manage emerging risks, for example around digital and data security.

5.3 The Corporate Safeguarding Group meets quarterly. A key focus of the Group is to review progress against the agreed delivery plan. The delivery plan for 2023/24 included actions, milestones, and measures and is presented at Appendix I. Specific deliverables are listed as follows:

- Putting in place new performance management arrangements that align with the Council's performance reporting periods. This helped to ensure robust monitoring of actions, and increased accountability.
- The Council's Service Self Evaluation template was updated to include a section on Corporate Safeguarding. The outcomes from this work have been used to inform the Council's Annual Self-Assessment.
- Agreeing and implementing Council specific Safeguarding Training Standards based on the National Training Standards.
- Receiving a report from the Head of Attendance & Wellbeing Service outlining the systems in place at all schools to record concerns raised within the school environment. The report demonstrated the reporting capabilities of the system and outlined how the information is used – in consultation with Headteachers and Safeguarding Cluster Groups for example.
- Receiving a thematic report summarising safeguarding issues arising from internal audit inspections of schools. The annual Internal Audit report indicated there is generally a sound system of governance, risk management and control in place in respect of safeguarding with areas of good practice identified.
- Preparing and sharing with Suppliers, a guide to '[Tackling Modern Slavery in our Supply Chains](#)' to raise their awareness of the Council's approach in this area.
- Putting in place robust arrangements across the Council's supplychain aimed at ensuring compliance with stringent Cyber Security protocols.
- Continuing to roll out mandatory Safeguarding training, and ensuring safe recruitment processes remain in place across the Council.
- Noting that staff awareness of Corporate Safeguarding requirements has been assessed in the recent staff survey and remained reassuringly high with 96% of respondents aware of the Council's Corporate Safeguarding policy and, 92% confirming they knew how to report suspected or know abuse/neglect.

5.4 Whilst good progress has been made during 2023/24, we know we have more work to do. Examples of areas where improvement is needed, or where we need to continue to deliver robust arrangements are listed as follows:

Leadership & Culture

- Put in place a range of communication activities to ensure all staff and elected Members are advised and reminded of their responsibilities in respect of the Corporate Safeguarding and in particular the new Corporate

Safeguarding Policy approved in February 2024. For example, staff newsletter, posters, improved web site presence, social media.

- Review and refresh the Council's existing [Social Media Policy](#) to ensure it identifies and addresses safeguarding risks.

Professional practice & Standards

- Continuing to ensure that safeguarding is included within tender packs and on procurement policy web pages, e.g., keeping people safe, whistleblowing and tackling modern slavery.
- ensuring that relevant contracts are subject to ongoing cyber security risk assessments.

Workforce, Recruitment & Selection

- Establish the required frequency of Level 1 refresher training for all staff (excluding those that work with children and adults), and then put actions in place to roll this out. Ensure this training is mandatory.
- Investigate the potential to use the I-Trent system as the central repository that records all safeguarding training delivered to staff.

Governance, Scrutiny & Performance Management

- Review the Corporate Safeguarding element of the Service Self-Evaluation to strengthen service assurance with compliance with corporate safeguarding arrangements for the 2024 SSE.
- Consider how Corporate Safeguarding can be embedded into 2025/26 Service Delivery Plans.

5.5 The [new Corporate Safeguarding Policy](#) establishes a framework within which the Council can continue to discharge its safeguarding responsibilities to keep the most vulnerable people in our communities safe. The new Corporate Safeguarding Framework comprises four areas of activity:

- Leadership & Culture
- Governance, Scrutiny & Performance Management
- Professional practice & Standards
- Workforce, Recruitment & Selection

5.6 In the light of the new Corporate Safeguarding Policy and its Framework areas, a new Corporate Safeguarding Delivery Plan 2024/25 has been developed and is presented at Appendix II. It is structured around the four areas of activity listed above and incorporates areas of work that were not fully implemented during 2023/24 and new actions. The delivery plan will be monitored and reported using the Council's Performance management Framework with progress being monitored by the Corporate Safeguarding Group.

5.7 The Council's strategic importance of corporate safeguarding has also been incorporated into the Council's new Corporate Plan 2024-30, approved by

Council on [24 April 2024](#). The Council's new Corporate Plan, 'Working with our Communities' contains four Well-being Objectives that are supported by underpinning Priorities, and a section that identifies the robust governance arrangements that need to be in place for our Council to be considered a 'well-run Council'. Corporate Safeguarding is a key element of the Council's robust governance.

6 EQUALITY & DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS

6.1 There are no equality and diversity implications arising from this report.

7 WELSH LANGUAGE IMPLICATIONS

7.1 There are no Welsh language implications arising from this report.

8 CONSULTATION

8.1 There are no consultation implications arising from this report.

9 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

9.1 There are no financial implications arising from this report.

10 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS OR LEGISLATION CONSIDERED

10.1 The Council's corporate safeguarding arrangements function within a complex legislative framework, the details of which are covered in the Corporate Safeguarding policy.

11 LINKS TO THE COUNCIL'S CORPORATE AND NATIONAL PRIORITIES AND THE WELL-BEING OF FUTURE GENERATIONS ACT

11.1 Safeguarding and protecting children and adults at risk is a key priority for Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council and is "everyone's business". By keeping our residents, both young and old, safe, the Council is contributing to the National Well-being goals, in particular a Healthier Wales, a More Equal Wales, and a Wales of more Cohesive Communities.

11.2 The Council's Corporate Safeguarding arrangements support the 'People and Communities' well-being objective of the Council's Corporate Plan 2024-2030, "Working with Our Communities", which aims to support and empower our residents and communities to live safe, healthy, and fulfilling lives. It is also a fundamental part of our commitment to a well-run Council.

12 CONCLUSION

12.1 The Council continues to have robust and effective arrangements in place in respect of its corporate safeguarding arrangements. Good work has been delivered during 2023/24 to strengthen our arrangements, but we know further

work is required. The delivery plan that has been put in place for 2024/25 aims to build on these strong foundations.