

Cherwell District Council

Overview & Scrutiny Committee

22 November 2016

<p>Safeguarding - Update on Internal Review Action Plan and Draft Section 11 Return Submission</p>

Report of Community Services Manager

This report is public

Purpose of report

To review the progress made against the actions of the 2015 Safeguarding review and to consider the Section 11 return for 2016.

1.0 Recommendations

The meeting is recommended:

- 1.1 To note the action plan progress made to date.
- 1.2 To endorse the draft Section 11 audit for 2016/ 17 for submission to the NSCB in December 2016;

2.0 Introduction

- 2.1 In the year following the joint internal review of safeguarding, both councils have made strides to understand that safeguarding has a much wider remit than solely the prevention of Child Sexual Exploitation or Preventing Radicalisation and includes matters such as the protection of vulnerable adults, child neglect, self-harm, female genital mutilation, missing children, domestic abuse, human trafficking and, modern slavery.
- 2.2 Both Cherwell District Council and South Northamptonshire Council have made changes to their own policies and introduced new procedures to capture information that may assist in the detection of crime, and capture of those engaged in criminal behaviours.

3.0 Report Details

3.1 The report recognises the good work which has been undertaken over the past year against the key objectives

- Better engagement with and financial support for the four safeguarding boards – adults and children in each county, and engagement with key partners in each county.
- Better use of internal processes for service planning and priorities, HR activities, communication and self-assessment.
- Increased safeguarding and awareness training for staff, elected members and partners.
- Increased involvement of members through scrutiny and individual roles.
- The opportunity to share the learning and good practice from this review with other District colleagues in Northamptonshire, Oxfordshire and elsewhere.

3.2 The review recommendations were incorporated into a detailed action plan that was approved at the beginning of the year. It prioritises the actions required to improve the delivery of the Councils' safeguarding duties.

4.0 Conclusion and Reasons for Recommendations

4.1 The Council has a duty to ensure it has robust systems and processes in place to capture the work being undertaken to safeguard children, young people and vulnerable adults. The steps outlined in the action plan support a more transparent and connected approach to safeguarding across both authorities and progress made by officers to undertake development work with partners to secure better outcomes for residents has been effective and welcomed.

4.2 The internal review identified the need for the Overview and Scrutiny Committee at each Council to have a role in this matter. A briefing on progress was made at six months alongside a refresher training session for members. This report satisfies the agreed requirement of a timely input to the submission of the annual Section 11 Childrens Act audit return.

5.0 Consultation

With partner organisations

As appropriate to the action arising in the initial action plan

6.0 Alternative Options and Reasons for Rejection

- 6.1 The following alternative option has been identified and rejected for the reasons as set out below.

Option 1: Do nothing further – rejected as there is clearly a need to assure members and senior Officers of the Council that safeguarding duties are being properly considered, escalated and records of action kept; that staff and members receive adequate training to fulfil their roles; that the Council is an active partner in the multiagency approach required to safeguard individuals from exploitation and extremism in all its forms.

7.0 Implications

Financial and Resource Implications

- 7.1 There have been some increased costs for financial contributions in 2016/17 and beyond towards all both safeguarding boards. These have been met from existing resources and where possible this will continue to be the case. There will also be a human resource allocation to manage the operational obligations each authority has; the proposal for how this can be achieved was met through the shared service business case for Community Services and the appointment of a part time Safeguarding officer shared across the two authorities has been successful with the officer starting in February 2017.

Comments checked by Denise Taylor, Group Accountant, 01295 221982, denise.taylor@cherwellandsouthnorthants.gov.uk

Legal Implications

- 7.2 There are statutory duties on District Councils to contribute to activity which safeguards children and vulnerable adults; promotes wellbeing and counters extremism and exploitation in all forms. The recommendations contained in this report will enable the authority to discharge these responsibilities.

Comments checked by Kevin Lane, Head of Law and Governance, 0300 003 0107; kevin.lane@cherwellandsouthnorthants.gov.uk

Risk

- 7.3 Failure to discharge its duty will have a significant reputational impact on the authority as well as the individuals involved. The improvement to internal processes (including the 'See It, Report It' process for any member of staff to raise an alert if they notice something they are concerned about), training and partnership working will mitigate this risk. Risk C12 – Safeguarding is monitored on a regular basis as part of the Corporate Risk Register.

Comments checked by Ed Bailey, Corporate Performance Manager, 01295 221605, edward.bailey@cherwellandsouthnorthants.gov.uk

8.0 Wards Affected

All

Lead Councillor
Councillor Tony Ilott

Document Information

Appendix No	Title
Appendix 1	Joint Internal Safeguarding Review Action Plan - update
Appendix 2	Oxfordshire Joint Safeguarding Board return for CDC 2016
Background Papers	
None	
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