



Safeguarding Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Minutes of the meeting held at County Hall, Dorchester, Dorset,
DT1 1XJ on Tuesday, 14 June 2016

Present:

Pauline Batstone (Chairman)
Mike Lovell, Steve Butler, Mike Byatt, Beryl Ezzard, Peter Hall and Susan Jefferies

Members Attending

Deborah Croney, Cabinet Member for Learning and Skills
Trevor Jones, County Councillor for Dorchester
Rebecca Knox, Cabinet Member for Health and Wellbeing and Children's Safeguarding
David Walsh, County Councillor for Gillingham

Officers Attending: Fiona King (Senior Democratic Services Officer), Sara Tough (Director for Children's Services), Mark Taylor (Group Manager - Governance and Assurance), Vanessa Glenn (Head of Families and Children), Anne Salter (Head of Strategy, Partnerships and Performance), Alison Waller (Head of Partnerships and Performance) and Sally Wernick (Safeguarding and Quality Service Manager) and Fiona King (Senior Democratic Services Officer).

- (Notes:(1) In accordance with Rule 16(b) of the Overview and Scrutiny Procedure Rules the decisions set out in these minutes will come into force and may then be implemented on the expiry of five working days after the publication date.
Publication Date: **Wednesday, 22 June 2016**
- (2) These minutes have been prepared by officers as a record of the meeting and of any decisions reached. They are to be considered and confirmed at the next meeting of the Cabinet to be held on **Wednesday, 5 October 2016.**)

Apologies for Absence

- 1 Apologies for absence were received from Toni Coombs and Daryl Turner.

Code of Conduct

- 2 There were no declarations by members of disclosable pecuniary interests under the Code of Conduct.

Public Participation

3 Public Speaking

There were no public questions received at the meeting in accordance with Standing Order 21(1).

There were no public statements received at the meeting in accordance with Standing Order 21(2).

Petitions

There were no petitions received at the meeting in accordance with the County Council's Petition Scheme.

Terms of Reference

- 4 Members noted the terms of reference for the Safeguarding Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

The Chairman drew members' attention to the Corporate Plan and the principle area of focus for the Committee, which was as follows:-

People in Dorset are SAFE – *Everyone should feel safe, wherever they are:*

- Children and vulnerable adults are safe wherever they are;
- Crime, anti-social behaviour and domestic abuse across Dorset is minimised;
- There are fewer accidental injuries and deaths – including those on Dorset's roads; and
- People and communities are better able to cope with environmental change and other natural emergencies.

Noted

Induction - Part 1

- 5 The Group Manager for Governance and Assurance gave members a presentation, 'Making a Difference to People's Lives', which focused on how to effectively use the overview and scrutiny functions.

He highlighted the new committee structure and the importance of a member led approach, noting that training for members and senior officers had already been provided, but more may be needed. He also referred to an Overview and Scrutiny Guide that had been produced and circulated to support transition to the new arrangements. It was explained that this was a very new and different approach in order to help members and officers gain a holistic view of the outcome priorities of the County Council and to work closely together to improve the lives of residents and communities we served.

The use of Policy Development Panels and Task and Finish groups was highlighted in order to understand more about how members could make a difference and to allow work to progress in a timely manner outside of formal committee meetings. The overview and scrutiny committees were now cross cutting committees across the authority and a one council view had been taken.

The Group Manager for Governance and Assurance focussed members' attention on the delivery of outcomes and highlighted the 4 overarching principles which the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board had established to guide the work of the new committee:-

- Doing less – but doing it more thoroughly
- When selecting topics there must be a clear link to the corporate plan outcomes, supported by a clear rationale and prioritised accordingly
- Topics must be clearly and concisely scoped to ensure a structured review process
- Reviews should deliver clear conclusions and recommendations for improvement that Executive can consider leading to robust outcomes

Following a question from a member about presentations to the Cabinet, the Group Manager for Governance Assurance anticipated that the Chairman or Vice Chairman would be presenting recommendations from this committee to the Cabinet, but that mechanisms needed to be effective and timely. He added that this was members' opportunity to ultimately hold the Executive to account and to help influence the future direction and approach.

The use of key lines of enquiry and an open and inquiring approach to asking questions to help shape a view and arrive at conclusions was explored with members. The Director for Children's Services added that it was also about understanding what worked elsewhere and then adapting that for Dorset.

One member commented on the need to ensure that members made the best of the budget that was available and to focus on the core values. The Group Manager for Governance and Assurance noted that by having agreed a Corporate Plan with clear priorities this would help focus the budget in the right areas.

Noted

Induction - Part 2

6 Member's received the following presentations, to give them an overview of safeguarding in relation to Children and Adults:-

- The Safeguarding Service Manager for Adult and Community Services gave a general presentation on adults safeguarding highlighting it was very different to children's safeguarding;
- The Head of Families and Children highlighted that the safeguarding agenda for children's was everyone's business;
- The Director for Children's Services updated members on the recent Ofsted inspection, highlighting the main areas for ongoing improvement and the next steps.

In response to a question from a member about personal budgets and empowering clients the Safeguarding Service Manager advised the presentation was just focused on safeguarding and not budgets at the present time. In relation to a number of different agencies and data sharing she advised that questions were asked of clients like 'what is it you want', these difficult questions needed to be asked as these clients, unlike children, had the capacity to make their own decisions.

One member felt it was encouraging to hear of better transition arrangements between Children's and Adults services.

Following a question from a member about the number of permanent qualified staff, the Head of Families and Children made reference to the Forward Together Programme for children that had been ongoing the outcomes of which were now being realised. The Directorate was currently going through a process of interviewing for new services which would be delivered from 1 September 2016. Officers were actively interviewing in order to establish a new team to deliver permanency for children. They were also reinvigorating social work practice and reference was made to the partnership with Bournemouth University to develop and train social workers.

In relation to evidence of children staying in care too long, the Head of Families and Children advised that the number of children coming into care continued to decrease and highlighted the work of the adoption service, moving children out of care into an adoptive family situation. It was noted that Ofsted saw evidence that the ages of children coming into care was decreasing.

In response to a question regarding business plans for the next 12 months, the Director made reference to the Partnership Plan for Safeguarding Children which was progressed through the Dorset Safeguarding for Children Board (DCSB), the Children and Young People's Plan that would be presented to the Health and Wellbeing Board in September 2016 and the Action Plan arising from the recently received Ofsted report.

Following a discussion about the DCSB, the Director informed members that the partners of the DCSB included health, hospitals, police, probation, fire, district councils, voluntary agencies, housing, adult services and public health. There had been a lot of work undertaken to create sub groups from within then Board. The Board had recently appointed a new permanent Chairman.

One member felt that with lots of different groups/boards it was sometimes very confusing to work out who was responsible for what and where. The Director advised that the Safeguarding and Health and Wellbeing Boards were the only statutory Boards. Talks were currently ongoing to determine whether a Children's Trust Board was still relevant and officers were looking at a more local level place based approach to how priorities for children were set. She undertook to circulate a map of all of the Boards to members.

Noted

The Corporate Plan - Priorities for Safeguarding

7 The Group Manager for Governance and Assurance highlighted the Corporate Plan and suggested that members used this as an important background document and focus for discussion when populating the Committee's Forward Plan.

Noted

Outcomes Based Accountability (OBA) Context Report

8 Members considered a report which provided background and context in relation to Outcomes Based Accountability which was a key methodology that the authority had adopted.

Also included within the report was a sample scoping document and report which had been prepared, for illustrative purposes only, in order for members to see how a planning and scoping document could look in relation to helping support the future overview and scrutiny review work of the committee.

Noted

Work Programme

9 To help focus members' discussion on some of the key areas for the Work Programme for the Safeguarding Overview and Scrutiny Committee, the Director for Children's Services suggested areas that linked to areas in the Corporate Plan. She also noted that it would be important to link to the Ofsted recommendations to ensure scrutiny of the work:-

- Looked after children – why has it not been possible for some children – causes and forces that were playing their part in hindering the ability to keep children at home.
- Child Protection – to understand the categories of abuse being working with.
- Domestic abuse and the toxic trio (domestic abuse, mental ill-health and substance misuse) – crosses over between adults and children's services
- Child Sexual Exploitation and missing children.

Following a comment from a member about the inclusion of children with Special Educational Needs, the Director felt this could possibly be picked up by the People and Communities Committee. It was noted that the Overview Scrutiny and Management Board would have the opportunity share the list for all committees.

Items for inclusion in respect of Adults could include:-

- Neglect
- Deprivation of liberty
- Making safeguarding personal
- Hate crime safe places
- Person Centred Care
- Rogue Trading

The Adults and Children's Safeguarding Boards would pick up some of the suggested issues but they would be looking at it from a partnerships point of view.

The Chairman suggested that she and the Vice Chairman meet with the Director and Group Manager to discuss the list and refine accordingly. As part of those discussions for priority topics a lead officer would also need to be identified to co-ordinate the work with members. The Group Manager for Governance and Assurance noted the importance of applying the prioritisation methodology as whilst all issues were important it was important to see where the key priority areas were. There would also need to be awareness and a suitable flexibility by members and officers to ensure that if specific issues cropped up at short notice they could be dealt with in a timely manner.

The Chairman reminded members that not all scrutiny work had to be conducted in a formal committee setting. Task and Finish Groups, Inquiry Days and/or Spotlight Scrutiny were also very useful and timely mechanisms that were available for use by the Committee.

Noted

Questions from County Councillors

10 No questions were asked by members under Standing Order 20(2).

Meeting Duration: 10.00 am - 12.20 pm