

## BRIDGEND COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

### REPORT TO CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

25 NOVEMBER 2014

#### REPORT OF THE ASSISTANT CHIEF EXECUTIVE – LEGAL & REGULATORY SERVICES

#### WESTERN BAY SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN'S BOARD

##### **1. Purpose of Report**

- 1.1 To present the Committee with the Annual report of the Regional Safeguarding Children's Board including evidence of the process for quality assurance as well as an update on the governance arrangements surrounding the Board.

##### **2. Connection to Corporate Improvement Objectives / Other Corporate Priorities.**

- 2.1 The key improvement objectives identified in the Corporate Plan 2013-2017 have been embodied in the Overview & Scrutiny Forward Work Programmes. The amended Corporate Improvement Objectives adopted by Council on 3 April 2013 formally set out the improvement objectives that the Council will seek to implement between 2013 and 2017. The Overview and Scrutiny Committees engage in review and development of plans, policy or strategies that support the Corporate Themes.

##### **3. Background.**

- 3.1 At its meeting on 11 February 2013, the Committee received a report from the Children's Directorate presenting the 2011-12 Annual Report of the Local Safeguarding Children's Board. This report also provided information over the plans for the future regionalisation of the Board which was held its first meeting in April 2013.
- 3.2 Members held considerable detailed discussion around the last Local Annual Board report and made the following observations, conclusions and proposals for the regionalisation of the Board:
  1. Members expressed concern over the absence of encouragement for the Third Sector's involvement in the LSCB meetings. Given the contribution of the Third Sector in frontline services, the Committee recommended that the new Regional Board actively seek to encourage and involve them in the work of the Board at every opportunity.
  2. Members were pleased to hear that the new Regional Board had secured future funding from the Police toward the overall budget of the SCB, however, they expressed the wish to revisit this to determine the extent of this contribution.
  3. The Committee requested that they receive the outcome of the research being carried out by a PhD Student into the factors and patterns relating to serious incidents involving young people known to the Youth Offending Service.

4. Members expressed concern over the report in that there appears to be no data analysis or evaluative commentary to indicate how the work of the SCB has informed strategic planning or helped develop preventative services for children and young people.
5. Members also expressed concern over the democratic disconnection of the Regional Board in that there appear to be no plans for the involvement of Scrutiny. Given the fact that the work of the SCB involves children of Bridgend, and significant investment from BCBC, Members believe that some process needs to be determined to ensure that there is suitable accountability with the involvement of Scrutiny.
6. The Committee therefore put forward some initial suggestions and requests:
  - a) That in the first instance, the Committee receives the draft Bridgend SCB Annual Report for 2012-13 before it is published. The role of the Committee in receiving this would be to act as a 'Critical Friend' and provide comments and proposals, as the Committee has done so with the Annual Social Services Report, which can assist in producing a more user friendly document.
  - b) This process could then be considered by the Regional Board when producing its future Annual Report for 2013-14 so that, once again, Members have early sight of the report and can assist by carrying out their 'critical friend' role.
7. Members expressed concern over the lack of evaluative evidence within both reports indicating any progress with the outcomes and findings of Serious Case Reviews or likewise any evidence that the quality of interventions is beginning to improve. The Committee recommend that future Annual Reports or updates to Scrutiny need to include this evidence.
8. The Committee request that as part of the Corporate Resources and Improvement Research and Evaluation Panel into Workwise, consideration is given to determining the barriers to implementation, such as those in Children's Social Services in relation to streamlining processes for Social Workers.

#### **4. Current Situation / proposal.**

- 4.1 Attached at Appendix A is a report from the Directorate detailing the Regionalisation of the Safeguarding Childrens Board including its first Annual report for 2014, the Business Plan and the Board's Terms of Reference.
  - a) *In terms of reporting to each Local Authority's Local Service Board, the report states that these arrangements are 'inconsistent however each receives progress updates when required.' When is the WBSCB 'required' to report to their Local Service Board and who 'requires' them, and why are the reporting arrangements inconsistent?*
  - b) *The report also states that 'LA scrutiny committees provide oversight and scrutiny of SCB arrangements through their respective representatives however this should be strengthened through consistent reporting framework mechanisms.' How is a more consistent approach being developed, what does this involve and when is this to be introduced?*

- c) *Whilst the structure for the Western Bay Safeguarding Children's Board has been established and strategic priorities agreed, to what extent is relationship building taking place at a practitioner level to ensure that future partnership arrangements are strong and effective?*
- d) *If we were to attach a RAG (Traffic light – Red Amber Green) status to the WBSCB Business Action Plan, where would the main 'REDS' be in relation to Bridgend and the other two local authorities, in terms of being not 'on track' with objectives, actions and priorities?*
- e) *How many referrals have Bridgend made to the Regional Board and what has been the outcome of these?*
- f) *What impact has the Regionalisation of the Board had on Bridgend's Safeguarding and Family Support Services – both positive and negative?*

## **5. Effect upon Policy Framework and Procedure Rules.**

- 5.1 The work of the Children and Young People Overview and Scrutiny Committee relates to the review and development of plans, policy or strategy that form part of the Policy Framework and consideration of plans, policy or strategy relating to the power to promote or improve economic, social or environmental well being in the County Borough of Bridgend.

## **6. Equality Impact Assessment**

- 6.1 The equality implications are outlined in the officer's report attached as Appendix A.

## **7. Financial Implications**

- 7.1 The financial implications are outlined in the officer's report attached at Appendix A.

## **8. Recommendation**

The Committee is asked to:

- i. Consider and discuss the information within the attached report;
- ii. Explore issues consistent with its challenge and support role;
- iii. Determine whether it wishes to make any comments or recommendations relating to the report.

**Andrew Jolley,**  
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**2014**

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**Background Documents:**

None