

WIRRAL COUNCIL

DELEGATED DECISION

SUBJECT:	Safeguarding Reference Group
WARD/S AFFECTED:	All
REPORT OF:	Strategic Director Families and Wellbeing
RESPONSIBLE PORTFOLIO HOLDER:	Councillor Tony Smith Councillor Chris Jones
KEY DECISION	No

1.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1.1

The report proposes that the Safeguarding Reference Group is re-established and revitalised as a working group under the Council's constitution. The purpose of the Safeguarding Reference Group will be to ensure that the most senior leaders of the Council, through its leading Members and Chief Executive, are informed about key safeguarding issues in order to carry out their responsibilities of safeguarding Children and Adults in Wirral. This proposal follows the consideration of findings from the Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Exploitation in Rotherham.

2.0 BACKGROUND AND KEY ISSUES

2.1 SAFEGUARDING REFERENCE GROUP

2.2 Purpose

The Council has a principal responsibility to do all in its power to ensure that Wirral children and vulnerable Adults are kept safe. It is the Children and Young People's Department for Wirral that has the lead responsibility for child protection. The Council, through the Department of Adult Social Services is the lead agency for safeguarding vulnerable adults although close partnership arrangements exist to deliver the agenda. The purpose of the Safeguarding Reference Group is to ensure that the Council, through its leading Members and Chief Executive, are enabled to carry out their responsibilities of safeguarding Children and Adults in Wirral.

2.3 Accountability

The Safeguarding Reference Group will be accountable, through the Leader of the Council, to the Cabinet and through that to full Council.

It is recognised that safeguarding is a multidisciplinary function. Wirral's Children's Trust is multi-agency and has a responsibility, amongst other

things, for Children staying safe along with the Local Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB). In relation to vulnerable Adults, there are multi agency responsibilities supported through the Safeguarding Adults Partnership Board (SAPB).

2.4 Membership, Chairing and Attendance

As a working group of the Cabinet, its membership can be drawn from all parties represented on the Council.

The proposed membership of the Safeguarding Reference Group is:

The Leader of the Council;
The Leaders of the second and third largest groups on the Council;
The Cabinet member for Children and Young people
The Cabinet member for Adult social services
The Chair and spokespersons from Families and Wellbeing Policy and Performance committee;
The Chief Executive.
The Strategic Director for Families and Wellbeing
The Director of Children's Services
The Head of Children's Specialist Services
The Director of Adult Social Services
The Head of Adult Social Services Delivery
The Corporate Safeguarding Manager
A representative of the Director of Law, HR and Asset Management;
The independent chair of Wirral LSCB and the SAPB.

It is proposed that the Group is chaired by the Leader of the Council.

2.5 Terms of Reference

Detailed Terms of Reference will be presented to the first meeting of the Safeguarding Reference Group for debate and agreement. They will then be presented to Cabinet for approval.

It is important that the Safeguarding Reference Group does not duplicate or overlap the functions already carried out by the LSCB, the SAPB, the Children's Trust or the Families and Wellbeing Policy and Performance Committee. The terms of reference are therefore likely to include:

- Consideration of the Annual Report and Business Plan on Safeguarding
- Consideration of the progress of recommendations from Serious Case Reviews or Critical Incident Reviews undertaken by Wirral LSCB or SAPB;
- Consideration of any safeguarding issues appertaining specifically to Wirral Council services (such as social care, schools, children's centres, day centres or commissioned services) raised through the activities of the LSCB and SAPB.

2.6 Meetings

It is proposed that there are four standing meetings per year which will receive the Annual Reports on Safeguarding, and receive interim reports on Safeguarding in Wirral Council services.

In addition to these standing arrangements, a meeting will be convened on receipt from the LSCB or SAPB of any Serious Case Review or Critical Incident Review report concerning a Wirral child or vulnerable adult.

2.7 Confidentiality

Current advice regarding confidentiality on these matters is as follows:

- The Annual Reports on Safeguarding Children and Adults will be public documents. They will take the form of a report to Families and Wellbeing Policy and Performance Committee and will be published on the Council's website. Serious Case Reviews are public documents. They are published on the Wirral LSCB website when they have been submitted to the National Panel for Serious Case Reviews. Similar arrangements apply to Serious Case Reviews concerning adult. Reports will be redacted where necessary to protect the identity of the family. The learning from Critical Incident Reviews would be available to share.

3.0 RELEVANT RISKS

- 3.1 There are risks that the most senior leaders of the Council, through its leading Members and Chief Executive are not sufficiently informed about key safeguarding issues, both nationally and locally, in order to carry out their responsibilities of safeguarding children and adults in Wirral.

4.0 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED

- 4.1 Not applicable to this report

5.0 CONSULTATION

- 5.1 Not applicable to this report

6.0 OUTSTANDING PREVIOUSLY APPROVED ACTIONS

- 6.1 There are none arising directly from this report

7.0 IMPLICATIONS FOR VOLUNTARY, COMMUNITY AND FAITH GROUPS

- 7.1 This sector provides important links for vulnerable people to access support and provide input to the work of both the Safeguarding Adults Partnership Board and the Local Safeguarding Children Board.

8.0 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS: FINANCIAL; IT; STAFFING; AND ASSETS

- 8.1 There are costs to undertaking Serious Case Reviews and supporting the work of both the Safeguarding Adults Partnership Board and the Local

Safeguarding Children Board. At present there would be insufficient funds available in the Safeguarding Board budgets to meet the cost of a Serious Case Review. The Safeguarding Board budgets are based on contributions from partner agencies as well as the Council. Discussions have taken place at both Safeguarding Boards this month and an agreement reached to meet further to discuss the issue of resourcing this work.

9.0 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 9.1 There could be a finding against the Council if there is a successful claim made that the council failed in its safeguarding duties.

10.0 EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

- 10.1 Not applicable

11.0 CARBON REDUCTION AND ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS

- 11.1 There are none arising directly from this report

12.0 PLANNING AND COMMUNITY SAFETY IMPLICATIONS

- 12.1 Consideration needs to be given as to

13.0 RECOMMENDATION/S

- 13.1 To re establish the Safeguarding Reference Group
- 13.2 To appoint those members referred to at paragraph 3.3 in the report as members of the Safeguarding Reference Group.
- 13.3 To appoint named deputies for each of these members as appropriate.

14.0 REASON/S FOR RECOMMENDATION/S

- 14.1 To ensure that the most senior leaders of the Council, through its leading Members and Chief Executive, are informed about, and consider key safeguarding issues, in order to carry out their responsibilities of safeguarding Children and Adults in Wirral.

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APPENDICES

None

BACKGROUND PAPERS/REFERENCE MATERIAL

Report of the Director of Children’s Services and the Director of Adults services.
Proposal to establish a Safeguarding Reference Group 15th April 2010 Cabinet
An Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Exploitation in Rotherham (1997-2013)
Professor Alexis Jay

SUBJECT HISTORY (last 3 years)

Council Meeting	Date