

<b>MEETING:</b>	<b>HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE OVERVIEW &amp; SCRUTINY COMMITTEE</b>
<b>DATE:</b>	<b>16 NOVEMBER 2012</b>
<b>TITLE OF REPORT:</b>	<b>TASK &amp; FINISH GROUP REPORT – SAFEGUARDING ARRANGEMENTS FOR CHILDREN IN HEREFORDSHIRE</b>
<b>REPORT BY:</b>	<b>Task &amp; Finish Review Group</b>

**CLASSIFICATION:** Open

### **Wards Affected**

County-wide

### **Purpose**

To consider the findings arising from the Task & Finish Group – ‘Safeguarding Arrangement for Children in Herefordshire’ and to recommend the report to the Executive for consideration.

### **Recommendation(s)**

**THAT:**

- (a) **The Committee considers the report of the Task & Finish Group – Safeguarding Arrangement for Children in Herefordshire, in particular its recommendations, and determines whether it wishes to agree the findings for submission to the Executive;**
- (b) **Subject to the Review being approved, the Executive’s response to the Review including an action plan be reported to the first available meeting of the Committee after the Executive has approved its response;**

### **Key Points Summary**

- A scrutiny Task & Finish Review has been undertaken into the Council’s Safeguarding Arrangement for Children.
- The findings and recommendations of the Review Group are contained in the attached report.

### **Alternative Options**

- 1 The Committee can agree, not agree or can vary the recommendations. If the Committee agree with the findings and recommendations from the review, the attached report will be submitted to the Executive for consideration. It will be for the Executive to decide whether some, all or none of the recommendations are approved.

## **Reasons for Recommendations**

- 2 This Committee commissioned a Task & Finish Group to look at Safeguarding Arrangement for Children. The Task & Finish Group has completed its task and its report is required to be submitted to this committee for approval. The recommendations also set out how the report should be progressed in accordance with the Council's Constitution, if approved by the Committee.

## **Introduction and Background**

- 3 On 27<sup>th</sup> July 2011 the Overview and Scrutiny Committee commissioned a Task and Finish Group to undertake a review of Safeguarding Arrangements for Children in Herefordshire, and agreed a scoping statement for that review. The reason for the review was to understand the current awareness of the safeguarding arrangements in Herefordshire specifically in relation to the roles and responsibilities of councillors and to understand the function of corporate parenting.
- 4 The Review has been undertaken and the resultant findings and recommendations are to be reported back to Committee for its consideration prior to being referred to the Council's Executive for consideration and approval.

## **Community Impact**

- 5 The Review links to the priority in the Corporate Plan of improving health care and social care and the long term outcome of improved intervention and support for children and keeping them safe.

## **Equality and Human Rights**

- 6 If the Committee agree with the findings of the Group the report will need to be considered by the Executive and, depending on their decision, any resultant revised policy and guidance will need to be assessed against the Equality Analysis and be reported to Cabinet.

## **Financial Implications**

- 7 The cost of undertaking any outcomes from the Review will have to be considered by the Executive, and met from within existing resources.

## **Legal Implications**

- 8 The Council is required to take into account the changes to recent government guidance to which the review report refers. If the Committee and the Executive agree with the findings of the Group, legal input will be given to the resultant revised policy and guidance.

## **Risk Management**

- 9 There is reputational risk if the Council does not operate a sound policy. The recommendations in the Review report should help mitigate this risk. The potential risk has been highlighted to the relevant department to assess whether the risk warrants inclusion in the risk register.

## **Consultees**

- 10 As part of the Review, interviews were held with David McCallum, Independent Chairman of the Children's Safeguarding Board, the Director for People's Services, the Assistant Director Children & Young People Provider Services, the Councils Referral and Assessment Team, Safeguarding and Vulnerable Children and the Looked After Children Team. Interviews were also held with looked after children in Centre 18 in Hereford and foster carers in Moor House, Hereford.

## **Appendices**

- 14 Task & Finish Review Group Report – Safeguarding arrangements for Children in Herefordshire.

## **Background Papers**

- 15 Department for Education:
- The Children Act 1989 Guidance and Regulations Volume 2: Care Planning, Placement and Case Review
  - The Children Act 1989 Guidance and Regulations Volume 3: Planning Transition to Adulthood for Care Leavers
  - Family and Friends Care: Statutory guidance for Local Authorities.
  - Fostering Services: National Minimum Standards