

MEETING:	CABINET
DATE:	21 FEBRUARY 2013
TITLE OF REPORT:	MULTI-AGENCY SAFEGUARDING IN HEREFORDSHIRE: CONTEXT , PRIORITIES AND FOCUS OF HEREFORDSHIRE SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN BOARD AND HEREFORDSHIRE SAFEGUARDING ADULTS BOARD
REPORT BY:	HSCB/HSAB BUSINESS MANAGER

1. Classification

Open

2. Key Decision

This is not a key decision

3. Wards Affected

County-wide

4. Purpose

To inform Cabinet of the current priorities of Herefordshire Safeguarding Children Board and Herefordshire Safeguarding Adults Board and the focus of the Boards into 2013-14.

The report is being presented to cabinet partly in response to the recommendations following the Ofsted Inspection of Local Authority Arrangements for the Protection of Children. It represents a further step in the Boards' improvement journey by creating more empowered governance and accountability structures around the Boards. It is planned that Cabinet will receive regular updates of this sort.

The Business Plans of the Boards set out the agreed priorities for the year and provide measurable actions to enable the Boards to hold each partner agency to account in delivering them.

They are supported by the context of safeguarding in Herefordshire laid out in the Annual Reports of the Safeguarding Boards which include assessment and analysis of the effectiveness of our local arrangements for safeguarding children and adults at risk. Specifically in relation to local safeguarding children boards, the annual report compares how we are performing all our functions required by the statutory guidance, Working Together, which specifies how. Working Together sets out how organisations and individuals should work together to safeguard and promote the welfare of

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children and young people in accordance with the Children Act 1989 and the Children Act 2004.

Local authority areas are required by law to have a Local Safeguarding Children Board, funded by a range of statutory agencies. The government has made a commitment to include a similar requirement for Adults Boards. This has not yet been completed.

In 2011 HSCB and HSAB agreed that safeguarding adults in Herefordshire should be as much of a multi-agency priority as safeguarding children. The role of Independent Chair was extended across both Boards and Herefordshire Safeguarding Adult Board was given equal support by the Business Unit; previously it had met without committed business support. With this move Herefordshire demonstrated its commitment to prioritise the safeguarding of adults alongside the safeguarding of children well ahead of the national government's intention.

5. Recommendation(s)

THAT:

- (a) Cabinet notes the priorities, focus and context of safeguarding outlined in the reports and the assurance that they provide; and**
- (b) the comments of Cabinet to the Boards about their future work programmes be noted.**

6. Key Points Summary

- Cabinet is responsible for exercising effective governance arrangements in overseeing the effectiveness of the multi-agency safeguarding arrangements for children and adults who may be at risk. A means of exercising the leadership role is to publically consider the annual reports and business plans of the Children and Adults Safeguarding Boards.
- Children's Safeguarding
 - The recent Ofsted inspection highlighted concerns about the effectiveness of child protection arrangements in Herefordshire. Although the Herefordshire Safeguarding Children's Board has played a part in leading the development of effective early help arrangements, it has been less effective at understanding and addressing both the causes of child protection issues in Herefordshire and having a strong understanding of the effectiveness and impact of child protection practice.
 - The annual reports of the Safeguarding Boards enable the Cabinet to understand and assess the multi-agency safeguarding arrangements. It should be noted that this report is retrospective and relates to the 2011-12 financial year. Now that the Board has improved its business processes, the 2012-13 report will be presented to Cabinet much earlier during 2013-14 to improve Cabinet's ability to exercise effective governance arrangements. See note 9.4.
 - As a result of the annual report, and the OFSTED inspection, the Board is focussing on:
 - Improving its leadership and visibility;
 - Strengthening its performance and QA framework in order to ensure that the Board knows exactly how individual agencies are performing and the impact this is having on children
 - Understanding the impact of sexual exploitation within Herefordshire and the implementation of its action plan;

- Understanding and addressing the underlying reasons that children become subject to Child Protections Plans, e.g. domestic abuse in partnership with the HPEG;
 - Proactive commissioning in the light of the unmet needs identified by audits;
 - Herefordshire Safeguarding Children Board structures its work to ensure that it meets its statutory responsibilities, therefore ensuring that the effectiveness of safeguarding arrangements across its partners continues to increase. It is currently reviewing its membership and functioning.
- Adults Safeguarding
 - Although the statutory basis for safeguarding vulnerable adults is different to children's safeguarding, it is essential that the Cabinet to apply the same rigour to considering adult protection issues and effectiveness as it does to children's issues.
 - Key developments in the way adult safeguarding referrals are received and initially processed by Wye Valley NHS Trust have begun to provide a more robust system of understanding of safeguarding issues and the needs of adults at risk in Herefordshire.
 - Through this new approach, the Board is beginning to increase its understanding the causes of abuse for adults at risk in Herefordshire and will ensure that it is able to ensure people's needs are met at the earliest point;
 - The Board will review and assess the effectiveness of the new referral processes and the response arrangements to inform further development of these;
 - The Board will continue its work around the Mental Capacity Act and improving the response to the number of referrals relating to learning disability issues;
 - Developing the Board's QA and performance role and championing adults at risk and learning from the inspection for Children's Services.
 - The Board will also be developing its work around understanding the quality and effectiveness of safeguarding work undertaken by providers of services for adults across Herefordshire and developing its relationship with them.
- Both Boards are currently developing their key priorities for 2013-14 and Cabinet's comments will assist them in this work. A key area for further improvement over the coming year for both Boards will be within our quality assurance and performance management structures.

7. Alternative Options

7.1 This is not a decision item.

8. Reasons for Recommendations

8.1 Cabinet members should assure themselves, following the recent Ofsted Inspection of Local Authority Arrangements for the Protection of Children, that Herefordshire Safeguarding Children's Board is meeting its statutory functions to ensure the safeguarding needs of children and young people in Herefordshire. Similar assurance should be sought by Cabinet members that Herefordshire Safeguarding Adults Board is meeting its remit.

9. Introduction and Background

- 9.1 Herefordshire Safeguarding Children Board has a statutory responsibility to produce an Annual Report to assess how well agencies are working together to safeguard children. The report highlights significant areas of the Board's and how safeguarding practice and processes are developing in Herefordshire through them.
- 9.2 Although there is no statutory responsibility on Safeguarding Adults Boards to produce an annual report, it is good practice to document the effectiveness of the local arrangements for safeguarding adults at risk and compare how we are performing against the specific functions of Herefordshire Safeguarding Adults Board.
- 9.3 The Annual Reports have been presented to Cabinet later than planned this year due to the staffing changes within the Boards and key external factors, including the Ofsted inspection. The Chair of the Boards and the Business Manager both came into post during the first 5 months of 2012 and have been implementing a number of significant developments as a matter of priority.
- 9.4 After the end of the financial year 2012/13 the following reporting timescales are planned to ensure Annual Reports and Business Plans are agreed and published in a timely manner:
- HSCB and HSAB Business Plans for 2013/14 will be published in April 2013.
 - HSCB and HSAB Annual Reports for 2012/13 will be published in June 2013
 - The Annual Multi-Agency Safeguarding in Herefordshire report to Cabinet will be made in July 2013.

10. Key Considerations

- 10.1 This is not a decision item.

11. Community Impact

- 11.1 This is not a decision item and therefore there is no direct impact from this report.

12. Equality and Human Rights

- 12.1 This is not a decision item and therefore there is no implication on our public sector equality duty. Protecting children and adults at risk of harm enables the Council to meet some of the requirements of the public sector equality duty.

13. Financial Implications

- 13.1 This is not a decision item and therefore there are no financial implications.

14. Legal Implications

- 14.1 This is not a decision item and therefore there are no legal implications.

15. Risk Management

- 15.1 The Safeguarding Boards and Cabinet, in its role to exercise effective governance, must understand the causes of safeguarding issues for children and adults at risk in Herefordshire and ensure appropriate systems are in place to reduce the effect of these issues and meet the needs of those subject to them. Failure to ensure appropriate action will place people at risk.

16. Consultees

- 16.1 Members of the Safeguarding Boards.

17. Appendices

- 17.1 Herefordshire Safeguarding Children Board's Annual Report 2011-2012.
- 17.2 Herefordshire Safeguarding Adults Board's Annual Report 2011-2012.
- 17.3 Herefordshire Safeguarding Children Board's Business Plan 2012-2013.
- 17.4 Herefordshire Safeguarding Adults Board's Business Plan 2012-2013.

18. Background Papers

- 18.1 None identified.