



Briefing for:	Overview and Scrutiny Committee
Title:	Report from Children's Safeguarding Policy and Performance Advisory Committee
Lead Officer:	Hilary Corrick, Independent Social Work Consultant, and Independent Member
Date:	30th March 2011

1. INTRODUCTION

This report gives feedback from the Children's Safeguarding Policy and Performance Advisory Committee.

2. BACKGROUND INFORMATION

The Children's Safeguarding Policy and Practice Advisory Committee is a back bench Committee which was set up in 2009 to look in detail at safeguarding aspects of policy and practice. As such, it has linked with the Overview and Scrutiny Committee and their regular reviews of child safeguarding work.

3. COMMITTEE UPDATE

At their January meeting members of the Children's Safeguarding Policy and Practice Advisory Committee received a report on contacts, referrals, and assessments in the First Response service. They looked at the data available and were able to compare rates of referrals, the proportion of referrals which receive an Initial Assessment and timescales for completing the assessments. Members were able to compare rates and timescales in the borough with those of comparator authorities and nationally. The data suggested that the service is able to identify those children needing assessment at an early stage, but is less good at completing those assessments in a timely way. Timeliness is important but Members questioned officers about the quality of assessments.

At their next meeting members of the Safeguarding Policy and Performance Advisory Committee will receive a report from Officers about



child protection planning, and the issues and challenges. They will also receive a report on an audit of child protection investigations which started in November 2010.

4. **THE COMMITTEE FUTURE**

A report was presented to Cabinet on March 22 2011 which proposes that the Children's Safeguarding Policy and Practice Advisory Committee should be reconstituted to ensure that it works along similar lines to the Corporate Parenting Committee.

Discussion had been held between with the Cabinet Member for Children and Young People, Chair of Committee, Independent Member of the committee and the Deputy Director for Children and Families about the work of the committee and its alignment to the Cabinet as an advisory committee. Similarities of the committee's role to scrutiny and its position in the committee structure were discussed and it was felt that the committee was correctly aligned to the Cabinet as an Advisory Committee. This provided the committee with a long term status and allowed linkages to the Corporate Parenting Advisory Committee to be made. The Children's Safeguarding Policy and Practice Committee was constructed to work in parallel to the Corporate Parenting Advisory Committee and had duties for overseeing the Council's responsibility for children in need, particularly focussing on safeguarding.

This proposal was agreed and a joint meeting of the Children's Safeguarding Policy and Practice Committee and the Corporate Parenting Advisory Committee will be held in March 2011 to discuss issues of mutual interest.

When these new arrangements come into place in the new Council year, the Children's Safeguarding Policy and Practice Committee should no longer require to report formally to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee.