



Agenda item:

[No.]

Cabinet

22 March 2011

Report Title. Reconstitution of the Children's Safeguarding Policy and Practice Committee

Report of Assistant Chief Executive (People and Organisational Development)

Signed :

Contact Officer : Ayshe Simsek, Principal Committee Co-ordinator

Telephone: 8489 2929

Wards(s) affected: **Not applicable**

Report for: **Non Key Decision**

1. Purpose of the report

1.1 To re-establish the Children's Safeguarding Policy and Practice Committee to work along similar lines to the Corporate Parenting Advisory Committee with the membership, quorum and terms of reference as outlined in the report.

2. Introduction by Cabinet Member

2.1 It is vital that as a Council we have in place the necessary arrangements for ensuring we discharge our corporate parenting and child safeguarding arrangements. This report sets out in detail how will ensure that this is the case. The arrangements respond clearly to the issues which were raised in the JAR inspection at the end of 2008 in relation to our governance arrangements for corporate parenting and child safeguarding. I am sure all members who are nominated to these committees will recognise the importance of their participation to ensure our arrangements are as robust as they possibly can be.

3. State link(s) with Council Plan Priorities and actions and/or other Strategies:

- 3.1 Section 2 (Committees of the Cabinet) of Part Three Section D of the Council's Constitution provides that -

The Cabinet may delegate any of its functions to a Committee of the Cabinet. Committees of the Cabinet shall report to the Cabinet. The Cabinet may establish decision-making Committees, which may only include Cabinet Members. The Cabinet may establish advisory Committees, the membership of which need not be limited to Cabinet Members. The Cabinet may change them, abolish them, or create further ones, at its own discretion.

Committees established by the Cabinet shall be empowered to perform their functions with immediate effect unless the Cabinet imposes any express restriction when they are established. Unless stated otherwise, all Decision-Making Committees will continue in operation until expressly abolished by the Cabinet and all Advisory or Consultative Committees will continue in operation only until the first meeting of the Cabinet in the next municipal year following their establishment when they must be expressly renewed or they cease to exist.

The establishment, abolition or cessation of Committees and the amendment of their terms of reference will be reported to full Council in due course for noting in the Council's Constitution.

- 3.2 The Joint Area Review report into Haringey's Children Services identified the need to improve governance of children safeguarding arrangements. Following which the Children's Safeguarding Policy and Practice Committee was established, formally, in July 2009. This report sets out proposals for the reconstitution of this committee to ensure that it works along similar lines to the Corporate Parenting Committee.

4. Recommendations

- 4.1 That the Cabinet approve the proposals for the reconstitution of the Children Safeguarding Policy and Practice Advisory Committee, their membership, quorum and terms of reference as detailed in paragraph 7.1 below.

5. Reason for recommendation(s)

- 5.1 To respond to the recommendations within the JAR Action in relation to improved governance of children safeguarding arrangements and to adhere to the agreement to review the terms of reference for the committee in 2010 as reported to Cabinet in June 2010.

6. Other options considered

6.1 None considered

7. Summary

7.1 Provision exists for the Cabinet to establish advisory or consultative bodies the membership of which is not limited to Cabinet Members. The Joint Area Review report into Haringey's Children Services identified the need to improve governance of safeguarding arrangements for children. This committee was formally established in July 2009, when it was also agreed that the terms of reference of this committee would be reviewed following the 2010 Local Elections. Further to this there was discussion 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 included children who would come into contact with safeguarding policies. Members of the Safeguarding Policy and Practice committee concurred with these views and recommended, at their meeting on the 06th December, that the committee be reconstituted and work along similar lines to the Corporate Parenting Advisory Committee. Members further agreed that the profile of the committee should be raised and there should be more awareness of the committee's work. This would be assisted by increasing officer attendance at meetings and by amending the constitution of the committee so that it was more in line with the arrangements for the Corporate Parenting Committee. This would involve:

- Increasing and defining the officer representatives to support the committee
- Compiling a twice yearly report to the Cabinet and to the Council annually

To further aid the parallel working of the Safeguarding Policy and Practice Committee and the Corporate Parenting Committee, it is proposed that there be annual joint meetings between them. Both committees would also share information on their continuing work on safeguarding and corporate parenting by considering minutes from each other's meetings.

It was important that the Children's Safeguarding Policy and Practice Committee continue undertaking detailed case scrutiny into chosen day to day safeguarding practices as this was an essential qualitative function not carried out by any other committee in the Council and with this in mind the committee agreed that the role of the committee, in

terms of detailed case scrutiny and the understanding of safeguarding policy, procedures and performance be unchanged. Members would continue to receive key safeguarding data at meetings to scrutinize and training sessions on safeguarding processes would be maintained to ensure that the committee were fully aware of safeguarding practices being followed by the Council.

Children Safeguarding Policy and Practice Advisory Committee

Proposed Membership

Councillors: Rice (Chair)

Davies

Amin

McNamara

Hare

Hilary Corrick (Non-Councillor Member - appointed by the Panel)

Quorum

The quorum will be two members.

The Advisory Committee will also be supported by officer representatives from:

- Safeguarding Team
- First Response
- CAF Team

Proposed Terms of Reference

The terms of reference are set out below:

- a. To examine and consider the effectiveness of the Council's policies and practice, relating to the safeguarding of children.
- b. To examine and consider the effectiveness of the arrangements for co-operation on child protection matters between partner agencies.
- c. To consider the Council's policies and performance relating to safeguarding through observing practice in Haringey and obtaining the views of key stakeholders (staff, families and children /young people) to attain a qualitative understanding of safeguarding practice.
- d. To make recommendations on these matters to the Cabinet or Cabinet Member for Children and Young People and Director of Children and Young People's Service in taking forward improvements to safeguarding of children.
- e. The Chair will determine the Committee's procedures and the means for conveying the Committee's views to the Cabinet but, in the event of any

dispute, the outcome will be determined by the majority vote of the Committee's membership with the Chair having a casting vote.

8. Chief Financial Officer Comments

- 8.1. The service manager confirms that this existing advisory committee can be serviced from within existing business unit resources.
- 8.2. Members should note that this committee is advisory only and as such has no formal decision making powers and thus will not have the authority to incur expenditure or make budgetary decisions.

9. Head of Legal Services Comments

- 9.1. The Council's Constitution sets out the relevant Cabinet arrangements at Part Three, Section D and confirms that the Cabinet may establish decision making committees, which may only include Cabinet Members. The Cabinet may establish advisory Committees, the membership of which need not be limited to Cabinet Members. The Cabinet may change them, abolish them, or create further ones, at its own discretion. Unless changed or abolished, the two decision-making Committees continue in operation without the need for formal renewal each year.
- 9.2. The Access to Information Rules (Part 5A of the Local Government Act 1972) about public rights of access to meetings and Committee papers will apply to these two Advisory Committees. The public can be excluded and papers kept confidential where information within the "exempt" categories is to be considered and the Monitoring Officer advises that the balance of the public interest justifies maintaining confidentiality.

10. Head of Procurement Comments – [Required for Procurement Committee]

- 10.1. Not applicable

11. Equalities & Community Cohesion Comments

- 11.1. The recommendations of Members to serve on this committee reflect Members' roles and specialisms because of the diversity of members the suggestions are balanced in terms of gender and ethnicity.

12. Consultation

- 12.1. There has been consultation on the proposals with the Safeguarding Policy and Practice Committee and the Children and Families service.

13. Service Financial Comments

- 13.1. It is not envisaged that the establishment of these Committees will of itself have any direct financial implications.

14. Use of appendices /Tables and photographs

- 14.1. Not applicable

15. Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985

15.1 Background Papers

The following background papers were used in the preparation of this report;

Report to the Cabinet on 24 February 2009 entitled Action Plan in Response to the Joint Area Review of Safeguarding in Haringey.

Report to the Cabinet on 21 July 2009 entitled Appointment of Cabinet Advisory Committees.

Report to Cabinet on 15 July 2010 entitled Appointment of Cabinet Committees

The background paper is located at River Park House, 225 High Road, Wood Green, London N22 8HQ.

To inspect it or to discuss this report further, please contact Richard Burbidge on 020 8489 2923.