

MEETING	Full Council
DATE	7 March 2024
TEITL	Strategic Safeguarding Panel Annual Report 2022-23 and introduce the review of Cyngor Gwynedd's Safeguarding Policy
CABINET MEMBER	Councillor Menna Trenholme
CONTACT OFFICER	Dylan Owen, Social Services Director

1. THE REASON FOR THE DECISION

1.1. The purpose of this report is to:

- Provide an update on what has been achieved by the Safeguarding Strategic Panel during 2022-23 (**Appendix 1**).
- Present the revised Policy and Guidelines for Safeguarding Children and Adults at risk of abuse and neglect ("Safeguarding Policy") (**Appendix 2**) together with the revised Terms of Reference for the Safeguarding Strategic Panel (**Appendix 3**).

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1. Cyngor Gwynedd's main priority is to ensure that children and adults at risk are safeguarded from abuse, neglect, radicalisation, slavery, domestic abuse, and exploitation. Everyone Cyngor Gwynedd has a responsibility to create the environment that assures this, making it less likely that a child or adult is abused.
- 2.2. The Safeguarding Strategic Panel ensures that suitable and appropriate safeguarding procedures are in place, and it is important that all Council members can satisfy themselves that the Panel has undertaken the work required thoroughly and conscientiously. It is believed that the annual report (**Appendix 1**) accurately and fairly summarises the work of the Panel, while also including references to comments by external auditors on this work.
- 2.3. During 2023 a review was also carried out of the Council's Safeguarding Policy, which states how we intend to fulfill its statutory responsibilities for protecting children and adults who are at risk in accordance with the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act (2014) . With the current version being an adaptation of a Policy created in 2013, it was decided that it was timely to prepare a new policy rather than updating the document in accordance with the usual procedure.
- 2.4. A workshop led by the Statutory Director of Social Services was held in October 2023. Representation of officers from across the Council attended, including the Assistant Head of Children - Quality Safeguarding and Senior Safeguarding, Quality Assurance and Mental Health Manager.
- 2.5. Several changes were agreed at the workshop:
- The revised Safeguarding Policy confirms that everyone has a responsibility to safeguard, but also notes specific responsibilities for Councillors and members of staff, as well as

detailing how safeguarding should be reflected in contracting and commissioning arrangements.

- Highlighting the expectations for Cyngor Gwynedd staff and Councilors to act according to the principles set out in this policy at all times, whether during working hours or otherwise.
- There was a lack of clarity in the old Policy between safeguarding and protection, and this has now been addressed. The Policy makes it is safeguarding which is under consideration, and that other procedures are to be followed when "protecting".
- The revised Policy highlights the role of the Safeguarding Strategic Panel. The Terms of Reference of the Panel has been modified, and further attention was paid to its membership in order to make sure that senior officers across the Council as well as experts in the field of safeguarding Children and Adults are invited.
- Strengthen the reporting and monitoring arrangements. An Annual Report will be presented to the Cabinet annually. That report will also go before the Full Council annually.
- Regarding the Safeguarding Policies of the Council's individual departments, it was noted that the Council has one corporate Policy. However, department can introduce their own specific policy if it is deemed necessary.

2.6. On 20 February 2024, the Cabinet approved the amended Policy, and therefore the above changes have now been adopted.

2.7. We recognise that further work is needed to promote the revised Policy among all Council staff. It is felt that presenting it to you in Full Council is an important step in order to raise awareness of the Policy widely.

3. RECOMMENDATION

3.1. The Council is asked to:

- Receive the Annual Report on the work of the Safeguarding Strategic Panel for the year 2022-23.
- Note the amended Safeguarding Policy (Appendix 2) and Terms of Reference for the Safeguarding Strategic Panel (Appendix 3).

4. STATUTORY OFFICERS' VIEWS

4.1. Monitoring Officer

As a member of the Panel I welcome this report which is an appropriate summary of the work. It is a means of providing assurance to the Council in relation to this key responsibility.

4.2. Head of Finance

I support the decision sought. There are no matters which involve financial propriety that need to be brought to the Council's attention