

TEWKESBURY BOROUGH COUNCIL

Report to:	Audit and Governance Committee
Date of Meeting:	15 December 2021
Subject:	Annual Safeguarding Update
Report of:	Head of Community Services
Corporate Lead:	Chief Executive
Lead Member:	Lead Member for Community.
Number of Appendices:	1

Executive Summary:

Safeguarding is everybody's business. All Councillors, employees and other statutory partners have a duty to report all safeguarding concerns to the relevant safeguarding authority.

This report provides the Committee with an update on how Tewkesbury Borough Council is fulfilling its safeguarding responsibilities. The Council has a Safeguarding Policy and Procedure which was refreshed and adopted in February 2020.

Section 11 of the Children's Act 2004 places a duty on safeguarding partners to demonstrate that they have effective processes in place to fulfil their responsibilities on safeguarding children and this is done by way of a self-assessment which is submitted for scrutiny to an assurance panel.

Recommendation:

To CONSIDER the annual report to give assurance as to the level of the Council's compliance with its safeguarding duty and to note the Section 11 self-assessment submission to the Assurance Panel, attached at Appendix 1.

Reasons for Recommendation:

Tewkesbury Borough Council is committed to the principles of safeguarding and promoting the welfare of all children, young people and adults at risk. Our employees and any contractors working on the Council's behalf are briefed and understand the definitions of children and adults at risk in the context of the Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act and the legislative framework of measures to protect these groups from harm. This report provides the Committee with the reassurance that safeguarding is being managed correctly by the Council.

Resource Implications:

None arising directly from this report.

Legal Implications:

None arising directly from this report; however, the Children Act 2004, Children and Social Work Act 2017 the safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006 and the Care Act 2014 place duties on the Council to ensure its functions are discharged having regard to the need to safeguard and promote the welfare of children, young people and vulnerable adults.

Risk Management Implications:

None arising directly from this report; however, the Council has a duty of care for the children, young people and adults at risk who take part in activities, or access services that it provides. The Council recognises that all children and young people have a right to be safe and to be protected from abuse and harm.

Performance Management Follow-up:

None arising directly from this report.

Environmental Implications:

None arising directly from this report.

1.0 INTRODUCTION/BACKGROUND

- 1.1** Safeguarding is everybody's business; all Councillors, employees and other statutory partners have a duty to report all safeguarding concerns to the relevant safeguarding authority. In Gloucestershire this means Gloucestershire County Council children's or adults services.
- 1.2** Tewkesbury Borough Council recognises and accepts its responsibilities to ensure, as far as possible, that young people and adults are protected from harm.
- 1.3** Historically, district and borough Councils and other partners are required to carry out a self-assessment in order to demonstrate their compliance with Section 11 (S.11) of the Children's Act 2004.

2.0 SECTION 11 SELF-ASSESSMENT

- 2.1** The S.11 process is a statutory requirement and an integral part of the self-assessment and assurance of effective safeguarding practice for each agency. This year's S.11 self-assessment has been submitted to the Assurance Panel and is attached at Appendix 1.
- 2.2** The self-assessment focusses on four main areas:
- 1) Leadership and Accountability
 - 2) Staff Safe Recruitment, Induction, Training and Development
 - 3) Safeguarding Policies and Procedures
 - 4) Listening to Children and Young People
- 2.3** The Head of Community Services attended the Assurance Panel on 16 November 2021 and initial feedback was extremely positive with no significant concerns raised for Tewkesbury Borough Council.

3.0 WORKING TOGETHER

3.1 Within last year's annual report to the Committee, the Head of Community Services set out the new arrangements for the Gloucestershire Safeguarding Children Partnership.

3.2 Working Together 2018 places a 'shared and equal duty' on Gloucestershire Clinical Commissioning Group, Gloucestershire Constabulary and Gloucestershire County Council for the safeguarding of Gloucestershire's Children.

3.3 The annual report of this partnership is available for Members to read, should they wish to do so, on the Gloucestershire County Council website.

4.0 TEWKESBURY BOROUGH SAFEGUARDING CASES

4.1 During the year April 2020 – March 2021 there were 14 safeguarding cases raised, of these, two needed to be formally referred to Social Care. Two were dealt with in partnership with the Neighbourhood Policing Team and two multi-agency meetings were called by the Council in light of the concerns raised. Four cases became ongoing Child Protection cases which were attended by one of our staff members who advised from Tewkesbury Borough Council's perspective.

4.2 The 14 cases raised internally came from a good cross section of Council departments which is encouraging as it demonstrates that officers have a good understanding of their safeguarding responsibilities.

5.0 COVID-19 IMPACT

5.1 The period of this report has been dominated by the UK response to, and impact of, the COVID-19 pandemic. It has had a significant impact on the working practices of all Gloucestershire agencies involved in safeguarding.

5.2 During the pandemic, safeguarding partners maintained a commitment to partnership working, including participation in online meetings. Appropriate adjustments were made to meeting structures and membership to ensure that dialogue could continue.

6.0 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED

6.1 None

7.0 CONSULTATION

7.1 None

8.0 RELEVANT COUNCIL POLICIES/STRATEGIES

8.1 Tewkesbury Borough Council Safeguarding Policy and Procedure

9.0 RELEVANT GOVERNMENT POLICIES

9.1 Safeguarding children and young people – July 2014
Adult safeguarding: statement of government policy – May 2011.

10.0 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS (Human/Property)

10.1 None

11.0 SUSTAINABILITY IMPLICATIONS (Social/Community Safety/Cultural/ Economic/ Environment)

11.1 None

12.0 IMPACT UPON (Value For Money/Equalities/E-Government/Human Rights/Health And Safety)

12.1 None

Background Papers: None

Contact Officer: Head of Community Services 01684 272259
Peter.tonge@tewkesbury.gov.uk

Appendices: Appendix 1 – Tewkesbury Borough Council Section 11 submission