

AGENDA ITEM: 10

Pages: 27-32

Meeting	Safeguarding Overview and Scrutiny Committee
Date	10 October 2011
Subject	Children's Service Governance Structures
Report of	Cabinet Member for Education, Children and Families and the Director of Children's Service
Summary	This report outlines the key governance structures in Barnet's Children's Service, the links between them, and how they help deliver the strategic and operational functions and responsibilities of the service.

Officer Contributors	Elaine Tuck, Strategy and Planning Manager
Status (public or exempt)	Public
Wards affected	All
Enclosures	None
Reason for urgency / exemption from call-in	Not applicable
Key decision	Not applicable

Contact for further information: Elaine Tuck, Strategy and Planning Manager, 020 8359 4191

1. RECOMMENDATION

- 1.1 That the Safeguarding Overview and Scrutiny Committee comment and make recommendations as appropriate to the Cabinet Member for Education, Children and Families on the governance structures in place in the Children's Service.**

2. RELEVANT PREVIOUS DECISIONS

- 2.1 Safeguarding Overview and Scrutiny Committee 4 July 2011, Agenda Item 8 – Forward Work Programme 2010-11 – the Committee requested a report detailing current governance structures in the Children's Service.

3. CORPORATE PRIORITIES AND POLICY CONSIDERATIONS

- 3.1 The Overview and Scrutiny Committees must ensure that the work of Scrutiny is reflective of the Council's priorities. The three priorities set out in the Corporate Plan 2011-13 are: better services with less money, sharing opportunities, sharing responsibilities; and a successful London suburb.
- 3.2 The Corporate Plan 2011/13 contains the following strategic objectives relevant to the Children's Service: continue to safeguard vulnerable children and adults from avoidable harm at a time of reduced resources; invest in early intervention to reduce the number of children and families experiencing complex problems; create the conditions for children to develop skills and acquire knowledge to lead successful lives; and ensure every school is a good school for every child and sufficient school places are available.
- 3.3 The governance structures within the Children's Service enable it to maintain a strategic and operational overview of services, ensuring that they help contribute towards corporate and service priorities. Please see 9.2 and 9.5 for more detail on multi-agency priorities as delivered by the Children's Trust Board.

4. RISK MANAGEMENT ISSUES

- 4.1 The Children's Service holds a risk register which is reported on to the Children's Service Senior Leadership Team each quarter. This includes key risks from across the Children's Service as identified in each team's risk register which forms part of their team plan.
- 4.2 The Children's Service has a Data Governance Group which meets monthly. It is responsible for helping to ensure that good practice is being followed across the service and to identify any areas where further work is required.

5. EQUALITIES AND DIVERSITY ISSUES

- 5.1 The Children's Service produces a 'Profile of Children and Young People in Barnet' every year, which contains data about our young people including gender, race, disability and other characteristics. This data, along with service-user specific data, is used to inform the commissioning and service planning that takes place at the various groups and boards throughout the Children's Service.

6. USE OF RESOURCES IMPLICATIONS (Finance, Procurement, Performance & Value for Money, Staffing, IT, Property, Sustainability)

- 6.1 None in the context of this report.

7. LEGAL ISSUES

- 7.1 Government has indicated its intent to remove the statutory requirement on local authorities to set up Children’s Trust Boards and the requirement on those Boards to prepare and publish a joint Children and Young People’s Plan.
- 7.2 The establishment of multi-agency Local Safeguarding Children Boards was a key element of the Children Act 2004; it has been a requirement for local authorities to have a board since 2006.
- 7.3 Establishing a Children in Care Council is a statutory requirement of the Care Matters Agenda.

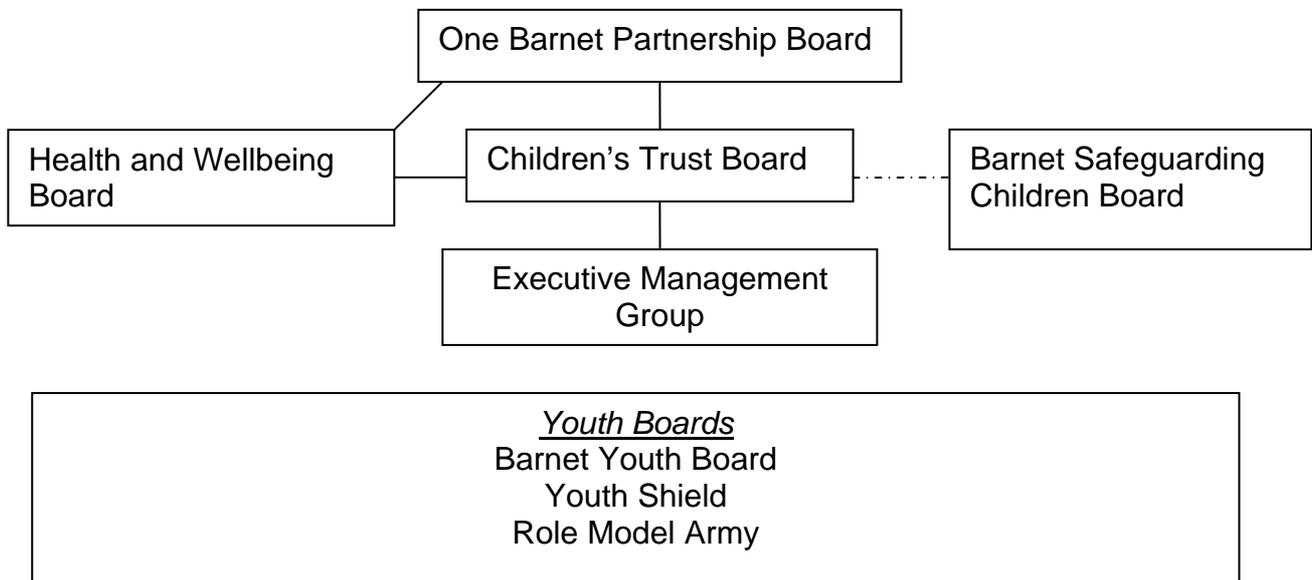
8. CONSTITUTIONAL POWERS

- 8.1 The scope of Scrutiny Committees is contained within Part 2, Article 6 of the constitution; the Terms of Reference of the Scrutiny Committees are in the Overview and Scrutiny Procedure Rules (Part 4 of the constitution).

9. BACKGROUND INFORMATION

- 9.1 The Children’s Service governance structures are aligned with corporate and multi-agency governance structures. The top level structures are shown in the diagram below.

Top-level multi-agency governance structures



One Barnet Partnership Board

- 9.2 The Sustainable Community Strategy is the ‘umbrella strategy’ for all the plans and strategies of key partners in Barnet. The One Barnet Partnership Board maintains oversight of the four strategic outcomes in Barnet’s Sustainable Community Strategy – strong, safe communities for everyone; investing in children, young people and their families; healthy and independent living; and a successful London suburb.

Children's Trust Board (CTB)

- 9.3 The Children's Trust Board delivers the outcome 'investing in children, young people and their families' and reports into the One Barnet Partnership Board.
- 9.4 The CTB brings together all services for children and young people in the borough, to focus on improving outcomes for all children and young people. It is chaired by Councillor Harper, Cabinet Member for Education, Children and Families. Key members of the trust include:
- Barnet Council
 - NHS Barnet, GPs, and health providers
 - Barnet Borough Police
 - CommUnity Barnet, who represent the voluntary sector
 - Primary and secondary schools in Barnet
 - Barnet College
 - Jobcentre Plus.
- 9.5 Although there is no longer a statutory obligation to have a CTB, the Board has chosen to retain it in order to support partnership working in Barnet. The CTB's priorities are ensuring the safety of all Barnet's children; narrowing the gap for children at risk of not achieving their potential; and preventing ill health and unhealthy lifestyles. The delivery of these priorities is externalised through the publication of an annual Children and Young People Plan. Progress on each of the priorities is monitored through a combination of performance indicators and progress reports submitted to the Children's Trust Board.

Executive Management Group (EMG)

- 9.6 Whilst the CTB provides inter-agency governance to ensure that partners in Barnet are working effectively together, the EMG is a larger group of Directors and Senior Managers, which implement the strategic direction set out by the CTB. EMG is responsible for implementing the direction provided by the CTB and holds decision-making powers in relation to budget allocation, business planning and service implementation, and quality assurance.
- 9.7 It is a multi-agency working group and board members include the Director of Children's Service and the Senior Leadership Team (SLT) from the Children's Service, as well as senior management from Adult Social Care, Housing, Health Services, the Police, CommUnity Barnet (representing the voluntary sector), Barnet College and Jobcentre Plus.
- 9.8 In order to keep meetings focussed, much of the day to day work of the CTB and EMG is carried out by sub-groups. There are a number of multi agency sub-groups covering areas including domestic violence, 14 to 19 education, school place planning, youth services, and inclusion. There are also a number of boards that make decisions in individual cases such as the Complex Needs Panel, which agrees educational statements; the Resource Panel, which makes decisions regarding high cost placements for children and decisions to initiate care proceedings; and the Fostering Panel that approves Foster Carers.

Barnet Safeguarding Children Board (BSCB)

- 9.9 The establishment of multi-agency Local Safeguarding Children Boards was a key element of the Children Act 2004; it has been a requirement for local authorities to have a board since 2006. The role of the board is to co-ordinate and challenge the effectiveness of partners in safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children.

- 9.10 The BSCB has had an independent chair since 2009 and board members include delegates from Health, Police, Probation, Voluntary Sector, Adult Services, Housing, Schools, and Children's Service. The BSCB has a two part structure with an Executive that meets as necessary prior to the full Board meeting. Executive Members are responsible for policy, strategy and performance in respect of safeguarding children. They are also responsible for establishing the BSCB budget and agreeing agency contributions. BSCB has overall responsibility for the delivery of the Work Programme in order to fulfil its statutory requirements.
- 9.11 The Cabinet Member for Education, Children and Families is now a participant observer on the BSCB. He is not a full member in order to maintain the independence of the BSCB. He is, however, politically accountable for ensuring that the local authority fulfils its legal responsibilities for safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people.
- 9.12 In 2010 a young people's safeguarding board 'Youth Shield' was developed – see paragraph 9.17. Representatives from Youth Shield attend BSCB meetings.
- 9.13 There are a number of sub-groups that report into the BSCB including the Standing Serious Case Review Sub Group, which is now independently chaired in accordance with Ofsted recommendations and the Child Death Overview Panel (CDOP), as well as the Performance and Quality Assurance Sub Group; the Training and Development Sub Group; the Professional Advisory Sub Group; and the Cross-Generational Sub Group. The Cross generational sub-group was established as a cross cutting group that reports to both the Safeguarding Children Board and the Safeguarding Adults Board.

Health and Wellbeing Board

- 9.14 The Health and Wellbeing Board leads the development of an integrated health and well being strategy, supported by a Joint Strategic Needs Assessment. Working across the Council and local NHS, this then informs specific commissioning arrangements. The Board will fulfil the functions set out in the current Health and Social Care Bill for greater local democratic legitimacy in health. It delivers on the 'healthy and independent living' strategic outcome of Barnet's Sustainable Community Strategy. The Cabinet Member for Education, Children and Families and the Director Children's Service sit on the board.

Youth Boards

- 9.15 There are three key groups facilitated by the Children's Service through which children and young people in Barnet are involved in decision-making.
- 9.16 Barnet Youth Board – The youth council for the borough of Barnet, representing young people aged 13 to 19. Members, comprising representatives from the majority of our secondary schools and from community and voluntary organisations, regularly take part in consultations and assemblies and deliver presentations.
- 9.17 Role Model Army – Barnet's Children in Care Council which meets to discuss issues with Barnet's care system, take part in consultations and work with managers to make changes in the care they and those they represent receive.
- 9.18 Youth Shield – The young people's safeguarding board which ensures the views of children and young people on safeguarding are represented. Representatives from Youth Shield attend BSCB meetings.

Top level Children's Service governance structures

- 9.19 Whilst the Children's Service host, operate and/or attend the multi-agency groups set out above, the service has its own internal management structure. The Cabinet Member for Education, Children and Families, Councillor Harper, is politically accountable for budget and policy formulation and implementation in relation to children and young people including in the areas of early years to post-16 education, youth services (including youth offending), safeguarding, and corporate parenting. He has regular theme meetings with the Director of Children's Service and members of the Senior Leadership Team to set strategic direction and discuss key issues.
- 9.20 Children's Service Senior Leadership Team (SLT) – meets weekly and consists of the Director and Assistant Directors. It is chaired by the Director of Children's Service. It is responsible for maintaining strategic oversight of all functions delivered by the Children's Service and for making high-level decisions around budgets, policy and service planning.
- 9.21 Children's Service Leadership Team (CLT) – meets monthly and consists of the Senior Leadership Team and other key managers. It is a forum to discuss key service issues and disseminate key information.
- 9.22 Children's Service Management Team (CMT) – meets every six weeks and consists primarily of middle managers across the service. It is a forum for managers to develop policy and disseminate information.
- 9.23 All these meetings aim to develop and foster a shared understanding of direction and to ensure corporate, partnership and service priorities are fully embedded in service delivery. Managers also hold regular team meetings with those reporting into them. Other forums for discussion and information-sharing include a quarterly Directors Question Time, a regular Children's Service newsletter, and lunchtime briefings for staff on topical issues emerging within the children's arena.

10. LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS

- 10.1 None

Legal – HP
CFO – JH