

Committee: Cabinet	Date: 8 th April 2009	Classification: Unrestricted	Report No: CAB 142/089	Agenda Item:
Report of: Corporate Director – Kevan Collins Originating officer(s) Kamini Rambellas Service Head – Children’s Social Care		Title: Tower Hamlets Safeguarding Children’s Board Annual Report 2008/9, Business Plan 2007/10. Summary of Lord Laming’s report and outcome of Serious Case Review evaluations Wards Affected: All		

1. SUMMARY

- 1.1 The report will firstly set out the work that the Tower Hamlets Local Safeguarding Children’s Board (LSCB) has undertaken since it reported to Cabinet in late 2007, presenting the Board’s Annual report to Cabinet.
- 1.2 The report also includes information concerning the Board’s response to the Joint Area Review which has included a recent independently facilitated review and stock take of the LSCB arrangements together with recommendations for the future. This review had been planned in advance of events in Haringey in late 2008, but as it took place early in this year, was able to take account of some emerging themes.
- 1.3 In response to the events in Haringey, The Secretary of State requested that Lord Laming undertake a further review of safeguarding arrangements. Lord Laming’s report was published on March 12th 2009. This report will advise Cabinet of the implications arising from Lord Laming’s report and the LSCB’s immediate response to it.
- 1.4 The report will also report on the evaluations of the Serious Case Reviews undertaken by LSCB since April 2007.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

Cabinet is recommended to:-

- 2.1 Note the contents of the LSCB annual report and business plan and outcomes arising from LSCB ‘stocktake’.
- 2.2 Note the summary of Lord Laming’s report.

- 2.3 Agree to appointment of an independent chair of the LSCB.
- 2.4 Note that the appointment will be made by the Director of Children's Services in consultation with the Council's Board partners.
- 2.5 Agree that the Council should support appointment of an independent chair by the LSCB for any future serious case reviews.
- 2.6 Note that a further report will be provided in relation to the full implementation of any changes arising from Government's response to Lord Laming's report. This will include proposals to support elected members in developing a greater understanding of the issues relating to safeguarding and their role and responsibilities in this area.
- 2.7 Note the outcome of the Ofsted evaluations of Serious Case Reviews undertaken in 2007-8.

3. BACKGROUND

- 3.1 In February 2006 a paper entitled, '*Establishing a Local Safeguarding Children Board in Tower Hamlets*', was presented to Cabinet recommending that a Local Safeguarding Children Board be established in Tower Hamlets with effect from April 2006.
- 3.2 The report outlined the proposed structure, governance, and chairing arrangements, and the proposed scrutiny arrangement of the Local Safeguarding Children Board.
- 3.3 In March 2007 the Director of Research in Practice facilitated the first meeting of the Tower Hamlets Safeguarding Children Board.
- 3.4 In December 2007 Cabinet agreed and approved the proposed changes to the structure and Governance arrangements for the Safeguarding Children's Board.
- 3.5 In July 2008 the Department for Children, Schools and Families published its 'LSCB Challenge and Improvement Tool'. This was followed in October 2008 by the ministerial announcement of the terms of reference for a planned stock take of LSCB's.
- 3.6 Tower Hamlets LSCB subsequently commissioned a further independently facilitated review of Current LSCB arrangements.
- 3.7 In November 2008 the events concerning the death of child 'P' in Haringey became public and the Secretary of State ordered an immediate inspection of safeguarding arrangements in Haringey. He also requested that Lord Laming undertake a review of current arrangements for the safeguarding of children.
- 3.8 The Secretary of State wrote to all Directors of Children's Services in December 2008 advising them of the outcome of the inspection of Haringey and that he had taken steps to put in place a new Director of Children's Services and an independent chair of Haringey LSCB. He also requested that all Lead Members, DCS and LSCB satisfy themselves concerning the effectiveness of local safeguarding arrangements.
- 3.9 The Tower Hamlets LSCB review took place in January 2009.
- 3.10 Lord Laming's report was published on March 12th 2009.

4. LSCB ANNUAL REPORT 2008/9

- 4.1 The LSCB Annual Report (Appendix1) summarises the work and achievements of the board in 2008/9. These have included:

- Creation of the Tower Hamlets Child Death Overview Panel
- Implementation of All London Child Protection Procedures
- Safer Recruitment Training rolled out to partner agency and voluntary sector
- Positive evaluations of Serious Case Review evaluations
- Dissemination of learning from Serious Case Reviews through multi-agency workshops
- Commissioning independent research of safeguarding Issues for BME Communities
- Successful LSCB Annual Conference on Domestic Violence
- Working with our Communities:
- Working with Muslim Families
- Increased safeguarding knowledge of faith & community groups through training, events and identifying emerging issues
- Empowering religious leaders to take forward safeguarding activities
- Held 4 Continuing the Dialogue seminars which inform future priority areas but also create a platform for hearing community views on safeguarding issues
- Successful conference on safeguarding issues for African children
- Delivered programme of seminars to enhance practice and knowledge in relation to safeguarding issues

4.2 Responding to the Joint Area Review

4.2.1 In April 2008, Tower Hamlets was subject to a Joint Area Review, which sought to understand through inspection the quality of services for children and young people in the Borough. Children Services were scrutinised as part of this process. Included within this was consideration of safeguarding arrangements and governance.

4.2.2 The work of the LSCB was considered as part of this review and inspectors judged that Tower Hamlets safeguarding arrangements were considered to be 'good'. It highlighted a number of strengths but noted that links with the Multi-Agency Public Protection Arrangements [MAPPA], the body that monitors and manages sexual offenders, needed improving. It also stated that the LSCB needed to strengthen

its monitoring role of partner agency wider actions and its accountabilities. It has been agreed that MAPPA will convene a specific event to explore the safeguarding implications and how they may be held to account for this.

4.3 LSCB Members Pack

A Members Pack has also been produced which fully explains the role and function of the Board but also includes a 'job description' which explicitly states what is required from each member representative to ensure their effective contribution to the work of the Board.

5. THE PROTECTION OF CHILDREN: A PROGRESS REPORT

5.1 The report was commissioned by The Secretary of State in his letter to Lord Laming of 17th November. Lord Laming was tasked with addressing three key questions which were, in summary:

5.1.1 What good practice has been successfully achieved in safeguarding children since the publication of the Victoria Climbié Inquiry report?

5.1.2 What are the key barriers, including in the legal process, that may impede efficient and effective work with children and families and that may be preventing good safeguarding practice from becoming standard practice?

5.1.3 What specific actions should be taken by Government and national and local agencies to overcome these barriers and accelerate systematic improvements?

5.2 The report was published on the 12th March 2009 and made 58 recommendations covering the areas of Leadership and Accountability; Support for Children; Interagency Working; Children's workforce; Improvements and Challenge; Organisation and Finance and Legal issues.

5.3 Lord Laming confirmed his view that integrated services and a focus on the Every Child Matters outcomes for children is the right context in which to deliver child protection services. Lord Laming has underlined his message that safeguarding is everybody's business and that the Leader, or Elected Mayor and Chief Executive should provide an additional layer of scrutiny and support for the Director of Children's Services. The recommendations include the following;

- Chief Executives and Leaders need to satisfy themselves that DCSs and their teams are adhering to processes.
- The role of the Director of Children's Services
Recommendations: NCSL programme key to development at the top.

DCS must have somebody with a social care background as a senior in their team to run the work and ensure safeguarding

- LSCB chairing will "move towards independence over time". The chair of the Children's Trust should not chair the LSCB.
 - LSCBs to account to Children's Trusts
 - Serious Case Review Panel Chairs and Overview authors must be independent of the LSCB
 - Serious Case Reviews and their inspection will concentrate better on practice and lessons learned not process.
 - The report endorses the Social Work Taskforce. Social work training and ICS, are to be focus for real serious and prompt work for the SW taskforce (See appendix 2)
 - Children's Trusts will be required to report annually on state of the nation and there will be targets in LAAs on safeguarding
 - There will be a national safeguarding advisor and unit, within DCSF
 - DCSF to revise Working Together to Safeguard Children
 - Ofsted to improve its expertise in Safeguarding
 - The Ministry of Justice to commission an independent review of the impact of court fees.
 - DoH to prioritise its commitment to recruitment of Health Visitors; promote the statutory duty of GP's to comply with child protection legislation and develop national training programme for the children's health work force
- 5.4 In response to Lord Laming's Report, the LSCB now seek to recruit and Independent Chair of the Board. The Board will require that the appointed chair has significant and substantial senior experience in the area of children's safeguarding. All future Serious Case Reviews will also be chaired by an independent person (not the chair of the Board).

6. EVALUATION OF SERIOUS CASE REVIEWS

- 6.1 Ofsted assumed responsibility for the evaluation of Serious Case Reviews (SCR's) on the 1st April 2007. The framework for how these evaluations would be undertaken was not made available until several months later. Since that date Tower Hamlets has submitted 4 SCR's for evaluation. Two of these (relating to the children MR and EWF)

were reported to General Purposes in late 2007. The remaining two have yet to be published or reported to members at the specific request of the Metropolitan Police due to ongoing criminal investigations, they have however been submitted for evaluation.

- 6.2 MR concerned an incident in 2006. The young person, placed in residential school by LBTH, sexually assaulted 7 year old child while staying at family friends while on w/e contact. Ofsted judged the SCR to be Adequate.
- 6.3 The case of EWF concerned a child who died in February 2007. The father of E killed mother, then died also (probable drugs overdose) E died as a consequence (dehydration) at 5 months. Ofsted judged the SCR to be Good.
- 6.4 The case of M who died in August 2007, concerned a young man in care, who was stabbed in a drug related street fight by an unknown perpetrator. Ofsted judged the SCR to be Good.
- 6.5 The final case concerned the child S, a 7 year old on CPR for neglect found in highly neglected state by MPS, multiple bruising to head and body. The child did not sustain life threatening injuries but the LSCB decided to undertake a Serious Case Review nonetheless as S had been subject to a Child Protection Plan when he sustained the injuries. The evaluation of this case is anticipated imminently and will be reported verbally to Cabinet.
- 6.6 Ofsted now publishes quarterly reports on the evaluations of Serious Case Reviews. To date, 208 have been evaluated and the majority of Serious Case have been judged either Adequate or Inadequate with on average, less 25% receiving a good judgement, none have been judged to be Outstanding. The evaluations of the Tower Hamlets submissions are, within this context, positive.
- 6.7 A number of changes have been implemented as a consequence of learning from Serious Case Reviews. These have included; the creation of Independent Reviewing Officers for Children in Need, rolling programmes of multi agency training to disseminate key practice learning and awareness of issues such as the impact of Domestic Violence on children and more recently, the development of a rolling programme of training for staff on working with perpetrators.
- 6.8 The Joint Area Review commented very positively on how well learning from Serious Case Reviews was embedded.

7. COMMENTS OF THE CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICER

- 7.1 This report advises Cabinet of the work that the Tower Hamlets' LSCB has undertaken since 2008, including the actions following the Joint

Area Review and there are no financial implications for the current and future financial years.

- 7.2 Further, it advises Cabinet of the immediate action that Children's Services intends to take as a consequence of the Laming Report on the protection of children, namely the appointment of an independent chair of the local LSCB and ensuring all future Serious Case Reviews are chaired by an independent person. It is anticipated that the cost for these roles will be approximately £50,000 per annum, which will be contained within the current Children's Services Budget.
- 7.3 A further report will be presented to Cabinet in relation to the full implementation of any changes arising from the Government's response to the Laming Report, which will also contain the full financial implications of the actions the Local Authority is required to take.

8. CONCURRENT REPORT OF THE ASSISTANT CHIEF EXECUTIVE (LEGAL)

- 8.1 Cabinet is asked to authorise appointment of an independent Chair to the Tower Hamlets Local Safeguarding Children Board ("LSCB").
- 8.2 The LSCB is established under section 13 of the Children Act 2004 and carries out its functions in accordance with the Local Safeguarding Children Boards Regulations 2006.
- 8.3 Pursuant to regulation 4, the Authority which establishes an LSCB shall, after consulting their Board Partners appoint a person to chair the LSCB. The proposal to appoint an independent Chair is one which is open to the Cabinet.
- 8.4 The functions of the LSCB are set out at regulation 5 and these are reported on in the attached annual report. It is appropriate for the Council to receive a report on these functions.

9. ONE TOWER HAMLETS CONSIDERATIONS

The report supports One Tower Hamlets by developing our approach to ensuring all children are appropriately safeguarded at all times

10. SUSTAINABLE ACTION FOR A GREENER ENVIRONMENT

None

11. RISK MANAGEMENT IMPLICATIONS

These are contained within the body of the report

12. EFFICIENCY STATEMENT

12.1 This is contained within the comments of the Chief Financial Officer

13. APPENDICES

Appendix 1 LSCB Annual Report and Business Plan

Appendix 2 Secretaries of State letter to Chair of S/W taskforce

**Local Government Act, 1972 Section 100D (As amended)
List of “Background Papers” used in the preparation of this report**

Brief description of “background papers”

Name and telephone number of holder and address where open to inspection.

The Protection of Children in England: A Progress Report

<http://publications.everychildmatters.gov.uk/default.aspx?PageFunction=productdetails&PageMode=publications&ProductId=HC+330>

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