

Committee: **Scrutiny Committee for Children's Services**

Date: **16 June 2005**

By: **Director of Children's Services**

Title: **Consultation on children's trust and safeguarding arrangements**

Purpose: **To seek the views of the committee on proposed arrangements ahead of proposals being submitted to Cabinet**

RECOMMENDATION - that the Committee:

- (i) notes the proposed arrangements for implementing the requirements of sections 10 and 11 of the Children Act in relation to cooperation in children's services, and effective safeguarding of children, as set out in consultation document at Annex A;**
 - (ii) notes the arrangements for consultation with partners currently taking place, as set out in the schedule at Annex B;**
 - (iii) offers any views on the proposed arrangements, to be taken into account before proposals are submitted to Cabinet for approval**
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1. Background

1.1 Section 10 of the Children Act 2004 is a key section, setting out a new duty on "Children's Services Authorities" (CSAs) – in our case East Sussex County Council – to establish arrangements for cooperation with other agencies providing services to children and young people, and a reciprocal requirement on a number of listed agencies to participate in the arrangements established by the CSA. The Council's specific responsibilities in relation to safeguarding are also, of course, a fundamental part of its role as a CSA.

1.2 Draft statutory guidance on the implementation of the new duties under section 10, aimed at both CSAs and the other listed agencies, was published for consultation just before Christmas. Parallel draft guidance on safeguarding was published more recently.

1.3 The consultation document at Annex A summarises the key strands of the proposed statutory guidance on both section 10 and – in Annex 3 to the document – section 11 on safeguarding. It describes briefly what action has already been taken in East Sussex in relation to the issues raised, makes some proposals for next steps and asks a number of consultation questions. It is designed to provide a background for a range of discussions with partners over the summer 2005, listed in the schedule at Annex B. We are linking together the consultation on Children's Trust arrangements and safeguarding because they both relate to children's welfare and we think it will be more manageable for partners if we look at them together.

1.4 The document was discussed at a meeting with NHS Trust Chief Executives on 29 April and the version at Annex A takes on board a few suggestions made by NHS colleagues. Overall the Chief Executives were very happy with the proposals; they will be taking them to their Boards over the summer so that they can offer a view.

1.5 We propose to bring a report to the July Cabinet meeting setting out the results to date of the consultation and seeking agreement in principle to proposals which can then, subject to any further consultation comments, be implemented in the autumn. The aim is to use the new governance arrangements to oversee the development of the first statutory Children and Young People's Plan, which regulations under the Children Act 2004 will require the Council to publish by 1 April 2006.

2. Equal Opportunities; Environmental implications

2.1 There are no particular implications for the environment. In developing arrangements for cooperation it will be important to have regard to the need to promote equal opportunities, and the consultation proposals are designed to do that.

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