

Report to: **Children's Services Scrutiny Committee**

Date: **26 September 2006**

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

Title of report: **Safeguarding Children – Local Safeguarding Children Boards**

Purpose of report: **To advise Scrutiny Committee Members of the inter-agency arrangements in place to safeguard children in East Sussex**

RECOMMENDATIONS

Scrutiny Committee is recommended to:

- 1. Note the arrangements for the establishment of a Local Safeguarding Children Board in East Sussex and the business plan for 2006/7.**
 - 2. Agree to receive annual reports on the Safeguarding Board business plan.**
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1. Financial Appraisal

1.1 There are no financial implications. The report describes services that are already provided from within Children's Services' budgets.

2. Supporting Information

2.1 In 2003 the Victoria Climbié Inquiry by Lord Laming was published. This report included a recommendation about the inter-agency arrangements for safeguarding children: *'The local authority should chair a Management Board for Services to Children and Families The Management Board for Services to Children and Families must include senior officers from each of the key agencies. The Management Board must also establish strong links with community-based organisations that make significant contributions to local services for children and families. The Board must ensure staff working in the key agencies are appropriately trained and are able to demonstrate competence in their respective tasks. It will be responsible for the work currently undertaken by the Area Child Protection Committee'*.

2.2 Later in 2003 Keeping Children Safe: The Government's Response to the Victoria Climbié Inquiry Report and Joint Chief Inspectors' Report Safeguarding Children 2003 advised that *'Reformed and strengthened Area Child Protection Committees, to be called Local Safeguarding Children Boards will be established on a statutory basis, with all the key agencies represented and having a duty to co-operate.'* The Children Act 2004 placed a duty on Local Authorities to set up Local Safeguarding Children Boards (LSCBs) and on key partners to take part; furthermore it determined that *'LSCBs will co-ordinate and monitor member agencies' efforts to safeguard and promote the welfare of children, set policy and procedures, and establish local screening teams who will analyse the data with the aim of reducing local childhood death or injury. They will ensure proper investigation of child deaths so that similar future deaths can be prevented if possible'*. In 2006 the Government issued 'Working Together to Safeguard children', Chapter 3 provided detailed guidance regarding the organisation and structure of the LSCB and the functions it would provide.

2.3 This report advises the Committee on the actions taken to establish the East Sussex Local Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB) and outlines the business plan for 2006/7.

2.4 Prior to 2006 within East Sussex there was an effective Area Child Protection Committee that already provided many of the services and functions of the LSCB. There was already an inter-

agency training programme resourced by all member agencies; there was a joint budget for the ACPC contributed to by all the key statutory agencies; there was an audit group in place and work was already underway to review the child protection procedures. Furthermore in anticipation of the required changes the ACPC established an LSCB Steering Group in April 2005 which reviewed the structure and organisation of the ACPC and planned the development of the LSCB.

2.5 Changes required to develop the LSCB included increasing the membership, it grew from 26 members to over 40; wider responsibilities than previously including the development of community child safety initiatives, advocacy for children involved in child protection conferences and child death overview review teams. In order to achieve this increased work programme there was a requirement for the LSCB budget to be increased and for its internal structure of sub-committees and working groups to be adapted and terms of reference amended. An outline structure and organisation was agreed by the ACPC in September 2005 and in April 2006 a launch conference was held for the LSCB.

2.6 'Working Together 2006' defined the role of members with regard to the LSCBs as follows: *'Local Authority Elected Members and non-executive directors of other board partners should not be members of a LSCB. Their role, through their membership of governance bodies such as the cabinet of the local authority or a scrutiny committee or a governance board, is to hold their organisation and its officers to account for their contribution to the effective functioning of the LSCB'*. It was therefore agreed that the annual report and business plan of the LSCB should be reported to the Children's Services Scrutiny committee in order to enable that accountability.

2.7 Attached as Appendix 1 is the draft annual report of the East Sussex Local Safeguarding Children Board. This includes a retrospective review of the work of the Area Child Protection Committee in 2005/6 as well as the business plan for 2006/7. Additionally there is a statistical report about the safeguarding services as well as details about the training provided in 2005/6 and the outline training plan for 2006/7. The business plan for 2006/7 includes a work programme that will ensure that the LSCB is able to develop child death overview reporting processes by 2008 whilst developing advocacy and community child safety provision but also maintaining core child protection services.

3. Conclusion

3.1 Effective arrangements have been put in place to establish a Local Safeguarding Children Board within East Sussex and the business plan for 2006/7 will meet the statutory requirements of the LSCB.

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Local Members: All

BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

The Victoria Climbié Inquiry - Report of an Inquiry by Lord Laming 2003

Keeping Children Safe: The Government's Response to the Victoria Climbié Inquiry Report and Joint Chief Inspectors' Report Safeguarding Children 2003

Working Together to Safeguard Children 2006, statutory guidance issued May 2006