

SLOUGH BOROUGH COUNCIL

REPORT TO: Cabinet **DATE:** 18th January 2016
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PORTFOLIO: Cllr Mann – Commissioner for Children and Education

PART I **NON-KEY DECISION**

REFERENCES FROM OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY – **SLOUGH LOCAL SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN’S BOARD ANNUAL REPORT**

1. Purpose of Report

The purpose of this report is to report the Panel’s views on the matter of safeguarding audits (as laid out in Section 11 of Children’s Act 2004) to Cabinet. This was discussed as part of the Slough Local Safeguarding Children’s Board Annual Report, taken by the Education and Children’s Services (ECS) Scrutiny Panel on 3rd December 2015.

2. Recommendations

That Cabinet notes the ECS Scrutiny Panel’s endorsement of the following policy:

- All contracts with outsourced service providers must stipulate that they conduct a safeguarding audit to Section 11 (Children’s Act 2004) standards to underpin SBC’s responsibilities in the area.

3. The Slough Joint Wellbeing Strategy, the JSNA and the Five Year Plan

3a. Slough Joint Wellbeing Strategy Priorities

This recommendation relates to the following priority:

- Safer Communities

3b. Five Year Plan Outcomes

This recommendation relates to the following priority:

5. Children and young people in Slough will be healthy, resilient and have positive life chances.

4. Other Implications

(a) Financial

Beyond the potential costs for outsourced service suppliers created by any new processes, the recommendation should not have any financial implications for Slough Borough Council (SBC).

(b) Human Rights Act and Other Legal Implications

The recommendation relates to Section 11 of the Children's Act 2004 (referred to as 'The Act' in this report).

5 Supporting Information

5.1 At its meeting on 3rd December 2016, ECS Scrutiny Panel discussed the Slough Local Children's Safeguarding Board's Annual Report for 2014 – 15. One theme which emerged during discussions with the Board's Chair was the need for sound quality assurance and a sound auditing policy and process. The Chair signalled his commitment to these aspects of the organisation's work and members of ECS Scrutiny Panel supported this priority.

5.2 In order to ensure that these efforts are supported at all levels, the matter of safeguarding audits was also raised. The Children's Act 2004 set out a series of standards by which safeguarding arrangements in public bodies would be assessed. The Act also established the public bodies which were subject to this assessment.

5.3 The standards outlined in Section 11 of The Act are as follows:

- Senior management commitment to the importance of safeguarding and promoting children's welfare;
- A clear statement of the organisation's responsibilities towards children is available for staff and volunteers;
- A clear line of accountability exists within the organisation for work on the safeguarding of children;
- Developments within the organisation take account of the need to safeguard children and are informed, where appropriate, by the views of children and families;
- Training on the safeguarding of children for staff and volunteers working with or, depending on the organisation's responsibilities, in contact with children and families;
- Safer recruitment;
- Effective inter-agency working to safeguard children;
- Staff are aware of the information sharing procedure for their organisation; and
- Work with individual children and their families

5.4 The Act specifies that these standards apply to:

- Local authorities;
- District Councils;
- Strategic Health Authorities and Special Health Authorities;
- Primary Care Trusts, NHS Trusts and NHS Foundation Trusts;
- Local policing bodies and The British Transport Police Authority;
- Local Probation Boards; and
- Youth Offending Teams

5.5 One question arising from this discussion was the matter of outsourced services. SBC has undertaken a variety of contracts with service providers in recent years. Given the technical wording of The Act, those delivering these outsourced services are not required to undertake such audits. However, given the intentions of The Act, the

interests of the local community and the objectives of SBC in ensuring comprehensive safeguarding arrangements for children, the Panel agreed it was logical that Section 11 audits should be undertaken as appropriate by service providers.

- 5.6 As a result, the Panel resolved that outsourced service providers should be obliged to meet the standards outlined in The Act. In order to ensure this, an explicit stipulation regarding Section 11 audits should be included in future contracts awarded to those who have agreed to provide services previously undertaken by SBC.
- 5.7 Slough Local Safeguarding's Children Board would also be reporting on SBC's performance on safeguarding in 2016. The formalisation of responsibilities for outsourced service providers, and the production of comprehensive assessments of these responsibilities, would also enable their work to be included in future analysis.

6 **Conclusion**

- 6.1 On the basis of the information and reasoning provided in Sections 5.1 – 5.7, Cabinet is requested to note the ECS Scrutiny Panel's support for the proposal contained in Section 2 .

7 **Appendices**

None

8 **Background Papers**

Slough Local Safeguarding Children's Board Annual Report 2015 - 16