

SLOUGH BOROUGH COUNCIL

REPORT TO: Education & Children's Services Scrutiny Panel

DATE: 15th March 2017

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WARD(S): All

PART I

FOR COMMENT & CONSIDERATION **SLOUGH LOCAL SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN'S BOARD**

1. **Purpose of Report**

To update the Education and Children's Services Scrutiny Panel on Slough Local Safeguarding Children's Board (SLSCB).

The SLSCB coordinates the safeguarding work of the individual agencies on the partnership board and monitors and challenges agencies' progress on improving child protection in Slough.

Since the last report to this Panel there has been extensive work to remedy concerns discussed in the previous report in March 2016. There have also been organisational and structural changes already carried through and in progress.

2. **Recommendation(s)/Proposed Action**

The Committee is requested to note and comment on the actions contained in this report.

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

The Slough Joint Wellbeing Strategy (SJWS) identifies children's services as a priority: Protecting vulnerable children is now clearly articulated as a major priority.

3a. **Slough Joint Wellbeing Strategy Priorities**

Actions carried out in the LSCB Business Plan and the continuing focus on assurance of good safeguarding practice and procedures by agencies working in partnership across Slough are of critical importance in delivering the SJWS priority to protect vulnerable children.

The LSCB is working increasingly closely with the Safer Slough Partnership and the Adult Safeguarding Board to promote coherence in safeguarding awareness, procedures and practice in Slough.

3b. **Five Year Plan Outcomes**

The SLSCB work supports specific delivery and challenges the Wellbeing Board's progress against the following Five Year Plan outcomes:

- Slough will be one of the safest places in the Thames Valley
- Children and young people in Slough will be healthy, resilient and have positive life chances

4. **Other Implications**

(a) Financial

There are no financial implications of proposed action. There is a financial contribution to the LSCB's budget from the core statutory partners of the local authority, the police and the NHS.

(b) Risk Management

LSCBs are partnership bodies; there is a reputational risk for all statutory members of the partnership in having an ineffective LSCB. This is most significant for Slough Borough Council (SBC) as it is the lead organisation charged with establishing the LSCB. The CEO is identified as the officer to whom the independent chair is accountable for their performance.

An effective LSCB provides oversight, support and challenge for services of the Council and partner agencies. It is at the forefront in ensuring a strategic assessment of the risks posed to children and young people in Slough by the statutory partners working in Slough.

(c) Human Rights Act and Other Legal Implications

There are no Human Rights Act Implications of proposed action although the work of the Board contributes to a number of Human Rights such as the right to family life.

(d) Equalities Impact Assessment

There is no requirement for an EIA attached to the proposed actions. SLSCB is aware of the need to ensure lay membership on the board and is progressing a recruitment approach with the assistance of input of Community services in Slough.

(e) Workforce

The development of a Joint Safeguarding Business Support Unit will have implications for the management line of the Business Manager. The development will be contained within existing financial resources.

5. **Supporting Information**

- 5.1 Local Safeguarding Children's Boards are required under the Children Act 2004. An LSCB must be established for every local authority area. The LSCB has a range of roles and statutory functions including developing local safeguarding policy and procedures and scrutinising local arrangements. The statutory objectives and functions of the LSCB are described in the extraction from Working Together to Safeguard Children at appendix A.
- 5.2 Since the report to this panel in March 2016 there have been significant developments in the actions carried out over the past 12 months, its leadership and governance line, and the way in which the LSCB works.

Actions since the report in March 2016

- 5.3 Tackling the criticisms made by Ofsted in November 2015 was carried forward in the Business Plan developed for 2015/16 (Appendix B). This Business Plan shows when specific Ofsted concerns were addressed and the actions taken to do so.
- 5.4 Work is now underway to develop the Business Plan into the future which will build on this work. LSCB subgroups focusing on areas of particular risk to children and young people which were identified by local agencies and by national concerns are also included.

Leadership

- 5.5 The new independent chair of SLSCB was appointed in September 2016. This appointment was made by the (then) Director of Children's Service at SBC, the CEO of the Slough Children's Services Trust (SCST) (with the support of the CCG), Thame Valley Police, Cllr Hussain and the Department for Education's (DfE) Children's Commissioner acting on behalf of the Secretary of State.
- 5.6 The new Chair is also the independent chair of the Slough Adult Safeguarding Board. As a result of this, they were already aware of some of the issues to be addressed in the way in which SLSCB operated within the SBC context. Additionally, a number of the partners on SLSCB already knew and had experience of their approach to partnership and safeguarding work. Since taking the post, the new Chair has focussed on promoting stronger partnership working within Slough and in conjunction with key officers in SBC and the Safer Slough Partnership Board (SSP) as there are a number of overlapping areas of common interest.

Governance line

- 5.7 The SBC Chief Executive is the responsible officer for SLSCB. While the LSCB Chair is independent of all the board partners, there is a required reporting line to the CEO and to the Lead Member for Children's Services (Cllr Hussain). However, as a consequence of the history with Children's Services and the establishment of the SCST the responsibility carried by SBC in relation to the LSCB was not sufficiently

visible. The actual operational work carried out to support the Chair and to deliver the LSCB's responsibilities currently resides with the SCST.

- 5.8 To address this, positive actions are underway, supported by key partners including the DfE commissioner, to develop operational support to the business of the LSCB back with the council.
- 5.9 A regular forum has been established involving the CEO, Cllr Hussain, The DCS, the DASS, the SCST CEO and the independent chair to promote coordinated understanding and actions in regard to a range of safeguarding issues relating to both children's and adults' services.

The way in which the LSCB works

- 5.10 The specific Slough focussed subgroups have been refreshed since September. These groups carry specific responsibilities in regard to:
- Learning and Development
 - Quality Assurance
 - Serious Case Reviews
 - Education
 - Female Genital Mutilation
 - Children Sexual Exploitation
- 5.11 Each subgroup has specific terms of reference and a work programme. Each of these is chaired by a member of the LSCB from across the span of partners. These chairs now meet on a regular basis ahead of each meeting of the LSCB to pool their knowledge and identify issues of common interest.
- 5.12 The Chair of the SLSCB sits on the SCST Joint Improvement Board. There is also an increasingly close connection with the work of the SSP and with the Adult Safeguarding Board as so many areas of concern overlap, for example in relation to domestic abuse, mental health pressures, and children and young people at serious risk of harm.
- 5.13 To facilitate this closeness and the importance of coherent actions across the range of partnerships, the Chair of SLSCB has been made a member of the SSP.
- 5.14 Actions are also underway to develop a joint Safeguarding Business Support Unit that will support both the Adult Children's Boards with a common business Manager. For the avoidance of doubt, the Chair has clarified that this is not a prelude to developing a joint safeguarding board between adults and children. The focus

necessary for each safeguarding board will not be well served in the foreseeable future by having a single board.

6. **Comments of Other Committees**

6.1 This report has not been presented to any other committee.

7. **Conclusion**

7.1 Since this panel's consideration of the work of the LSCB in March 2016 there has been significant progress through implementing the board's business plan, 2016-17, as is evidence in the updated business plan attached at appendix 1. Additionally there have been significant developments in the way in which the LSCB is now carrying forward its work, its relationship with SBC as the lead statutory agency, and improved working with other partnership boards in Slough. The panel is asked to consider these developments.

8. **Appendices Attached**

A - Extract from Working Together To Safeguard Children: March 2015

B - SLSCB Business Plan 2016-17

9. **Background Papers**

None