

Agenda item:

[No.]

Cabinet

On 13 July 2010

Report Title: Safeguarding Plan for Haringey

Report of **Peter Lewis, Director of Children & Young People's Service**

Signed :

Contact Officer : Mark Gwynne, Safeguarding Plan Programme Manager

Wards(s) affected: **ALL**

Report for: **Non Key Decision**

1. Purpose of the report (That is, the decision required)

- 1.1. This report presents for consideration the refreshed Safeguarding Plan for Haringey, as approved by Children's Trust on 24th June 2010.
- 1.2. The plan sets out the programme of activity to enable safeguarding of children and young people within Haringey to be recognised as being amongst the best by December 2011.

2. Introduction by Cabinet Member (if necessary)

- 2.1. We have pledged to improve our children's services so that they become amongst the best in the country. We are not there yet, though we have made significant progress since winter 2008. This Safeguarding Plan sets out what we need to do to ensure that this progress continues and does so at a pace.
- 2.2. We, the Council, cannot achieve the safeguarding of children on our own. We have to work in partnership and that is why this plan is not just the Council's plan, it is a partnership commitment and has already been approved by the Children's Trust.
- 2.3. Our staff, and those of our partners, are key to success and I wish to place on record my thanks to them for their hard work.

3. State link(s) with Council Plan Priorities and actions and / or other Strategies:

- 3.1. The Haringey Community Strategy 2007-2016 in particular the 'Safer for all' key outcome. In response to the JAR Action Plan we have strengthened our commitment to provide support and protection to the most vulnerable people in our community through the following priority: We will **'Safeguard children and adults from abuse and neglect wherever possible and deal with it appropriately and effectively if it does occur'** – *Community Strategy Update, March 2009*
- 3.2. The Council Plan 2007-2010 priority of 'Encouraging lifetime well-being at home, work, play and learning'
- 3.3. The Children and Young People's Plan 2009-20 in particular the 'Stay Safe' element which, in part, replicates the key actions developed within the Safeguarding Plan.
- 3.4. Haringey Strategic Plan (NHS) 2008-2013
- 3.5. Safer for all, Haringey's Community Safety Partnership Strategy 2008-2011

4. Recommendations

- 4.1. To note the refreshed Safeguarding Plan which has been considered by the Towards Excellence in Children's Services Board and approved by the Children's Trust (attached as Appendix 1).
- 4.2. To note the revised governance arrangements including the establishment of a Towards Excellence in Children's Services Board as agreed with the former Secretary of State (contained in Appendix 2).

5. Reason for recommendation(s)

- 5.1. This report presents Cabinet with the refreshed Safeguarding Plan for Haringey.
- 5.2. It was originally stated within the Safeguarding Plan that it would be refreshed following the January Ofsted follow-up inspection, to incorporate this feedback and the learning from other inspections across the country.

6. Summary

- 6.1. The refreshed JAR Action Plan forms the Safeguarding Plan for Haringey. Following delivery of the first phase of actions within the Safeguarding Plan and the feedback from Ofsted, the plan has been refreshed to take forward improvements over the period to December 2011, enabling the partnership to be amongst the best at safeguarding children and young people by 2012. The plan continues to incorporate key findings from the serious case reviews (SCRs) and initial learning where these are yet to be completed.
- 6.2. There were several challenges to achieve the desired outcome from phase 1 of

the Safeguarding Plan, the period June – December 2009. These challenges have been achieved, as demonstrated through Ofsted follow-up inspection which took place at the end of January 2010. This follow-up inspection was designed to assess the progress we have made since the urgent JAR in November 2008 and the follow-up visit in June 2009 in relation to specific areas for improvement identified in the previous inspections.

7. Chief Financial Officer Comments

- 7.1. During 2009-10 the Council made available significant additional resources in order to assist in the implementation of the Safeguarding Plan; some of which were supported by one-off grant resources from the Government. In addition the Council has, as a part of its 2010-11 budget strategy, allocated additional resources on an on-going basis to support safeguarding work. Despite these additional resources, put in over a two year period, there remains significant budgetary pressures apparent in safeguarding services during 2010-11.
- 7.2. It is important that the actions set out in the safeguarding plan can be sustained on an on-going basis within the overall existing level of resource allocated to Children's Services. This is particularly relevant in the context of constrained public finances over the short to medium term.
- 7.3. A separate bid has been submitted to the Department For Education (DFE) to assist with work targeted at improving safeguarding services and included within the safeguarding plan. However, the success of this bid is not certain and, in the event that those additional resources are not forthcoming, the service needs to be in a position where it can continue to deliver the plan within the resources available. The overall priorities of the actions within the plan needs to be understood so that adjustments can be made to match resources to the actions set out in the plan.

8. Head of Legal Services Comments

- 8.1. N/A

9. Head of Procurement Comments

- 9.1. N/A

10. Equalities & Community Cohesion Comments

- 10.1. N/A

11. Consultation

- 11.1. N/A

12. Service Financial Comments

12.1. Please see CFO comments above.

13. Use of appendices / Tables and photographs

13.1. Appendix 1: Safeguarding Plan Refresh, June 2010

13.2. Appendix 2: Secretary of State Communications on Progress

14. Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985

14.1. JAR Report (December 2008)

14.2. Annual Performance Assessment (December 2008)

14.3. Inspection of Progress in the Provision of Safeguarding Report (July 2009)

14.4. Inspection of Progress in the Provision of Safeguarding Report (February 2010)

1. Background

- 1.1.1 In developing the JAR Action Plan back in January 2009, partners across the borough were keen that the Plan was ambitious and represented more than just addressing the JAR (Dec 2008) and APA (Dec 2008) inspection reports. The intention was to unite all partners in the borough to implement more fundamental changes in the quality of safeguarding work.
- 1.1.2 The ambition was to achieve a 'positive direction of travel' by June 2009 which was to be validated by the inspection. Whilst the inspection report recognised progress in some areas, their overall assessment fell short of the desired outcome.
- 1.1.3 Senior officers across the partnership embraced the inspection findings and agreed that it provided an opportune moment to review the plan. The inspection team also endorsed the need for this at their feedback session and suggested that the timelines for delivering the plan be revisited.
- 1.1.4 The Safeguarding Plan for Haringey (the refreshed JAR Action Plan) identified a streamlined plan of the key actions that were required in the short term to establish solid foundations on which future performance improvements could be delivered. The first phase of this set out the key actions to be delivered by December 2009 in readiness for the January 2010 follow-up visit from Ofsted.
- 1.1.5 A range of quality assurance mechanisms were put in place to assess improvement in the quality of work ahead of the inspection. External assessments of progress have been commissioned to validate improvements and identify areas where further work is required. In addition, a review of the published reports from unannounced safeguarding inspections has ensured that we continue to learn from others and are aware of key issues arising nationally as well as locally.

2. Next Steps

- 2.1.1 Governance and programme management arrangements for delivery of the refreshed plan are contained within the Safeguarding Plan and are designed to ensure that there is effective internal and external challenge, monitoring and control, without adversely impacting on the ability of managers and staff to continue to deliver the required improvements. This will ensure that the momentum is maintained.
- 2.1.2 Robust governance arrangements are a key component of the capacity to improve judgement. Whilst our significant improvement has been recognised, it is important that we do not remove the governance controls that support the continuing improvement of the service. Following discussions held shortly before the general election 'purdah' period agreement was reached with the Secretary

of State and DCSF on the appropriate governance arrangement for the next stage of the safeguarding plan. The key changes to the governance arrangements are the replacement of the Quality Outcomes Board and the regular 'challenge ' meetings with GOL / DCSF with a Towards Excellence in Children's Services Board, which meets on a quarterly basis. This board will have an independent chair as well as senior representation from the Department for Education, Government Office and the Audit Commission. Further information on the terms of reference and remit of this group is set out within Appendix 2 Annex A as is correspondence with the Secretary of State on this matter.

- 2.1.3 The refreshed plan, addressing areas for further development arising from the Ofsted visit has been developed in partnership and approved by the Children's Trust in June 2010.