

# Southend-on-Sea Borough Council

Agenda  
Item No.

6

Report of Corporate Director for People  
to  
People Scrutiny  
on  
2<sup>nd</sup> December 2014

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**Annual Report on Safeguarding Children and Vulnerable Adults**  
**People Scrutiny Committee–**  
**Executive Councillors: Cllr Anne Jones & Cllr David Norman MBE**  
***A Part 1 Public Agenda Item***

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**1. Purpose of Report**

To inform the committee of the annual assurance assessment in respect of the council's responsibilities for safeguarding children and vulnerable adults in Southend, and for members to give their views prior to consideration by Cabinet at its meeting on 6<sup>th</sup> January 2015. This report contributes to the requirements of statutory guidance in Working Together to Safeguard Children 2013 and the Care Act 2014.

**2. Recommendation**

That the Committee's views are sought on the report to help guide Cabinet at its meeting on 6<sup>th</sup> January 2015

**3. Background**

3.1 In previous years separate reports have been produced to provide an annual assurance for the chief executive and elected members regarding their responsibilities for safeguarding children and safeguarding vulnerable adults. For the period 2013-14 the Local Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB), Safeguarding Vulnerable Adults Board (SVAB), Southend Borough Council Children's Services and Southend Borough Council Adult Social Care Services have coordinated their annual reporting cycles in order to provide the chief executive and elected members an overview of the activity and effectiveness of safeguarding children and vulnerable adults service in Southend.

3.2 Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children is defined as:

- protecting children from maltreatment;
- preventing impairment of children's health or development;
- ensuring that children grow up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care; and

- taking action to enable all children to have the best outcomes. (Working Together 2013)

3.3 The Local Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB) is a statutory partnership responsible for co-ordinating and monitoring the effectiveness of safeguarding children arrangements in all agencies. The LSCB works alongside the Success for All Children Group, which is responsible for leading and coordinating improvements in services for all outcomes for children, including their safety. Both the LSCB and the Success For All Children Group work with the Health and Wellbeing Board which provides strategic leadership across all services.

3.4 Effective safeguarding children systems are those where:

- the child's needs are paramount, and the needs and wishes of each child, be they a baby or infant, or an older child, should be put first, so that every child receives the support they need before a problem escalates;
- all professionals who come into contact with children and families are alert to their needs and any risks of harm that individual abusers, or potential abusers, may pose to children;
- all professionals share appropriate information in a timely way and can discuss any concerns about an individual child with colleagues and local authority children's social care;
- high quality professionals are able to use their expert judgement to put the child's needs at the heart of the safeguarding system so that the right solution can be found for each individual child;
- all professionals contribute to whatever actions are needed to safeguard and promote a child's welfare and take part in regularly reviewing the outcomes for the child against specific plans and outcomes;
- LSCBs coordinate the work to safeguard children locally and monitor and challenge the effectiveness of local arrangements;
- when things go wrong Serious Case Reviews (SCRs) are published and transparent about any mistakes which were made so that lessons can be learnt; and
- local areas innovate and changes are informed by evidence and examination of the data.

3.5 The Safeguarding Vulnerable Adults Board (SVAB) will become a statutory partnership from April 2015, responsible for co-ordinating and monitoring the effectiveness of safeguarding adults arrangements in all agencies. The SVAB works in Partnership with the LSCB and Health and Wellbeing Board to provide strategic leadership across all services. Safeguarding Vulnerable Adults Boards should:

- identify the role, responsibility, authority and accountability with regard to the action each agency and professional group should take to ensure the protection of adults;
- establish ways of analysing and interrogating data on safeguarding notifications that increase the SVAB's understanding of prevalence of abuse and neglect locally that builds up a picture over time;

- establish how it will hold partners to account and gain assurance of the effectiveness of its arrangements;
- determine its arrangements for peer review and self-audit;
- establish mechanisms for developing policies and strategies for protecting adults which should be formulated, not only in collaboration and consultation with all relevant agencies but also take account of the views of adults who have needs for care and support, their families, advocates and carer representatives;
- develop preventative strategies that aim to reduce instances of abuse and neglect in its area;
- identify types of circumstances giving grounds for concern and when they should be considered as a referral to the local authority as an enquiry;
- formulate guidance about the arrangements for managing adult safeguarding, and dealing with complaints, grievances and professional and administrative malpractice in relation to safeguarding adults;
- develop strategies to deal with the impact of issues of race, ethnicity, religion, gender and gender orientation, sexual orientation, age, disadvantage and disability on abuse and neglect;
- balance the requirements of confidentiality with the consideration that, to protect adults,
- identify mechanisms for monitoring and reviewing the implementation and impact of policy and training;
- carry out safeguarding adult reviews;
- produce a Strategic/Business Plan and an Annual Report;
- evidence how SVAB members have challenged one another and held other boards to account;
- promote multi-agency training and consider any specialist training that may be required.
- consider any scope to jointly commission some training with other partnerships, such as the Community Safety Partnership.

3.6 This report provides an annual assurance statement of the LSCB, SVAB and Council's effectiveness in the discharge of their safeguarding responsibilities. The report contains five elements:

- The annual report from the independent chair of the LSCB covering the effectiveness of safeguarding of children, and identifying key priorities locally to improve that effectiveness. (Appendix 1).
- A report from the Head of Children's Services covering the quality and effectiveness of the Council's children's social care delivery (Appendix 2).
- The annual report from the independent chair of the SVAB covering the effectiveness of safeguarding vulnerable adults and identifying key priorities locally to improve that effectiveness. (Appendix 3).
- A report from the Head of Adult Services covering the quality and effectiveness of the Council's adult social care delivery (Appendix 4).
- A review of activity and outcomes of work by the LSCB and its partners regarding Child Sexual Exploitation, and identified areas for development (Appendix 5)

- 3.7 Working Together 2013 states that the LSCB Chair must publish an annual report on the effectiveness of child safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children in the local area. The annual report should be published in relation to the preceding financial year and should fit with local agencies' planning, commissioning and budget cycles. The report should be submitted to the Chief Executive, Leader of the Council, the local police and crime commissioner and the Chair of the health and wellbeing board.

The report should provide a rigorous and transparent assessment of the performance and effectiveness of local services. It should identify areas of weakness, the causes of those weaknesses and the action being taken to address them as well as other proposals for action.

The Care Act Guidance 2014 states that the SVAB must publish an annual report that must clearly identify what both the SVAB and its members have done to carry out and deliver the objectives and other content of its business plan.

- 3.8 As Director of the Department for People I have responsibility for improving outcomes for all children, young people and vulnerable adults in Southend and to ensure that all appropriate local authority services engage effectively with the LSCB and SVAB. The lead members and I have met with the Chief Executive and the Council Leader with this report in order that they can satisfy themselves that I am fulfilling my responsibilities. The actions from that meeting are detailed below:

- i. This report and its appendices will be presented to Pre Scrutiny before presentation to the Full Cabinet
- ii. The Chief Executive will write to the Police and Crime Commissioner, Nick Alston, to escalate the concerns regarding the effectiveness of the Multi Agency Risk Assessment Conference (MARAC) process, and in particular the delay in reporting the outcome of the strategic review of MARAC commissioned by the Southend, Essex and Thurrock (SET) Strategic Domestic Abuse Board; and the quality and process concerns regarding the interim triage process.
- iii. The Chief Executive will contact the Chief Constable of Essex Police, Stephen Kavanagh, regarding concerns about the capacity within Essex Police to effectively engage with the LSCB and SVAB and other strategic boards
- iv. The Director of the Department for People will ensure that the scoping and forward planning for the proposed implementation of a Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) in Southend is undertaken within timescales
- v. The LSCB Chair will request an update from the Police and Crime Commissioner regarding engagement of the Crown Prosecution Service and Her Majesty's Court and Tribunal Service in the strategic approach to supporting victims of child sexual exploitation to ensure the conviction and disruption of alleged perpetrators.
- vi. The SVAB will develop its interface with commissioners of social care provision to monitor the quality of that provision effectively
- vii. The SVAB will improve the quality and analysis of the performance information received from partner agencies to provide a more detailed

assurance of the effectiveness of safeguarding vulnerable adults services and identify priority areas for development in its first statutory annual report for 2014-15.

#### **4. Other Options**

None

#### **5. Reasons for Recommendations**

To keep the Council informed of the position in respect of safeguarding children and vulnerable adults in Southend.

#### **6. Corporate Implications**

##### 6.1 Contribution to Council's Vision & Corporate Priorities

The work of partners and the Council in safeguarding children directly contributes to the Council's priority of improving the life chances of vulnerable children.

##### 6.2 Financial Implications

None

##### 6.3 Legal Implications

This report supports the Council, The Leader, the Chief Executive Director and Lead Member to discharge their statutory duties under the Children Act 2004 and Care Act 2014.

##### 6.4 People Implications

None

##### 6.5 Property Implications

None

##### 6.6 Consultation

The LSCB and SVAB are inclusive organisations which involve statutory and voluntary agencies. The LSCB community lay member and a youth lay member, represent the interests of the community on the Board and its sub groups, in line with statutory guidance. Consultation with children and families, which influences the way in which services are delivered, is a key strategic priority for the LSCB.

The SVAB service user organisation member and new Healthwatch member represent the interests of the community on the SVAB in line with statutory guidance

##### 6.7 Equalities and Diversity Implications

The Council, the LSCB and the SVAB have the responsibility to ensure that all children and vulnerable adults have their safety and welfare needs addressed. The Southend, Essex and Thurrock Procedures for both Child Protection and Vulnerable Adults addresses the "recognition of additional vulnerability" and covers the considerations which must be taken into account when meeting the needs of particular groups. All the LSCB and SVAB sub groups address equality matters, with a standing item on all agendas.

## 6.8 Risk Assessment

Risk logs are maintained for the LSCB and SVAB and within the Department for People. There is a standing item on the LSCB and SVAB Executive agendas identifying risks to the efficacy of safeguarding services identified by partners, and agreeing mitigating actions to address these.

## 6.9 Value for Money

Fulfilling our responsibility to safeguard children and vulnerable adults and promote their welfare is a statutory requirement. The Council works in partnership with other organisations and local authorities to ensure we fulfil those responsibilities in the most cost effective way. LSCB and SVAB members ensure that all functions are undertaken on value for money principles. From July 2013 the business management resource of the LSCB has been shared with the SVAB, with some additional administration resource shared between both Boards. There has been a saving to the LSCB in staffing costs which the Board has reinvested into its safeguarding children priorities.

## 6.10 Community Safety Implications

LSCB & SVAB arrangements support the safety for our most vulnerable members of society across the localities and partnerships. The LSCB and SVAB oversees work on road safety, e safety, bullying and hate crime as it relates to children and vulnerable adults, and monitors the effectiveness of the implementation of the domestic abuse strategy

## 7. Background Papers

Many are core documents and are the same as identified in previous reports

- The Children Act 2004 Every Child Matters: Change for Children
- Children Act 1989
- The Protection of Children in England: A Progress Report – Lord Laming (2009)
- Working Together to Safeguard Children (2013)
- The Munro Review of Child Protection: Final Report : A Child Centred System ( May 2011) – DfE website
- A Child Centred System: The Government’s response to the Munro Review of Child Protection (July 2011) – DfE website
- SEN and Disability Green Paper (2011) – DfE website
- Independent Reviewing Officers (IRO) guidelines (2010) – DfE website
- Family Justice Review (Nov 2011)
- Children’s Commissioner –Report on the findings of the OCC’s enquiry into child sexual exploitation in gangs and groups (Nov 2012)
- Keeping Children Safe in Education (2014)
- No Secrets (2000)
- Mental Capacity Act (2005)
- The Care Act (2014)
- Care Act Guidance (2014)

## 8. Appendices

Appendix 1 – LSCB Annual Report on the Effectiveness of Safeguarding Children in Southend 2013/14

Appendix 2 – Report on the Effectiveness of Safeguarding and Protecting Children by Southend Council’s Children’s Services

Appendix 3 – SVAB Annual Report on the Effectiveness of Safeguarding Vulnerable Adults 2013/14

Appendix 4 – Annual Report on the Effectiveness of Safeguarding Vulnerable Adults by Southend Borough Council Adult Social Care Services

Appendix 5 – Report on Child Sexual Exploitation in Southend