

9 December 2020		ITEM: 15
Cabinet		
Independent Review of the Local Safeguarding Children's Partnership (LSCP)		
Wards and communities affected: All	Key Decision: Non Key	
Report of: Councillor James Halden, Portfolio Holder - Adult and Children's Social Care		
Accountable Assistant Director: Joe Tynan, Assistant Director Children's Social Care & Early Help		
Accountable Director: Sheila Murphy, Corporate Director of Children's Services		
This report is: Public		

Executive Summary

Thurrock children's partnership is focused on reviewing effectiveness to ensure we learn and strive for the very best for children. This is evidenced in commissioning an independent expert to come into the partnership to conduct an open and full review, and then publically publishing the recommendations to take us forward as a partnership.

The Children and Social Work Act 2017 and Working Together 2018 dissolved the requirement for Local Safeguarding Children's Boards (LSCB). The three Strategic Partners, determined under the Children and Social Work Act 2017, comprise Thurrock Council, Essex Police and Thurrock Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG). Thurrock's new arrangements as the LSCP, came into effect on the 7 May 2019.

The agreement of the LSCP is to have a rotating Chair from the three statutory partners, initially with Health (2019/20), the Council (Corporate Director of Children's Services) has taken on the Chair role from April 2020.

The attached report at appendix one, is the report of the independent review undertaken of the LSCP during August 2020. The report is presented to Cabinet to ensure Members have an opportunity to comment on the activities of the LSCP and to review the recommendations made to the LSCP.

1. Recommendation(s)

1.1 Cabinet to comment on the independent review of the LSCP and support acting upon the recommendations of the independent review.

1.2 Cabinet to support the establishment of an Independent Chair to help further the partnerships work and provide the critical friend function to all partners.

1.3 Cabinet requests a year's review to ensure that the partnership has the capacity to proactively review relevant cases of concern, and not just formal SCR's/LPR's.

2. Introduction and Background

2.1 The LSCP was formed following legislation in 2017 (Social Work Act 2017) and guidance in 2018 (Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018), to dissolve the previous Local Children's Safeguarding Board's. Local partnerships were given the opportunity to create new safeguarding partnerships. The legislation created three strategic partners, being the police, health and the council.

2.2 The three Strategic Partners, determined under the Children and Social Work Act 2017, comprise Thurrock Council, Essex Police and Thurrock Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG). The three strategic partners worked through 2018/19 to develop the new arrangements required by the Children and Social Work Act 2017. Thurrock's new arrangements as the LSCP, came into effect on the 7th May 2019.

2.3 The new LSCP set up terms of reference and governance for the new partnership. The agreement of the LSCP was to have a rotating Chair from the three statutory partners, instead of the independent chair role operated by the Local Safeguarding Children's Board. However, in order to provide independence and external oversight to the LSCP arrangements, the governance document set out the requirement to have an annual peer review or independent review of the partnership arrangements.

2.4 An independent review of the LSCP was commissioned in June 2020, as the LSCP had been operating for a year and this was in line with the governance arrangements. The independent review considered how effectively the LSCP arrangements are working for children and families as well as for practitioners, and how well the safeguarding partners are providing strong leadership across the partnership. The review also identified any gaps in the partnership working and recommend actions to be taken to ensure the partnership is working as effectively as possible. This independent review acted as a constructive critical friend, in order to promote reflection to drive continuous improvement within the Partnership.

3. Issues, Options and Analysis of Options

3.1 The independent review was asked to consider the following issues for the LSCP and to provide recommendations for the LSCP to consider:

- To review the current structure of the LSCP; is it fit for purpose any suggested improvements?
- To review the work on Managed Reviews and Learning Practice Reviews; how effective are they? Are they timely and if not, suggestions to bring them back in line with 6 months required in Working Together (2018). Are lessons learned from the Reviews, do they enhance practice in the Partnership?
- How to secure independent overview of the partnership; to propose options for independent scrutiny of the LSCP.
- Review of the current working groups for effectiveness and outcomes.
- To review the current funding arrangements of the LSCP and to propose alternative funding models.
- In reviewing the partnership are any gaps identified in partnership working. To suggest ways that the partnership can close any identified gaps.
- To highlight any good examples of performance of the LSCP.
- How will we know we are being effective?

3.2 The independent review addressed the questions posed by the LSCP, and these can be read in the full report at Appendix One. Recommendations are delivered throughout the report, to provide ease to identify relevance of the recommendations. There is a composite list of the 26 recommendations at section 21 of the report.

3.3 The majority of the recommendations are operational in nature and the Management Executive Board of the LSCP, will have oversight of the action plan arising from this independent review.

3.4 Some of the key recommendations from the independent review include;

- Though there was evidence of respectful challenge between the three key partners and holding each other to account, this would be further strengthened by the recruitment of an independent chair and/ or an independent scrutineer. The role of the Independent Chair/Scrutineer would provide independent scrutiny of any partner.
- Health and police gradually increase their contribution over the next two years, to ensure equity of funding across the three statutory partners.
- Consider different models to involve frontline staff /schools, for example learning hubs.
- Agree a multiagency dataset based on priority areas, plus regular reporting on safeguarding proxy indicators with analysis.
- Agree an Audit schedule - re-audit some areas on an annual basis for evidence of impact on priority areas.
- Develop more immediate models of practice review; to prevent reviews not being contained within statutory timescales.

3.5 The independent reviewer stated that; 'Working Together 2018 requires there to be independent scrutiny in order to provide assurance in judging the effectiveness of multi-agency arrangements to safeguard and promote the

welfare of all children in a local area, including arrangements to identify and review serious child safeguarding cases. I can confirm that the Multi-agency Safeguarding Arrangements for Thurrock Safeguarding Children Partnership are compliant with Working Together 2018. The arrangements ensure children in Thurrock are safeguarded and their welfare promoted.'

4. Reason for Recommendation

- 4.1 The LSCP commissioned an independent review of its work, on behalf of the Partnership. The review has been completed and there are a number of recommendations arising from the review (see appendix one). Cabinet have clear and accountable governance and responsibility to review reports relating to safeguarding of children across the partnership.

5. CONSULTATION (including Overview and Scrutiny, if applicable)

- 5.1 Children's Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

6. Impact on Corporate Policies, Priorities, Performance and Community Impact

- 6.1 This report contributes to the following corporate priorities:

The People priority – a borough where people of all ages are proud to work and play, live and stay

7. Implications

7.1 Financial:

Implications verified by: **David May**
Strategic Lead - Finance

The LSCP is funded by the three statutory partners and small contributions from other members of the partnership.

7.2 Legal:

Implications verified by: **Judith Knight**
Interim Deputy Head of Legal (Social Care & Education)

The Children and Social Work Act 2017 and Working Together 2018 dissolved the requirement for Local Safeguarding Children's Boards (LSCB). The three Strategic Partners, determined under the Children and Social Work Act 2017, comprise Thurrock Council, Essex Police and Thurrock Clinical

Commissioning Group (CCG). Thurrock's new arrangements as the LSCP, came into effect on the 7 May 2019.

The 2017 Act requires that the arrangements made by the LSCP must include arrangements for scrutiny by an independent person of the effectiveness of the arrangements.

7.3 **Diversity and Equality**

Implications verified by:

Becky Lee

**Team Manager – Community
Development and Equalities**

Supporting our children and young people who are disadvantaged is a key strategic priority for Thurrock Council. The Partnership promotes practice to achieve equality, inclusion and diversity, and will carry out its duties in accordance with the Equality Act 2010 and related Codes of Practice and Anti-discriminatory policy. All Partners are signed up to these principles.

7.4 **Other implications (where significant) – Staff, Health, Sustainability, Crime and Disorder, and Impact on Looked After Children**

None

8. **Background papers used in preparing the report** (including their location on the Council's website or identification whether any are exempt or protected by copyright):

None

9. **Appendices to the report**

9.1 Appendix 1 - Independent Review of Thurrock's Local Safeguarding Children's Partnership; August 2020

Report Author:

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Corporate Director of Children's Services

Chair of the LSCP