

<b>MEETING:</b>	<b>CABINET</b>
<b>MEETING DATE:</b>	<b>31<sup>st</sup> July 2014</b>
<b>TITLE OF REPORT:</b>	<b>Herefordshire Safeguarding Children Board Business Plan</b>
<b>REPORT BY:</b>	<b>Director for Children's Wellbeing Services</b>

## **Classification**

Open

## **Key Decision**

This is not a key decision.

## **Wards Affected**

County-wide

## **Purpose**

To inform the Board of the progress of the Herefordshire Safeguarding Children Board (HSCB) Business Plan 2013-2014 at year end and to note the 2014-2015 Business Plan.

## **Recommendation(s)**

**THAT the Board:**

- (a) notes the progress achieved in the 2013-2014 Business Plan at Appendix 1;**
- (b) considers the 2014-2105 Business Plan and notes the identified priorities at Appendix 2**

## Alternative Options

- 1 There are no alternative options as this report is to inform enable the Board to consider the HSCB Business Plan.

## Reasons for Recommendations

- 2 To ensure that the Board are informed of the progress of the 2013-2014 HSCB Business Plan.
- 3 To ensure that the Health and Wellbeing Board have the opportunity to challenge the Board's priorities and assure itself that the Business Plan is in line with the Council's Delivery Plan, is sufficient to meet the recommendations from the recent Ofsted review of the effectiveness of the HSCB and will enable the Council to meet its obligations to have well-functioning multi-agency safeguarding arrangements for children and young people.

## Key Considerations

Council's are legally obliged to establish an effective Safeguarding Children Board. Further detail is in paragraphs 12-16 below.

- 4 HSCB Strategic Board reviewed the progress of the 2013-2014 Business Plan at their April meeting. The plan was an ambitious one, and whilst progress has been made in a number of areas, some have not progressed as fully as the Board would wish.
- 5 The following Action Areas have been fully implemented during the year as planned and are therefore fully "RAG" rated green. A number of these are planned for the next stage of development within the Board's 2014-2015 Business Plan in line with the three year strategic priorities:
  - *DA1: Implement changes in safeguarding practices and HSCB functioning to meet the statutory changes within Working Together 2013.* Ofsted stated that HSCB complies with its statutory responsibilities. It also stated that the Board has detailed action plans aimed at increasing the effectiveness of safeguarding activity.
  - 2 *DA3: Domestic Abuse.* Information received confirms previous knowledge that Herefordshire has a higher rate of DA than its regional neighbours and that the increase in reported incidents recorded this year is also higher. HSCB has been proactive in ensuring its strategic partners within the DA multi-agency task and finish group progress the prevention agenda in Herefordshire.
  - 3 *DA3: Sexual Exploitation and Trafficking:* Following key activities to increase awareness across the children's workforce and to build a greater level of intelligence around sexual exploitation in Herefordshire, cases highlighted and reviewed by the SET Case Evaluation Panel have shown that an increased knowledge of SET among the workforce has resulted in some better intervention with young people affected by SET. Ofsted identified the response made to date to this agenda and how we will be taking that forward.
- 6 The following action areas have made significant progress during the year, but have not yet been fully implemented during the year as planned and have at least one action "RAG" rated red in the Business Plan. More detail of the plans for each activity is included within Appendix 1. In brief however:

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Further information on the subject of this report is available from  
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- DA1: Every agency to ensure the voice of children, young people and their families is captured and used to improve services. This is a two year priority for HSCB in line with the Board's strategic priorities. During the past year all statutory agencies of the Board have developed their processes for capturing the voice of children and young people and have begun to report their mechanisms and their findings to the Board. During 2014-2015 agencies have committed to further development of these which will support the Board in planning its own processes for directly capturing the voice of children and young people and will be able to identify themes across all this work which will inform future strategic priorities.
- DA1: Improve the quality of reflective supervision and the involvement of the appropriate level of management in case decision making. This is an ongoing piece of work in line with the three year strategic priorities. Having championed the need for greater multi-agency accountability for understanding domestic abuse in Herefordshire and the commissioning of generic services during 2013-2014, HSCB is now focussing on ensuring that services that will support children affected by Domestic Abuse are appropriately commissioned along with those that support perpetrators to reduce such behaviour.
- DA2: Improving multi-agency case decision making. This action will be completed once quality assurance work confirms the consistently improving work that is being evidenced through performance data.
- DA2: Improving multi-agency assessments within Children's Social Care. This is a significant piece of work being driven within the Children's Wellbeing improvement agenda – currently being delivered through HSCIB (Improvement Board) and as part of the Directorate's Transformation Programme (CHIPP). Additionally training for practitioners involved in Initial Child Protection Conferences (ICPCs) is being developed and is scheduled to be available during the summer to improve multi-agency engagement and accountability for child protection decision making.
- DA3: Children Missing from Care (to include all missing children). Work is progressing through the West Mercia consortium to deliver a regional protocol that will include the outstanding requirements for a greater level of clarity around multi-agency responsibilities to ensure missing episodes are dealt with more effectively and therefore are more able to protect those children involved. This will be carried through to the 2014-2015 Business Plan in line with the three year strategic priorities.
- DA3: Children Placed in Herefordshire by Other Local Authorities. The decision was taken to delay finalisation of the Best Practice Agreement (previously the Contract of Expectations) with providers in order that it is fully conversant with the West Mercia Regional Protocol and will be incorporated into the launch of the protocol by October 2014
- DA4: Develop the culture of constructive challenge within the Board. All Board members have given verbal commitment to prioritise the completion of HSCB's Safeguarding in Leadership e-learning course, procured in response to the identification of development needs of Strategic Board members.
- DA4: Develop an evidence base of safeguarding casework across all agencies to demonstrate and learn from best practice. The rationale for this is two fold: to evidence that the HSCB are meeting and at times exceeding the statutory responsibilities; and to promote a 'learning culture' across agencies. Moving forward this will be delivered via the HSCB's Communications Strategy.

- 7 DA4: Develop the Board's knowledge of the children's workforce and its development needs. While the training needs analysis has only given a partial picture of the training needs across the children's workforce, the intelligence gathered has been used in line with other evidence to inform the provision of training during 2014-2015. The 2014-2015 Business Plan is currently being finalised by members of HSCB's Strategic Board and its development has been based upon the Board's agreed 2013-2016 Strategic Priorities. It is pleasing that the Ofsted findings are generally in line with the development agenda already planned by HSCB. The draft business plan has also been developed to include the following additional areas that Ofsted identified for improvement:
- DA3: Private Fostering (3.4); and
  - DA4: The effectiveness of HSCB Training (4.5)

## **Community Impact**

- 8 There are few items within the Business Plan that can yet be successfully measured for impact at this stage. The HSCB Business Unit is currently writing the Board's Annual Report and within this process impact analysis of relevant actions will be undertaken where it is possible to judge at this stage. However, the recent Ofsted inspection confirmed that there are no widespread or serious failures that create or leave children being harmed or at risk of harm in Herefordshire. The inspection report evidences ongoing improvements in the delivery of services to children and their families in line with the Council's statutory responsibilities and the statutory duties to cooperate placed on other partners.
- 9 The draft Business Plan (Appendix 2) includes expectations of how and when impact will be measured and what the expected impact will be.

## **Equality and Human Rights**

- 10 Different aspects of the implementation of the Business Plan pay due regard to the public sector equality duty as set out below:

Under Section 149, the "General Duty" on public authorities is set out thus:

"A public authority must, in the exercise of its functions, have due regard to the need to -

- eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct ... prohibited by or under this Act;
- advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it;
- foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it."

## **Financial Implications**

- 11 In order to enable the delivery of the HSCB Business Plan, the Council will need to maintain its current contribution to the Business Unit of £127,016 per annum.

## Legal Implications

- 12 Section 13 of the Children Act 2004 requires each local authority to establish a Local Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB) for their area and specifies the organisations and individuals (other than the local authority) that should be represented on LSCBs.
- 13 Section 14 of the Children Act 2004 sets out the objectives of LSCBs, which are:
- to coordinate what is done by each person or body represented on the Board for the purposes of safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children in the area; and
  - to ensure the effectiveness of what is done by each such person or body for those purposes.
- 14 Regulation 5 of the Local Safeguarding Children Boards Regulations 2006 sets out that the functions of the LSCB, in relation to the above objectives under section 14 of the Children Act 2004, are as follows:
- (a) developing policies and procedures for safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children in the area of the authority, including policies and procedures in relation to:
- i. the action to be taken where there are concerns about a child's safety or welfare, including thresholds for intervention;
  - ii. training of persons who work with children or in services affecting the safety and welfare of children;
  - iii. recruitment and supervision of persons who work with children;
  - iv. investigation of allegations concerning persons who work with children;
  - v. safety and welfare of children who are privately fostered;
  - vi. cooperation with neighbouring children's services authorities and their Board partners;
- b. communicating to persons and bodies in the area of the authority the need to safeguard and promote the welfare of children, raising their awareness of how this can best be done and encouraging them to do so;
- c. monitoring and evaluating the effectiveness of what is done by the authority and their Board partners individually and collectively to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and advising them on ways to improve;
- d. participating in the planning of services for children in the area of the authority; and
- e. undertaking reviews of serious cases and advising the authority and their Board partners on lessons to be learned.
- 15 Regulation 5 (2) which relates to the LSCB Serious Case Reviews function and regulation 6 which relates to the LSCB Child Death functions are covered in chapter 4 of this guidance.
- 16 Regulation 5 (3) provides that an LSCB may also engage in any other activity that facilitates, or is conducive to, the achievement of its objectives.

## **Risk Management**

- 17 There are no risks contained within the recommendations as this is an opportunity for Cabinet to consider and challenge the HSCB progress and priorities.
- 18 The main risk is that failing to have a strong and effective Safeguarding Children Board will leave children and young people more at risk of suffering harm.

## **Consultees**

- 19 HSCB Strategic Board
- 20 HSCB Steering Group Sub Group Chairs
- 21 Herefordshire Safeguarding Children Improvement Board

## **Appendices**

Appendix 1 - HSCB 2013-2014 Business Plan Monitoring Sheet

Appendix 2 - HSCB 2014-15 Draft Business Plan

## **Background Papers**

- None identified.