

		AGENDA ITEM 4
		CYP/12/10
Committee:	Children and Young People Policy and Scrutiny Committee	
Date:	13 May 2010	
<u>Safeguarding Children Review</u>		
Enquiries to:	Paul Fallon, Independent Chairman, Essex Safeguarding Children Board	

1) Introduction

The ESCB received a copy of the Policy and Scrutiny Committee's report towards the end of last year and reviewed its recommendations at its Business Planning Group (Executive). At around the same time the Board received two reports and sets of recommendations resulting from the activity of an external consultancy team commissioned by the DCSF to review the Board following on from the Joint Area Review. These reports covered the Board overall and serious case review activity specifically. They were considered by the Board at a Development Day held in November 2009 where some important decisions were made regarding the future structure, roles and responsibilities of the Board and in particular its relationship with the Children's Trust. The outcomes of this day, the recommendations from the P&SC and the recommendations from the external consultant reports are now all being taken forward by the Board and have informed its developing Business Plan for 2010-2013 which will be available for the Committee later on in the year.

For the information of the Committee the recommendations from the external consultant reports were as follows. All recommendations are either completed or in progress.

ESCB Report

1) The ESCB and the Children's Trust should be now setting out processes and timetables for considering their responses to:

- The SHA review of safeguarding

- The scrutiny committee review of safeguarding
- The publication of practice guidance on how to operate effectively
- The publication of the revised Working Together to Safeguard Children
- The review of the Essex Safeguarding Children Board

Any changes made to the ESCB and its Business Plan should be consistent with the recommendations and requirements of the revised Working Together

The ESCB has either reviewed or is in the process of reviewing the above. The SET Procedures are currently being revised in full and a comprehensive exercise has been undertaken to identify changes required to these from Working Together. The revised procedures, which will be fully Working Together compliant, will be published around September. The implications of these documents have been identified as part of the development of the ESCB business plan for 10-13 which will be available in draft around May 10.

- 2) There should be an increase in the number of days per annum for the independent chair of the board over the next 18 months and, if the incumbent chair is unable to increase his current commitment, an independent vice chair working to the current chair, should be appointed on a time-limited contract

This has been agreed in principal. Additional days required for this year will be accommodated in the ESCB budget and the Chair's contract will be altered as required when this becomes due for renewal.

- 3) The ESCB should maximise opportunities for joint working with Southend and Thurrock LSCBs

The ESCB continues to work in partnership with Southend and Thurrock on areas such as training, development of procedures, section 11 and child death review. Possibilities for joint working are considered whenever a new project is started.

- 4) ASHE, EPHA, ESSHTA and ESCB should review the representation of schools on the ESCB and its sub groups and how communication between the ESCB and schools is best achieved

A letter will shortly be sent to the associations in connection to this. Meetings are also being arranged between Paul Fallon and the associations to support this review process. The input of the Essex County Council Schools Service will be enhanced as part of the review of membership.

- 5) The ESCB Business sub group should be reformed as the ESCB Executive Group and should be chaired by the independent chair of the ESCB

This has been accepted, the next meeting of the group in May will consider the changes that will have to be made to membership, agenda etc to enact this recommendation. The Chair is already observing the meetings and will shortly formally take over the chairing.

- 6) Membership and the structure of the ESCB and its subgroups should be reviewed to ensure that:
- All relevant agencies are appropriately represented
 - The ESCB structures reflect the structure of other key groups such as the Children's Trust
 - That the requirements of the revised Working Together are met

This has been undertaken and proposals for revision of membership and structure discussed at the ESCB Development Day during November 2009. The changes in membership are currently being worked through and agreements reached in relation to changes to sub-groups, These will be implemented during the next months.

- 7) Along with the revising of the structure of the board and its sub groups, protocols should be developed and agreed setting out how the ESCB and its sub groups:
- Communicate with one another and with senior management boards and governance bodies of the partner agencies
 - Communicate with disparate groups and those presented on the Board via representative arrangements only such as GPs, dentists, voluntary organisations, schools, children's centres and early years providers

This work is in progress however there are a number of actions outstanding due to the lack of a communications officer within the support team or a communications group. Proposals will be developed to address this within the next months

- 8) The ESCB should produce a report on the business case for increased resources over the next 18 months and the Children's Trust and the senior management teams of the partner agencies review their funding of the ESCB to address the recommendations in the Business Case

This report has been produced. The budget for 10/11 has been agreed and the report will therefore be used to support the budget setting process for 11/12.

- 9) This report should be considered by the Children's Trust Board with a clear indication of what recommendations within the report are supported by the Trust Board members

All recommendations were supported by the Children's Trust Board

Serious Case Review Report

- 1) The Board should consider how best to incorporate the final revisions to Chapter 8 of 'Working Together' before finalising the revised local procedures

Changes to Chapter 8 have already been identified and incorporated into local practice. New requirements are clearly indicated to those who become involved in the SCR process. The ESCB SCR Procedures Manual will be revised during the year.

- 2) The Board should consider increasing the frequency of Board meetings in the medium term and senior managers in the partner agencies should plan for significant demands on the time of key staff in addressing the backlog of SCR work

Frequency of Board meetings has been increased and ad hoc meetings are being arranged as and when required to adopt SCRs, The backlog of SCR work has reduced substantially. Timeliness of submission of SCRs has improved however lack of time to complete SCR work is still being flagged up by IMR authors in agencies as a concern. This will be addressed by the Chair at the end of the current two SCRs.

- 3) Once the current backlog has been cleared, the Board and consistent agencies should plan long term resource allocation for completion of SCRs on the basis of at least two such reviews per annum to be completed within timescales set out in the guidance

This is budgeted for in the Board budget, Issues related to the resources within agencies is referred to above.

- 4) Greater attention should be paid to formulating the scope of each IMR and SCR to ensure that the ensuing work is focused. The Chair of the Board should be involved in signing off the terms of reference produced by the SCR Panel

Chair of the Board now does sign off the terms of reference, any changes to the terms of reference identified after the start of the review are also referred back to the Chair.

- 5) In view of the history of not completing IMRs and SCRs within timescales as set out in the guidance, the Chair if the Board has put in place a system whereby the progress of completion of IMRs and Overview Reports is regularly monitored and reported back to him. Partner agencies should ensure that they nominate a senior manager whom the chair can contact when delays are occurring within a particular agency

This is in place. The Chair reviews progress at each SCR Panel meeting and issues are alerted to him by the Business Manage in between these meetings.

- 6) The Schools, Children and Families Department of the Council should review it's approach and strategy to engaging schools in the learning from IMRs and SCRs

This is not an ESCB action but is being taken forward by SCF.

- 7) Action plans arising from recommendations of IMRs and SCRs should indicate the level and nature of resource implications required to implement the recommendations

This is in place for SCRs and will be implemented for IMRs when the next set need to be produced.

- 8) The Serious Case Review Chair should work closely with Overview Writers to ensure that recommendations are relevant and only address the key issues. Action Plans should have clear action points, timescales and named individuals at operational and senior management level with responsibility for implementation, The SCR Panel should build into the process sufficient time for each IMR and SCR recommendation and action point to be signed off by the agency to which it relates

Clear action plans are in place. The requirement to build in sufficient time to ensure specific consultation and sign off of actions is proving difficult to achieve due to the statutory timescales in which reviews need to be completed and the very complicated, cross-border nature of the reviews currently in progress. For future reviews a robust line will have to be taken in relation to this issue to ensure Government Office approval is achieved to project plans including sufficient time for this activity.

- 9) Actions points should routinely contain target dates for completion and arrangements for feeding back to the Board.

This is in place and an effective monitoring system is operational.

2) Development of the relationship between the ESCB and Children's Trust

The Committee should be aware of the following information that is relevant to the fulfilment of the recommendations outlined below. The ESCB and the Children's Trust have agreed the following:

- The ESCB will coordinate, and scrutinise the work of the Children's Trust to ensure delivery of the key safeguarding outcomes across the partnership.
- To support the scrutiny role of the ESCB, members of the ESCB must be appointed by all partners at the appropriate level.
- That the Local Safeguarding Groups are disbanded and that the responsibility for delivery in local areas is transferred to the Local Children's Trust Boards.
- That an ESCB nominee will represent the ESCB on each Local Children's Trust Board. In this role the representation of the ESCB will be their sole focus.
- ESCB's 6 Core Questions and associated performance are encapsulated in the Children and Young People's Plan in the Stay Safe section.
- The Director of Commissioning Wendi Ogle-Welbourn will attend the ESCB and report on progress of the Children's Trust.
- The Children's Trust will take on the delivery aspects of the ESCB in relation to multi agency integrated training on Safeguarding.
- The Children's Trust and ESCB will develop a joint communications strategy.
- The ESCB has statutory duties in relation to Serious Case Reviews and Child Death Review Panels and will maintain responsibility for these
- Management Information will be provided by the Children's Trust to the Evidence and Effectiveness County group of the ESCB who may need to ask the local Children's Trust Board to undertake more detailed local analysis and report back.

The above agreements are in line with statutory expectations as set out in the current version of Working Together and the revised consultation version. It is also a much clearer set of arrangements than has existed in Essex up to this point and responds to the requirements of the Government's response to the Laming report which called for "*clear distinction between the roles and responsibilities between LSCBs and Children's Trusts to ensure appropriate challenge, scrutiny and impartiality*".

3) Specific action taken against Scrutiny Committee recommendations for the Board Chair

	Recommendation	Owner	Action
1	The Committee should continue to fulfil its role of critical friend by monitoring the implementation of the SCF business plan at three monthly intervals, focussing on specific items identified in the Director's report.	CHAIRMAN OF COMMITTEE	Recommendation not for ESCB Chair
2	The Chairman of the ECSB will be asked to present an annual report on the Board's activities and a copy of its business plan between February and May each year.	PAUL FALLON.	Reports / presentations to the Committee will be supplied on request. The Board's Business Plan for 2010-2013 and a summary annual report for 2009/10 will be available by approximately the end of May. From 2010 the Board will be under a statutory duty to produce an annual report focusing less on its own activity and more on the effectiveness of safeguarding arrangements across partner agencies in the local authority area. A presentation of this report will be made to the Children's Trust Board annually to assist with the development of the Children and Young People's Plan. This could also be made available to the Scrutiny Committee.
3	In order to provide continuity, the Cabinet Member may wish to consider appointing the Chairman of the ECSB on a three year contract.	CABINET MEMBER	The ESCB Chair is currently appointed on a one year contract which expires in December 2010. The decision around appointing / reappointing a chair for the Board is the responsibility of the Director of Children's Services in conjunction with other Board partners. It is recommended that the Cabinet member liaises with the Director of Children's Services at the point of contract renewal to ensure that this is considered.

4	The Chairman of ECSB and the Cabinet Member should review the induction process for new members who join the Board.	PAUL FALLON. CABINET MEMBER	The Board membership is currently in the process of being reviewed and revised and a new membership will be in place by Summer 2010. All Board members will be provided with a job description and relevant briefing documents including letters outlining how they are expected to communicate out from the Board and who with. As with current practice the ESCB Business Manager will undertake induction meetings with new Board members as they are appointed.
5	The Chairman of the ECSB should consider how to encourage continuity of attendance and processes for reporting back to all organisations, particularly to district/borough councils and their elected members.	PAUL FALLON.	External consultants have recently been reviewing these issues on behalf of the Board Chair and a report was provided to the February 2010 Board outlining proposals for amending the reporting mechanisms and also for changing the Board membership to ensure greater engagement at a senior level. The revised membership is currently being worked through and will be in place by the Summer. It has been agreed that following each Board meeting a letter will now be written direct to senior officers of all member agencies clarifying key issues, decisions reached and action to be taken. Agencies will be under an obligation to provide a response to this letter. Agencies are also being asked to clarify how these letters will be dealt with within their agency – for example what senior management teams will the updates and actions go to.
6	The Committee should commission a periodic sampling of how issues discussed at the ECSB are disseminated between and within partner organisations.	CHAIRMAN OF COMMITTEE	Recommendation not for ESCB Chair

7	The Committee would support an investigation by the Cabinet Member into the best ways of involving representatives of the voluntary sector within the ECSB's activities.	CABINET MEMBER	<p>Recommendation not for ESCB Chair</p> <p>When the ESCB membership is revised the Board will seek to increase the voluntary sector representation and will also review the membership on its sub groups. The Board is now working in conjunction with the Children's Trust to utilise its communications networks to disseminate information and will have a regular article in the 'e-zine' which is shortly to be made available. The ESCB will be seeking to develop its communications function during the next year and this will include liaison with the voluntary sector.</p>
8	The Executive Director of the SCF Directorate may wish to promulgate the approach taken by the Salvation Army in providing training on child protection issues throughout the voluntary sector, and for this to be used as a benchmark.	MALCOLM NEWSAM.	The Committee should be aware that a recent decision has been made to transfer responsibility for the delivery of safeguarding training from the ESCB to the Children's Trust. This has offered the opportunity to revise the delivery model to ensure enhanced and more consistent provision. It is hoped that this will be fully in place by September 2010.
9	The Committee would welcome consideration by the Cabinet Member of ways of sharing lessons with all organisations who deal with children and young people.	CABINET MEMBER	<p>Recommendation not for ESCB Chair</p> <p>The ESCB response is included below.</p>

10	<p>The ECSB Chairman should initiate a review of the way in which lessons from Serious Case Reviews are embedded into and through partner organisations.</p>	<p>PAUL FALLON.</p>	<p>The ESCB has recently revised its monitoring system for serious case review recommendations. Implementation is now monitored systematically on a quarterly basis and there has been a steady improvement in the implementation of recommendations to timescale. There is now a standard recommendation made for each case review that each agency should ensure that learning from the review is shared at a practitioner, management and governance level and agencies are providing reports to demonstrate how this is done. The Training and Development Manager post for the Board is currently vacant but is being revised and will shortly be recruited to, the loss of the responsibility for the delivery of training has increased the capacity that will be in this post to focus on leading activity re the dissemination of learning- for example, more regular newsletters and briefing events.</p> <p>A recommendation was made in SCR Child A / 2008 that the Board should provide an annual summary to each member agency regarding lessons from serious case reviews and in turn each agency should provide this summary to their relevant management and governance bodies. Due to lack of capacity the Board has not yet been able to fully comply with this however it is hoped that the above changes will help this situation and that there will be regular production of this report from 2010. This information has always been provided in summary in the Board Annual Report in any case.</p>
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11	<p>The Chairman of the ECSB may wish to review with the Head of Legal Services the resources required to provide more effective support for the ECSB, including any audit and post Laming requirements.</p>	PAUL FALLON.	<p>The following actions have been taken:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Commissioning of an independent consultancy company to provide additional support with the section 11 audit process, development of multi-agency audit processes and responding to some outstanding serious case review recommendations. ▪ Approval provided via the 2010/11 budget proposal to appoint a monitoring and evaluation office to administer monitoring activity ▪ Appointment of a temporary Support Officer to administer one of two on-going serious case reviews ▪ Commissioning of an Independent Project Manager to project manage the other on-going serious case review which is extremely complex in nature ▪ Appointment of a new full time Serious Case Review Officer to replace the part-time Serious Case Review Officer who retired at the end of March ▪ Changes to the delivery of training resulting in additional capacity within both the Training and

			<p>Development Manager post (currently vacant but to be revised and recruited to by Summer 2010) and the Training Administrator post</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Activity started to create an additional part time administration post for the Child Death Review process to enable the Child Death Review Officer to have more capacity to progress activity to disseminate and respond to lessons learnt ▪ Agreement given at the February 2010 Board to establish a joint communications function between the ESCB and the CTB <p>In addition to the above external consultants have been commissioned by the Chair to undertake further review activity into the Board and develop a business case for increased resources in future years. This has included reviewing current staffing levels and projecting on-going requirements.</p>
12	The Committee should monitor vacancy levels within social worker posts and the success of recruitment and retention initiatives on an ongoing basis.	CHAIRMAN OF COMMITTEE	Recommendation not for ESCB Chair
13	The Committee should review the success of the SCF Directorate's revised foster carer's recruitment campaign.	CHAIRMAN OF COMMITTEE	Recommendation not for ESCB Chair