

**Open Report on behalf of Debbie Barnes, Executive Director of Children's Services**

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| Report to: | <b>Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee</b>   |
| Date:      | <b>06 March 2015</b>  |
| Subject:   | <b>Review of the accountability framework for the Independent Chair of the Lincolnshire LSCB.</b> |

**Summary:**

This review was undertaken in October 2014 by Paul Burnett. The review took place during the Ofsted inspection but was not connected to this process. The purpose was to scrutinise the local authority's accountability framework for the independent chair of the LSCB and to ensure that it was compliant with statutory guidance set out in Working Together 2013 and Section 14A of the Children Act 2004. The review also considered the inter-relationships between the LSCB and other key forums across the partnership geography of Lincolnshire.

The review identified a number of strengths in the accountability arrangements in place in Lincolnshire. These are highlighted in the report below and in the full Review report which is attached.

It has also identified three areas for improvement which are also highlighted below and in the full Review report attached.

**Actions Required:**

The Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee is requested to:

- i. Consider the review report and record any comments on the findings;
- ii. Consider the identified strengths and areas for development and determine whether these match their perception of the accountability framework;
- iii. Agree that the Executive and the LSCB be asked to draw up an action plan to address the areas for development identified in the review.

## **1. Background**

- 1.1 This report relates to a review of the accountability framework for the Independent Chair of the Lincolnshire LSCB that was undertaken in October 2014. The report was undertaken by Paul Burnett an experienced LSCB chair and former Director of Children's Services in two local authorities.

1.2 The purpose of the review was:

- to scrutinise the local authority's accountability framework for the independent chair of the LSCB;
- to ensure that the framework was compliant with statutory guidance set out in Working Together 2013 and Section 14A of the Children Act 2004
- to test that the arrangements met the requirements of the 'Statutory guidance on the roles and responsibilities of the Director of Children's Services and the Lead Member for Children's Services' as set out in April 2013.

1.3 In addition the review considered the inter-relationships between the LSCB and other key forums across the partnership geography of Lincolnshire.

1.4 A full copy of the report is attached as Appendix A to this report.

1.5 The Review was based on consideration of a range of written documentation relating to both the accountability framework of the Independent Chair of the LSCB and a number of face-to-face interviews with key players in the accountability arrangements as set out in the review report.

1.6 The Review sets out in detail findings in relation to the a number of key lines of enquiry as follows:

- The roles of the Chief Executive, the Lead Member and the Director of Children's Services in holding the Board Chair to account for the effective working of the LSCB;
- The role of the Leader of the Authority in ensuring proper governance, scrutiny and oversight is achieved;
- The relationship between the Health and Wellbeing Board and the LSCB and the effectiveness of their interface.

## **2. Conclusion**

2.1 The review concluded that there is a range of strengths in the accountability framework that is in place in Lincolnshire to manage the Independent Chair of the LSCB. These strengths are set out in detail in the review report and are headlined in the conclusion as follows:

- The accountability arrangements are compliant with the expectations of Working Together 2013 and other statutory requirements and guidance in relation to the roles of the Chief Executive, the Director of Children's Services, the Leader of the Council and the Lead Member for Children's Services;

- in many areas arrangements exceed statutory requirements in ways that facilitate effective stakeholder communication and engagement in the safeguarding agenda, incorporate safeguarding into key policy, strategic and resource priority setting and test the impact of this activity on safeguarding performance and outcomes for children and young people.
- the success of existing arrangements is based on strong inter-relationships and working arrangements between people in key roles - there was strong evidence of trust and respect between key stakeholders throughout the review.

2.2 The review has identified three areas for development as follows:

- the need to incorporate the individual performance priorities, goals and targets set for the Independent Chair with the Director of Children’s Services into the agenda of the meeting with the Chief Executive so that he is able to scrutinise, monitor and evaluate the Independent Chair’s performance on a regular basis;
- keep a log of the issues on which the Leader of the Council, the Lead Member for Children’s Services and Scrutiny have engaged in activities that support the LSCB’s strategic objectives, particularly examples of their impact on both improvement and the future priorities of the LSCB itself.
- To further develop the inter-relationship between the safeguarding boards and the Health and Well-Being Board in order to:
  - develop a more robust reciprocal challenge relationship between the two Boards;
  - secure greater connectivity between the annual safeguarding needs analysis and the JSNA process;
  - secure and extend the ‘Think Family’ concept that is championed by the Health and Well-Being Board into the work of the two safeguarding boards.
- To further develop joint working between the LSCB and SAB

### 3. Consultation

#### a) Policy Proofing Actions Required

n/a

### 4. Appendices

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| These are listed below and attached at the back of the report |   |
| Appendix A  | ‘Review of the accountability framework for the Independent Chair of the Lincolnshire LSCB’ |

## 5. Background Papers

The following background papers as defined in the Local Government Act 1972 were relied upon in the writing of this report.

| Document title   | Where the document can be viewed  |
|--|---|
| Working Together 2013  | <a href="https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/working-together-to-safeguard-children">https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/working-together-to-safeguard-children</a>   |
| The statutory roles of the DCS and Lead Member for Children's Services | <a href="https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/directors-of-childrens-services-roles-and-responsibilities">https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/directors-of-childrens-services-roles-and-responsibilities</a> |
| The Children Act 2004  | <a href="http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2004/31/contents">http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2004/31/contents</a>   |

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