

PART 1 - PUBLIC

Decision Maker: **General Purposes and Licensing Committee**

Date: **28 July 2010**

Decision Type: Non-Urgent Executive Non-Key

**TITLE: APPOINTMENT OF ELECTED MEMBER TO ATTEND
BROMLEY SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN BOARD**

Contact Officer: Julie Daly, Head of Safeguarding and Quality Assurance
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Chief Officer: Gillian Pearson, Director of Children and Young People Services

Ward: Boroughwide

1. Reason for report

- 1.1 This report sets out the statutory framework relating to the role of the Lead Member for Children and Young People Services in relation to safeguarding children.
 - 1.2 The report also sets out the remit of the Bromley Safeguarding Children Board in acting as the key statutory mechanism for agreeing how the relevant organisations in Bromley co-operate to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and for ensuring the effectiveness of what they do.
 - 1.3 The report proposes that the Lead Member for Children and Young People Services, or his representative, takes up formal membership on the Bromley Safeguarding Children Board.
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2. **RECOMMENDATION(S)**

- 2.1 That the Executive endorses the proposal that the Executive Member for Children and Young People Services, or his representative, takes up formal membership of the Bromley Safeguarding Children Board.

Corporate Policy

1. Policy Status: Existing policy: "Every Child Matters in Bromley", the Children and Young People Plan 2006-2009
 2. BBB Priority: Children and Young People
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Financial

1. Cost of proposal: N/A
 2. Ongoing costs: N/A
 3. Budget head/performance centre: BSCB is an independent body
 4. Total current budget for this head: £
 5. Source of funding: Various public bodies, and £34k from CYP
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Staff

1. Number of staff (current and additional) – N/A
 2. If from existing staff resources, number of staff hours -
-

Legal

1. Legal Requirement: Statutory requirement:
 2. Call in: Call-in is applicable
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Customer Impact

1. Estimated number of users/beneficiaries (current and projected) -
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Ward Councillor Views

1. Have Ward Councillors been asked for comments? N/A
2. Summary of Ward Councillors comments:

3. COMMENTARY

- 3.1 The Children Act 2004 places a statutory responsibility on the Lead Member for Children's Services to promote the needs of children, provide political leadership and monitor the effectiveness of services throughout the Local Authority and across all partnership agencies.
- 3.2 Statutory guidance on the role of the Lead Members, including in relation to safeguarding children, was produced in July 2009 and states that the Lead Member should ensure that the authority's paid officers maintain a clear focus on effective safeguarding arrangements. The Lead Member should focus in particular on satisfying themselves that there are systems in place for effective co-ordination of work with other agencies with relevant responsibilities and challenge partner agencies on how they fulfil their responsibilities.
- 3.3 In addition the 2004 Act sets out the requirements for all Local Authorities to have a Local Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB). Bromley Safeguarding Children Board (BSCB) is the key statutory mechanism for agreeing how the relevant organisations in Bromley will co-operate to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and for ensuring the effectiveness of what they do. The work of BSCB fits within the wider context of the children's trust arrangements in Bromley. While the work of BSCB contributes to the wider goals of improving the well being of all children in Bromley, its primary focus is on the aspect of 'staying safe'. The aim of the BSCB is to ensure that all children within Bromley, in whatever setting, are kept safe from harm.
- 3.4 The core functions of the BSCB are to:
- develop local policies, procedures and thresholds for inter-agency safeguarding working;
 - monitor and evaluate how well services work together to safeguard children in Bromley;
 - encourage effective working partnerships between professional groups, including sharing knowledge gained through national and local research;
 - undertake case reviews where a child has died or is seriously harmed and co-ordinate a response to unexpected child deaths;
 - ensure the functioning of the child death overview arrangements;
 - communicate the shared responsibility for safeguarding children and young people;
 - improve inter-agency work through agreeing training and development priorities;
 - listen to and take children and young people's views into account when planning and delivering programmes to safeguard them and improve their welfare.
- 3.5 The Baby Peter child protection case, publicised in October 2008, raised significant concerns at national and local levels regarding the standards of child protection and safeguarding arrangements.
- 3.6 In November 2008 the Children's Minister, in the light of the Baby Peter case and developments in Haringey, commissioned Lord Laming to review progress on local safeguarding arrangements following his inquiry into the death of Victoria Climbié.

- 3.7 The Laming report on ‘The Protection of Children in England: A progress Report’ was published in March 2009 and states:

In order to be most effective, Lead Members must have access to an appropriate level of up-to-date detail of safeguarding practice for their authority, including an understanding of the profile of children and young people in their area, the level of need, and the quality and effectiveness of the services that protect children from harm.

- 3.8 During the period 2006-2009, the Director Children and Young People Services undertook the duties as Chairman of Bromley’s Safeguarding Children Board. As part of the national review of safeguarding and child protection commissioned in 2009 by the former Secretary of State, it was recommended that Local Authorities and their partner agencies should consider engaging independent chairmanship. Following a recruitment process in Summer 2009, Bromley engaged an independent chairman with effect from October 2009. The Director CYP Services has a statutory responsibility to be a member of the Board and undertakes those duties now in the capacity of Vice-Chairman.

- 3.9 At its meeting of the Executive on 30 March 2009 Bromley Council endorsed the establishment of an Member Working Group on Safeguarding to assist the Lead Member and Director of Children and Young People Services in discharging their responsibilities under the 2004 Children Act in relation to the safeguarding of children in Bromley. The involvement of the Lead Member for Children and Young People Services and other key elected members is essential to ensuring the profile and importance of safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children is understood throughout the Local Authority and the Children’s Trust. On 17 June 2009 the Executive endorsed the membership of that group.

- 3.10 Further to Lord Laming’s report, the revised statutory guidance ‘Working Together to Safeguarding Children’, which was published in March 2010 sets out the role of elected members in relation to LSCB as:

Local authority elected membersshould through their membership of governance bodies such as the cabinet of the local authority or a scrutiny committee hold their organisation and its officers to account for their contribution to the effective functioning of the LSCB.

- 3.11 In relation to the Lead member it states:

The Lead Member should be a ‘participating observer ‘ of the Local Safeguarding Children Board (they should) routinely attending meetings.... and challenge, when necessary, from a well informed position.

- 3.12 It is therefore proposed that the General Purposes and Licensing Committee endorse that the Lead Member for Children and Young People Services in Bromley, or his representative, attend the meetings of the Bromley Safeguarding Children Board.

- 3.13 The main BSCB Board meets 3 times a year.

4. POLICY IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 “Every Child Matters in Bromley”, the Children and Young People Plan 2006-2009, sets out the Council’s vision and strategy, working with partners to improve outcomes for all children and young people. “Staying Safe” is one of the five outcomes under the Every Child Matters: Change for Children programme.

4.2 Attendance at meetings of the BSCB will enhance elected members knowledge of the multi agency safeguarding network in Bromley.

5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

5.1 There are no immediate financial implications.

6. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

6.1 This proposal is in line with the Children Act 2004 and the statutory guidance 'Working Together to Safeguard Children'.

Non-Applicable Sections:	Personnel Implications
Background Documents: (Access via Contact Officer)	