

**STOCKTON-ON-TEES BOROUGH COUNCIL**

**CABINET RECOMMENDATIONS**

**PROFORMA**

Cabinet Meeting .....11th June 2009

1. Title of Item/Report

Lord Laming's Progress Report: Protection of Children in England

2. Record of the Decision

Consideration was given to a report that summarised the content of Lord Laming's report, and the Government's response to his recommendations, the report having been commissioned following the death of Baby P in Haringey.

The Review considered what good practice had been achieved in safeguarding since the Climbié Inquiry Report was published in 2003, the key barriers which prevented efficient and effective safeguarding. It found that the Every Child Matters reforms, introduced by the Children Act 2004, provided a sound framework for protecting children and promoting their welfare. However, Lord Laming also found that there needed to be a step change in the arrangements to protect children from harm. To achieve this, he challenged leaders of local services to accept their responsibility to translate policy, legislation and guidance into day to day practice on the frontline of every service. Lord Laming made fifty eight recommendations to address the issues he identified; targeted at government and local agencies. These include recommendations in respect of the independent chairing of the Serious Case Review process and about the relationship between the Local Safeguarding Children Board, the Lead Member and the Children's Trust.

The LGA held a conference on 25th March to enable discussion of the recommendations and this informed a response to DCSF. Lord Laming's report was welcomed but concern was expressed that the recommendations had not been costed. It was suggested that there needed to be joint work between local and central government to ensure that spending plans nationally support implementation. On the day that Lord Laming's report was published, the Government issued an immediate reply accepting the recommendations and announced the appointment of Sir Roger Singleton as Chief Adviser on the Safety of Children.

Key points from the response included:-

- Detail about the way in which the National Safeguarding Unit will work
- Proposals for a more rigorous inspection framework
- Strengthening of local leadership and accountability, by proposals in the Apprenticeships, Skills, Children and Learning Bill to strengthen the Children's Trust Board, publication of a set of national performance indicators in respect of safeguarding to inform statutory and local target setting by Children's Trusts, clarifying the respective roles of the LSCB and the Children's Trust, clarifying the respective responsibilities of the Director of Children's Services, the Lead Member for Children's Services, the Council Leader and the Chief Executive.
- Revision of Working Together
- Leadership programmes for Directors of Children's Services, development of a programme of intensive support and coaching for Team Managers
- Rapid research reviews to look at key practice issues such supporting decision making by frontline staff
- Issuing updated guidance on the use of the Common Assessment Framework (CAF)
- Intention to bring forward a programme of reform of the social work profession once the report of the Social Work Taskforce is published
- Accepting the Task Force's advice in respect of relaxing the national requirements in respect of the Integrated Children's System
- Allocate £57.8m to create a Social Work Transformation Fund to increase capacity to train and support social workers and implement change in the immediate term.
- Extend the Newly Qualified Social Worker pilot scheme to all newly qualified social workers from September 2009

Locally, Lord Laming's report had generated local discussion within agencies. The Stockton Local Safeguarding Children Board was to have a half-day workshop in June to consider the implications of the report for Stockton. The North Tees and Hartlepool Foundation Trust Safeguarding Steering Group had also held a preliminary discussion of the implications and there would be further work led by the Designated Nurse (Stockton on Tees Teaching PCT) and the Cross-Tees Safeguarding Group. It was

proposed that Cabinet receive a further report on the detailed implications for the Council locally in the near future.

RESOLVED that:-

1. Cabinet note Lord Laming's findings and recommendations and the response of the Secretary of State to these.

2. Cabinet receive a further report on the detailed implications for the Council of those recommendations which relate to the local authority.

3. Reasons for the Decision

The report considers the protection of the most vulnerable children in England and the key role that the Council plays is given considerable attention. It is therefore important to have time to fully consider the detailed implications of Lord Laming's recommendations because they could have significant impact: both in respect of the front line delivery of services but also on the way in which the council contributes to the leadership and scrutiny of the inter-agency working via the Local Safeguarding Children Board.

4. Alternative Options Considered and Rejected

None

5. Declared (Cabinet Member) Conflicts of Interest

None

6. Details of any Dispensations

Not Applicable

7. Date and Time by which Call In must be executed

By Midnight, Friday, 19th June 2009

Proper Officer  
16 June 2009