

REPORT FOR: CORPORATE PARENTING PANEL

Date of Meeting:	28 March 2011
Subject:	INFORMATION REPORT – Safeguarding Leaders' Meeting
Responsible Officer:	Catherine Doran, Corporate Director Children's Services
Exempt:	No
Enclosures:	Draft terms of reference leaders' quarterly safeguarding and performance meeting.

Section 1 – Summary

This report sets out new arrangements to ensure sound communications and support by leaders in the council around safeguarding Children. A forum has been created, led by the Leader of the Council.

FOR INFORMATION

Section 2 – Report

Statutory guidance in 2009, "*The roles and responsibilities of the Lead Member for Children's Services and Director of Children's Services*" set out the role of the Leader of the Council, Lead Members and Chief Officers in holding local safeguarding arrangements to account. In addition, the guidance set out the responsibility of the Leader of the Council, Lead Members and Chief Officers to take a proactive approach in order to more fully understand the safeguarding needs of children in the locality.

The statutory guidance states that the Lead Member for Children's Services should be a 'participant observer' of the Local Safeguarding Children's Board. The guidance states that this would serve to "*provide the Lead Member with the independence to challenge when necessary from a well informed position*" paragraph 2.17.

Being formally part of Local Safeguarding Children's Boards is seen by the guidance as a way of providing Lead Members with regular access to information that would help them to challenge and be satisfied on matters of performance, measurement and quality. In turn the Lead Member would be in a position to regularly update the Leader on analysis of this information and intelligence, identifying risks in the system that need attention and plans to address these.

In relation to the respective roles and responsibilities of Lead Member and Leader, the guidance also emphasises the following:

'...the LM [Lead Member] and DCS (Directors of children's services) have specific statutory responsibilities for providing political and professional leadership for promoting children and young people's wellbeing. These arrangements sit within the overall responsibilities of Leaders and Chief Executives to ensure that local authorities are well led, managed, accountable and effective. In this respect Leaders and Chief Executives should:

- *Monitor the performance respectively of the LM and DCS in securing better outcomes for children and young people;*
- *At least once a year report formally on their assessment of arrangements for safeguarding children;*
- *Provide support to the LM and DCS in the discharge of their responsibilities; and*
- *Support the LM and DCS in ensuring that children and young people's well-being is reflected in corporate and partnership working.'* - para 4.5

As a way of ensuring a strategic overview in Harrow, quarterly meetings, led by the leader of the Council and including the Lead Member Children's Services, the Chief Executive, the Corporate Director of Children's Services, the LA Divisional Director for Safeguarding and the independent chair of the LSCB have been set up to provide leadership, support and challenge around arrangements for safeguarding children in Harrow.

The specific aims of the meetings are:

- To fulfil the responsibilities and accountabilities of the Leader of the Council and the Chief executive in safeguarding children.
- To report to the Leader of the Council and the chief executive on safeguarding arrangements in Harrow, to ensure that safeguarding issues are raised, supported and led at the highest level.

Section 3 – Further Information

The Draft Terms of Reference as agreed are attached.

Section 4 – Financial Implications

There are no financial implications.

Section 5 – Corporate Priorities

The corporate priority is to improve support for vulnerable children and young people.

Name: Emma Stabler	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	on behalf of the Chief Financial Officer
Date: 17 March 2011		

Section 6 - Contact Details and Background Papers

Contact: Betty Lynch, Strategic Development manager, 0208 424 1370 (x2370)

Background Papers: Draft terms of reference attached.