

## Overview and Scrutiny Briefing Note

<b>Title</b>	<b>Briefing on feedback from the HSCB Section 11 Audit</b>		
<b>Report of the Head of</b>	<b>Community &amp; Leisure</b>		
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<b>Report to</b>	<b>Overview and Scrutiny Committee</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>September 2016</b>

### Briefing Summary

A report was presented to OSCOM on the 10<sup>th</sup> May 2016 to provide an update on the Councils safeguarding policies and procedures.

At this time, the annual Section 11 Audit requested by Hampshire Safeguarding Children Board (HSCB) was underway. This is a mechanism to self assess our compliance in relation to safeguarding legislation and guidance and is a requirement of the Board for all agencies that work with children to complete.

OSCOM requested a briefing be provided to them once we were in receipt of the findings of this audit by the HSCB.

This was received by the Chief Executive on the 26<sup>th</sup> August 2016. Test Valley Borough Council has been assessed as being broadly compliant with safeguarding children standards as outlined in Working Together 2015 (Section 11) with some areas requiring development.

### Main focus of the document

An extract from the HSCB feedback to the Test Valley Borough Council Section 11 audit stated the following:

#### Strengths

1. The Cabinet member has safeguarding children included in his / her job description and there is active engagement from the corporate director in the delivery of safeguarding training.
2. Quality Assurance includes specific reference to safeguarding.
3. The submission demonstrates good awareness of HSCB resources and training.
4. The Social Media Policy addresses customers' use of IT.
5. Good engagement with the Serious Case Review process via attendance at the HSCB Serious Case Review Committee.

6. CSE training planned for taxi drivers and counsellors.
7. Clear processes in place regarding allegations of abuse and reference to LADO is made within the safeguarding policy.
8. Proactive checks made with Children's Services to establish whether 16-21 year olds who become homeless are looked after or care leavers.
9. The council requested that the leisure provider complete a Section 11 self-assessment, which has been submitted to HSCB. This is positive and the findings could be shared with other Boroughs / Districts with similar arrangements.
10. Safeguarding children will be included within the new leisure contract when issued.
11. The Newsletter to Litter Pickers is positive and the Board would be interested in receiving an update including any impact on practice / referrals.

### **Areas for Improvement**

1. The panel queried the resilience of channelling concerns via the safeguarding lead in all cases. A wider group of staff should feel confident in being able to report concerns to Children's Services directly.
2. Best practice would suggest a specific safeguarding statement within job descriptions for all staff.
3. The mechanism for staff raising concerns was not explicitly stated; therefore, the panel could not access whether it enables staff to follow the Whistle Blowing policy.
4. The panel felt there was a distinct lack of information provided to make any assessment of how the needs of disabled children are addressed.

Officers are generally content that the policies and procedures that we have in place are satisfactory to meet our safeguarding requirements. The Section 11 audit is a standard set of questions that all organisations, statutory or voluntary, who work with children are required to complete. It is therefore important to understand that as TVBC is not a front facing childrens service, there will be areas in which any suggested improvements are not feasible within our safeguarding remit.

### **TVBC response to the areas suggested for improvement:**

1. Our procedure is that a safeguarding referral is made by a member of staff using a secure form which is submitted to the Safeguarding Team comprising of 7 officers, not just the safeguarding lead. In this way, there will always be at least one person who can pick up the concern and advise the member of staff on course of action and support them to make the referral into the correct organisation. We have taken the decision to channel our referrals in this way as we would rather staff have some support to ensure they do follow up on a concern rather than ignore it because they feel nervous about what to do. Staff who are used to dealing with safeguarding matters, such as Housing and Community Engagement Officers will report concerns directly but also complete a referral form. This enables us to maintain accurate and secure records of safeguarding concerns. Our reporting process will remain the same.

2. The recommendation to put a statement regarding safeguarding on all employees job descriptions has been raised in previous Section 11 audits by the HSCB. In response it is suggested that we will not make blanket changes to all staff job descriptions to incorporate safeguarding as this is not a requirement in all roles, instead it is included in appropriate roles only. The importance of safeguarding and the role everyone has to play is covered during the induction process. This was reflected in the audit return and therefore no changes are proposed to the job descriptions.
3. The Whistle Blowing Policy is available to all staff to highlight concerns of internal mismanagement, illegal or fraudulent activity which could include a concern regarding safeguarding relating to a colleague (either as a perpetrator or a victim). The procedure for using the policy is promoted to staff covered during induction training and can be found on the staff intranet and is self explanatory. This will be clarified with the HSCB.
4. As a result of previous feedback from the HSCB on our response to disabled children, we have increased the information available to staff, included the higher risk children with a disability face on the training and promoted courses and awareness on this to key staff. We will be asking the HSCB for further guidance on what they consider we should and could be doing for this group.

#### **Proposed Outcomes for consideration**

A response will be sent to the HSCB outlining our comments on this feedback and highlighting areas where we are limited in our remit so can not make significant improvements and also asking for their input to help us improve our service provision, namely in regard to disabled children.

A representative from the HSCB will attend the next meeting of the Hampshire Safeguarding Lead Officers group to discuss the findings of the Section 11 audit across all councils. This will also be an opportunity to explore how we can work with the HSCB for future audits to provide them with a better understanding of our role to provide a more service focused approach to the Section 11 audit.

#### Confidentiality

It is considered that this report does not contain exempt information within the meaning of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972, as amended, and can be made public.

No of Annexes:	
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