

MUNICIPAL YEAR 2014/2015 REPORT NO. **206**

MEETING TITLE AND DATE:
Council– 25th March 2015

REPORT OF:
Director of Schools and Children's
Services

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Agenda – Part: 1	Item: 9
Subject: Child Sexual Exploitation and Associated Risks to Children & Young People Task Group – Terms of Reference Wards: All	
Cabinet Member consulted: n/a	

1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1 Following the decision taken at Council on 25th February 2015, this report presents to Council the terms of reference for the Task Group set up to focus on Child Sexual Exploitation and Associated Risks to Young People.
- 1.2 The aim of the Task Group is to further strengthen the robust governance and political oversight of safeguarding to vulnerable children and young people.
- 1.3 The Task Group will report to full Council twice a year.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

Council is asked to approve the Terms of Reference for the Task Group, as detailed in Appendix 1 of the report.

3. BACKGROUND

- 3.1 Following on from the recent events and publication of the reports concerning child sexual exploitation in Rotherham, Enfield Council considered its own arrangements for political oversight and challenge in relation to safeguarding vulnerable young people at similar risk in the borough, at Cabinet on 11th February 2015.
- 3.2 The report to Cabinet outlined the content and key findings of the report produced by the Government's investigation team, led by Louise Casey, into Rotherham Council and range of governance measures in place across the Council to provide oversight in relation to the safeguarding of vulnerable children and young people.
- 3.3 The report also highlighted the increased OFSTED emphasis, under their inspection framework for services to children, arising from the key challenges

identified within the Rotherham report in terms of the need to ensure challenge, knowledge, understanding and scrutiny at the highest level within Councils around safeguarding. As a result Cabinet were asked to consider:

- (a) further strengthening the Council's scrutiny focus on children and young people by recommending that Overview & Scrutiny Committee include a standing item on their agenda regarding children and young people's issues; and
- (b) recommending to Council the establishment of a specialist dedicated Task Group with a strong focus on Child Sexual Exploitation and associated risks for children and young people.

3.4 These proposals were agreed by Cabinet, on the basis of them supporting a systematic and focussed approach at the highest level within the organisation towards the drive for continued improvement in relation to the support and improved outcomes for vulnerable children.

3.5 The report was then referred on to Council for consideration on 25th February 2015. Council agreed to:

- (a) the establishment of the specialist dedicated Task Group, comprised of 6 Members (split 4:2 in order to comply with the proportionality requirements), with names to be notified by each Group.
- (b) that the detailed terms of reference and working arrangements for the Task Group would be subject to further consideration by the Group itself, and would then be reported back to Council for formal approval.
- (c) That the Task Group would report on its work to Council on a bi-annual basis along with any recommendation on tackling on Child Sexual Exploitation and the associated risks for children and young people.

3.6 Following consultation with both Groups, it has been agreed that membership of the Task Group should be drawn from non -Executive Members with its detailed remit based around the proposed Terms of Reference, as set out in Appendix 1. In order to enable the Task Group to start meeting formally, Council is being asked to consider and agree the attached Terms of Reference and operating arrangements.

4. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED

None.

5. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

The intention underpinning the recommendations and the establishment of the Task Group is for the continuous drive for improvement by the Council and its partners in relation to the support and improved outcomes for vulnerable children.

6. COMMENTS OF THE DIRECTOR OF FINANCE, RESOURCES AND CUSTOMER SERVICES AND OTHER DEPARTMENTS

6.1 Financial Implications

The financial implications are considered to be minimal and affordable within the medium term financial plan. This will be reviewed regularly. The cost of administering and supporting the Task Group will be contained within existing resources.

6.2 Legal Implications

6.2.1 Section 101 (1) (a) of the Local Government Act 1972 permits a local authority to 'arrange for the discharge of any of their functions by a committee or a sub-committee...of the authority'.

6.2.2 Schedule 2 paragraph 4 (1) of the Children Act 1989 requires every local authority to take reasonable steps, through the provision of services under Part III of the Children Act 1989, to prevent children in their area suffering ill-treatment or neglect.

6.2.3 The proposals set out in this report comply with the above provisions.

6.3 Property Implications

None

7. KEY RISKS

The recent and alarming issues highlighted in the two key child safeguarding reports since 2012 investigating the events in Rotherham, have evidenced the level and nature of risk faced should focus on this issue be lacking or unsystematic.

8. IMPACT ON COUNCIL PRIORITIES

8.1 Fairness for All, Growth and Sustainability & Strong Communities

A further strengthening of the focus on Child Sexual Exploitation through the Task Group described within this proposal would ensure that all 3 of the councils' key aims are addressed and that the corresponding 9 objectives within the Children and Young People's Plan, shared by the Council and its partner agencies, are treated with rigour and challenge from the heart of the political leadership through to the front line service delivery.

9. EQUALITIES IMPACT IMPLICATIONS

A full equalities impact assessment will be carried out during the creation of the Task Group.

10. PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT IMPLICATIONS

The intention underpinning this proposal is to support the continuous drive for improvement by the Council and its partners in relation to the support and improved outcomes for vulnerable children.

11. PUBLIC HEALTH IMPLICATIONS

This proposal will also ensure that measures to improve the health and wellbeing of children and families will be further challenged through the scrutiny function. This proposal will further strengthen measures in the borough to prevent the sexual exploitation of children.

Background Papers: None

Child Sexual Exploitation and Associated Risks to Children and Young People Task Group

Terms of Reference

1. Task Group Composition:

- 1.1 To be in accordance with political proportionality the group is composed of 6 Members, comprising 4 Members of the Labour Group and 2 of the Conservative Group to be drawn from the non-executive element of the Council.
- 1.2 The Chair to be elected at the first meeting of the Task Group from within the group membership.
- 1.3 The Director of Schools and Children's Services, or their representative(s), will be in attendance at all meetings of the Task Group.
- 1.4 The Cabinet Member for Education, Children's Services & Protection will be invited to attend all meetings of the Task Group as the relevant lead member and in order to present reports or respond to requests for information.
- 1.5 The Group will also be able to invite any other councillors, officers, specialists, commissioning or delivery partners to attend meetings as required for specific items.
- 1.6 Support to the group will be provided by the Democratic Services Team.

2. Quorum:

The Quorum for the Task Group is 3 Members

3. Purpose and Role of Group

- 3.1 To review and scrutinise all matters relating to Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) and Associated Risks for Children and Young People. This to include:
 - Monitor and evaluate the performance of relevant services and functions in relation to both the prevention of and interventions to address CSE and associated risks for children and young people.
 - Review the efficiency of services, functions and outcomes relating to CSE and associated risks for children and young people
 - Consideration of relevant legislation in regard to CSE and the associated risks to young people.
- 3.2 To make recommendations and report directly to full Council and Cabinet, taking an independent leadership role in Enfield Council's aim of continuous improvement in the performance of its tasks, functions, policies and resources as they relate to CSE and associated risks to children and young people.
- 3.3 To publish an annual report of its work for Council.

3.4 Regular updates from appropriate officers and specialists in relation to the associated work of the Children's Safeguarding Board, Multi-Agency Sexual Exploitation Group (MASE), Young Runaways and Children Missing from Care, Home and Education.

4. Frequency:

4.1 Task group to meet every 3 months (4 times per year) with any additional meetings deemed necessary being arranged on an ad hoc basis as appropriate.

4.2 The Task Group will present reports twice a year to full Council.

5. Conduct of Meetings

5.1 All meetings of the Task Group will operate in accordance with the requirements of the Access to Information Act, including provision for the consideration of exempt or confidential information where the principles of the relevant Access to Information provisions apply.

5.2 The Task Group meetings may on occasions consider highly sensitive confidential information. The meetings will be subject to the Data Protection Act 1998, rules around exempt information as defined by the Local Government (Access to Information) (Variation) Order 2006 and the Local Government Act 1972 excluding press and public from meetings and other legislation as relevant.

5.3 Each member of the Group will have one vote and decisions will be made on the basis of a simple majority, with the chair having a casting vote (if required).

5.4 The Group will review its purpose and function on an annual basis.