

DUNDEE CITY COUNCIL

REPORT TO: POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE - 12TH JANUARY 2009

REPORT ON: CHILD PROTECTION IN DUNDEE - CHIEF OFFICERS MEETINGS

REPORT BY: CHIEF EXECUTIVE

REPORT NO: 19 - 2009

1.0 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

This report seeks committee approval for plans to enhance and strengthen governance arrangements in relation to the multi-agency management of child protection in Dundee.

2.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that members of the Policy and Resources Committee:

- 2.1 note the content of the report;
- 2.2 instruct the Chief Executive to develop enhanced governance arrangements in respect of child protection and to report back on the details of these arrangements to Committee; and
- 2.3 instruct the Director of Social Work to extend these interim governance arrangements, in the longer term, to include adult protection, domestic abuse and Multi Agency Public Protection Arrangements (MAPPA).

3.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no financial implications in relation to this report.

4.0 MAIN TEXT

4.1 Background

4.1.1 Although all elected members and many senior officers and officers of Dundee City Council have roles to play in relation to the care and protection of children and young people in the City, certain officers have key responsibilities. These include the Chief Executive of the Council, the Chair of the Children and Young Person's Protection Committee (CYPPC), the Lead Officer of the CYPPC and the Director of Social Work, as the Chief Social Work Officer (Report 617-2008).

4.1.2 In 2005, the Scottish Executive published guidance entitled 'Protecting Children and Young People: Child Protection Committees'. This guidance states that the Chief Executive of the local authority will ensure that Chief Officers - including the Chief Constable and the local NHS Chief Executive - work together and assume leadership roles in the area of child protection. The decision whether or not to set up a bespoke forum or integrate this activity into other structures which already existed was left to local authorities. At that time a decision was made in Dundee to have the Chief Officers meet annually with the CYPPC, to agree the annual report of the committee, along with its business plan for the following year.

4.1.3 In addition Integrated Children Services is a cross-cutting theme of the Council Community Plan, developed through the work of Dundee Partnership, which is chaired by the Chief Executive of the Council. The Assistant Chief Executive chairs the Integrated Children's Services Strategic Planning Group and the Integrated Children's Services Implementation Group. These are key multi-agency strategic planning and decision-making fora, attended by senior officers, which report back through existing structures to the Chief Executive of Dundee City Council, the Chief Constable of Tayside and the Chief Executive of NHS Tayside. The CYPPC is a theme group within this overall strategic planning structure and, as a result, child care and protection business is also discussed and scrutinised through these partnership fora.

4.2 **Establishing a Chief Officers Group**

4.2.1 Given the increasing complexity of the work involved in the care and protection of children and young people and its multi-agency nature, it is now considered that there is a need to enhance and strengthen partnership governance arrangements. This includes the need to establish more regular strategic scrutiny meetings of Chief Officers, which also involve the Chair of CYPPC, the Lead Officer (CYPPC) and the Director of Social Work, as the Chief Social Work Officer.

4.2.2 It is suggested that:

- the Chief Executive, Dundee City Council, the Chief Constable of Tayside and the Chief Executive of NHS Tayside should meet at least three times per year, or more frequently as necessary. For example an additional meeting may be called where it becomes necessary to consider the content of a Significant Case Review.
- the Chief Executive, the Chair of CYPPC, the Lead Officer (CYPPC) and the Director of Social Work, as the Chief Social Work Officer, should meet in advance of any meeting of the Chief Officers Group.
- the Chief Executive, the Chair of CYPPC, the Lead Officer (CYPPC) and the Director of Social Work, as the Chief Social Work Officer, should meet twice yearly with the leader of administration and the Convenor of Social Work and Health

4.2.4 It is proposed that in Dundee, the Chief Officers, working together would have roles and responsibilities which would include the need to:

- individually and collectively demonstrate leadership and accountability for child protection work and its effectiveness on behalf of their agencies - including the effectiveness of the CYPPC itself;
- agree and endorse an annual report and business plan of the CYPPC;
- ensure that the CYPPC has a set of key shared objectives, an integrated action plan and a performance reporting framework;
- oversee the implementation of the action plan, including operational priorities for protecting children, and allocate resources to the CYPPC;
- ensure that the child protection committee links to other planning fora, most notably Dundee Partnership and its Integrated Children's Services planning processes;
- regularly consider a child protection data set of management information and performance reports linked to the Single Outcome Agreement; and
- agree reporting mechanisms with elected members and board members that cover the work of the CYPPC.

4.2.5 This list is neither exhaustive nor wholly new but is likely to provide the framework for the agendas and work of the Chief Officers Group.

4.3 **Beyond Child Protection**

This report focuses on the need to establish a Chief Officers Group in relation to the protection of children and young people in the City. It is also recognised that the Chief Officers, along with some others, have a key role to play in the wider agenda of protecting people. It is suggested that the Director of Social Work be asked to develop a proposal for the extension of the responsibilities of a Chief Officers Group to include the needs of people affected by adult protection, domestic abuse and the Multi Agency Public Protection Arrangements (MAPPA).

5.0 **POLICY IMPLICATIONS**

This report has been screened for any policy implications in respect of Sustainability, Strategic Environmental, Anti-Poverty, Equality Impact Assessment and Risk Management.

There are no major issues.

7.0 **CONSULTATIONS**

The Chief Executive, Depute Chief Executive (Support Services), Depute Chief Executive (Finance) and Head of Finance have been consulted in preparation of this report.

8.0 **BACKGROUND PAPERS**

None.

Alex Stephen
Chief Executive
Date: 9th December 2008