

# CABINET

## MINUTES AND DECISION RECORD

20 AUGUST 2012

The meeting commenced at 9.30 am in the Civic Centre, Hartlepool

**Present:**

The Mayor, Stuart Drummond - In the Chair

Councillors: Cath Hill (Children's and Community Services Portfolio Holder)  
John Lauderdale (Adults and Public Health Services Portfolio Holder)  
Paul Thompson (Finance and Corporate Services Portfolio Holder)

Also Present: Malcolm Walker – Mayor's Advisory Panel

Officers: Nicola Bailey, Acting Chief Executive  
Andrew Atkin, Assistant Chief Executive,  
Kate McCusker, Commercial Solicitor  
Dave Stubbs, Director of Regeneration and Neighbourhoods  
Jill Harrison, Assistant Director, Adult Social Care  
Alastair Rae, Public Relations Manager  
David Cosgrove, Democratic Services Team

**54. Apologies for Absence**

John Maddison – Mayor's Advisory Panel.

**55. Declarations of interest by Members**

None.

**56. Minutes of the meeting held on 6 August 2012**

Confirmed.

**57. Annual Report and Business Plan of the Hartlepool Safeguarding Children Board 2011-2012** (*Director of Children and Adult Services*)

**Type of decision**

None – for information only.

### **Purpose of report**

To inform Cabinet of the publication of the Annual Report and Business Plan of the Hartlepool Safeguarding Children Board.

### **Issue(s) for consideration by Cabinet**

The Assistant Director, Adult Social Care reported that Hartlepool Safeguarding Children Board had produced and published a annual report each year since 2008. Each had reported positive progress in meeting the outcomes set the previous year. The report consisted of three parts:

- The Annual Report for 2011 – 12;
- A Performance Book in which there is a comprehensive set of data and reports that support the conclusions contained in the Annual Report; and
- The Business Plan for 2012 – 13.

The Annual report published in 2011 confirmed the following priorities for the work of the Board during 2011-2012:

- Children and young people live in households where they are properly cared for, all of their needs are met and they are free from the impact of neglect.
- Children and young people live free from the impact of Domestic Violence
- Adolescents in Hartlepool are supported to make safer choices and are safeguarded from significant harm
- Children and young people safely access and use existing and emerging technologies to aid their enjoyment and achievement.
- Staff working with children and young people are suitably trained to meet their needs.

In her Forward, the Independent Chair of the Board thanked staff of all of the agencies who had worked hard during the year to help the board achieve its overall objective that Children Live Safely In Hartlepool.

In relation to children within the child protection system and in common with the national trend, there had been an increase in the number who had become subject of a protection plan. Those aged up to nine continued to constitute the majority on a plan – although there had been an increase in the number of teenagers this year. Neglect was still by far the most common category at 81%. There had been a slight rise in children becoming subject to a plan for a second or subsequent time during this year but as part of a downward trend.

The analysis of local safeguarding activity concluded on page 17 of the Performance Book that:

“Overall, the information contained in this report supports the assertion that agencies are safeguarding the children of Hartlepool and the Board is

fulfilling its responsibility for this aspect of the role.”

In setting priorities for the forthcoming year the Board, at its development day decided to retain the existing priorities for next year, 2012 - 2013, given the large agenda associated with those issues.

The Mayor commented that the increase in the number of children being subject to a care plan wasn't necessarily a bad thing as it showed that those children were being identified and brought into the system. The Assistant Director agreed and commented that along with adult safeguarding, increased awareness was leading to an increase in referrals.

The increasing trend in referrals related to neglect was questioned and whether any specific work was being done to identify the underlying causes. The Assistant Director commented that that the Board received regular reports regarding referrals and undertook audits to identify trends and underlying causes. It was also highlighted that the high proportion of referrals relating to neglect had been a trend over the past few years, and was common to other local authorities in the region.

A Cabinet Member expressed concern that with the on-going austerity measures and the forthcoming reductions in council tax support and other benefits, many families could find themselves in difficulty that may have an effect on on-going referral numbers and it was important that such triggers were clearly identified. The Acting Chief Executive supported the comment but did feel that neglect was a systemic issue with many key factors including domestic violence and substance and alcohol abuse. The northeast had higher than average levels of neglected children and this was something that needed to be tackled by all agencies. The Association of Northeast Councils (ANEC) was undertaking some statistical analysis to support this work.

### **Decision**

That the Annual report and Business Plan of the Hartlepool Safeguarding Children Board be received by Cabinet.

The meeting concluded at 9.40 a.m.

**P J DEVLIN**

**CHIEF SOLICITOR**

**PUBLICATION DATE: 21 AUGUST 2012**