

HIGHLAND CHILD PROTECTION COMMITTEE

Minute of meeting held on 23rd June 2009, Committee Room 2, Highland Council HQ, INVERNESS

Present:

Mr Alistair Dodds, Chief Executive, HC
Mr Ian Latimer, Chief Constable, Northern Constabulary
Ms Harriet Dempster, Director of Social Work, HC
Ms Jan Baird, Director of Community Care, NHS Highland
Mr Hugh Fraser Director of Education Culture & Sport, HC
Mr Andrew Laing, Procurator Fiscal
Ms Fiona Malcolm, Solicitor, Highland Council
Detective Superintendent Ralph Noble
Ms Marj Stewart, GIRFEC Lead (By invitation)
Ms Pene Rowe, CP Development Officer, HCPC

Apologies:

Mr Roger Gibbins, NHS Highland
Mr Tom Boyd, Authority Reporter, Highland SCRA
Mr Steve Barron – Director of Housing and Property
Mr Bill Alexander, Head of Children’s Services, HC&NHS
Ms Rhona Morrison, Chair of the Children’s Panel
Mr Ken Ross, Vice Chair Children’s Panel
Mr Stewart Fraser, Legal Manager, Highland Council

	Item	Summary of Discussion	Action Required
1.	Welcome and Apologies	Apologies were noted.	
2.	Minutes of 31st March 2009	Given the intention that this should be a special meeting to discuss Public Protection and urgent business only, it was agreed to defer the minutes of the previous meeting and non-urgent matters arising to the September meeting.	
3.	Matters Arising	There were no urgent matters arising other than the items on the agenda.	
4.	Public Protection and Governance Issues	<p>It was noted that the review of partnership around Public Protection issues, in January, had raised issues of accountability and parity of Chief Officer representation.</p> <p>Subsequently a working group consisting of Bill Alexander, Jan Baird and Ralph Noble had carried out a review of structures and governance issues.</p>	

This resulted in the recommendation that a 3 tier approach be considered.

- Tier 1 – A Leadership group, ‘Safer Highland’, consisting of the 3 Chief Officers, the Procurator Fiscal and the chairs of the tier 2 strategy groups. This group would oversee consistency and progress, feeding back to partner organisations, e.g Highland Council.

- Tier 2 – 6 Strategy groups:
 - Child Protection
 - Adult Support and Protection
 - Violence Against Women
 - Substance Misuse
 - MAPPA
 - Youth Justice

These would have members of sufficiently seniority to influence activity. Each group would be sponsored by a Chief Officer as follows:

Alistair Dodds – CP and YJ

Roger Gibbins – VAW and ASP

Ian Latimer – SM and MAPPA

- Tier 3 – Delivery groups. These would consist of Lead officers and senior staff who could act in an advisory capacity and implement the action plan.

In addition to the Chief Officer sponsorship, there may be a case for political champions akin to the 3 children’s champions across the Highland Council or similar champions in partner agencies.

The working group will also consider how to make best use of existing support staff, taking into consideration key strengths and skills mix, and will map any gaps in support provision.

	<p>Discussion: There followed a detailed discussion which considered the likely impact on the CPC. It was agreed that membership of the CPC would need to be reviewed and comments fed back to the Leadership group.</p> <p>Mr Latimer reported that he was very supportive of the proposed restructuring and had met with the chair of the DAAT to discuss direction of travel. The CPC is being viewed as the model. However, Mr Latimer went on to note that the CPC should be careful not to lose focus in light of the forthcoming inspection. Although DS Noble will sit on the restructured CPC, Mr Latimer will continue to attend in a voluntary capacity until the inspection.</p> <p>Mr Laing suggested that the Leadership group would need to consider how they would engage with the public and with key workers, to explain what this restructuring will mean for them?</p> <p>Some concern was expressed that the Joint Community Safety Tasking Group was not included in the structure. It was, however, felt that Domestic Abuse against Males, Race Crime and Anti-social Behaviour groups were well established and, whilst they need to dove-tail with the new structure they do not need to be absorbed into it. The JCSTG is a tactical delivery group working at operational level.</p> <p>Mr Dodds noted that there will be a need to coordinate across the council. It was agreed that he would ask Karen McDermid to take this issue forward.</p> <p>The meeting went on to discuss the current remit of the CPC and agreed the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The future remit of the CPC needs to be firmly set within the GIRFEC framework. • In addition to having a Chief Officer sponsor, the other Chief Officers should be ex-officio members of the CPC. • The Youth Convener should be invited to become a member. • The idea of a junior CPC was mooted but, on reflection, it was decided that Highland Youth Voice should be able to serve this purpose. • The CPC membership should include a clinician – the lead paediatrician. • Rather than having tokenistic representation from the voluntary sector at the strategic level there should be consideration of how best to encourage contributions at the delivery level. This should be reviewed regularly. 	<p>AD</p> <p>AD</p> <p>JB to discuss with RG</p>
--	---	---

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The CP Development Officer should remain on the CPC in an advisory capacity. • There is a need to review the communications strategy, in terms of both staff and the public, and to decide how the CPC should report into governance procedures. • The Chief Officers should produce a joint paper to the Police Board, Health Board and The Highland Council to explain the rationale for the changes and the timing. • The emphasis should be on bringing together the work of the 6 strategic groups so that any gaps between them are closed. <p>Mr Dodds asked that Ms Rowe and Mr Alexander assist him to populate the template for the restructuring.</p>	<p>AD/IL/RG</p> <p>BA/PR to discuss draft with AD</p>
5.	<p>AOB:</p> <p>i) Self Evaluation for Corporate Parenting</p> <p>ii) MARS</p> <p>iii) HMle Link Inspector</p> <p>iv) Swine Flu - contingency planning</p>	<p>On 17th June the Scottish Government published a framework for self-assessment for corporate parenting. This can be found at: http://www.hmie.gov.uk/documents/publication/ischgiocp.html It is not yet known whether the HMIE Child Protection Inspection will touch on this.</p> <p>A letter had been received from Beth Smith, the newly appointed Director of the Multi Agency Resource Service (MARS – established in response to recommendation 27 of the Eilean Siar SCR), requesting an opportunity to meet with the CPC. It was agreed that she should be invited to the September CPC.</p> <p>The CPC has been informed that Kevin Mitchell will be the HMle inspector assigned to Highland as link inspector. In view of the forthcoming inspection it was recommended that a meeting be arranged with Kevin in August, if at all possible.</p> <p>Ms Baird raised the issue of contingency planning for child protection cover in the event that a swine flu epidemic impacts on specialist staffing. NHS Highland is in the process of producing a contingency plan. Mr Dodds reported that he had checked the corporate plan on the previous day and could confirm that child protection had been included. Mr Latimer reported that he would be chairing a meeting with Police and Scottish Government representatives at the end of the week to consider key priorities in the event of a pandemic.</p>	<p>PR to draft invite.</p> <p>PR to draft invite.</p>
11.	Date of Next Meeting	29th September 2009 at 3pm-5pm, Committee Room 2, Council Headquarters, INVERNESS	

LT/ML