

# Subject: Safeguarding

Report to: Police and Crime Committee

Report of: Executive Director of Secretariat

Date: 30 January 2014

This report will be considered in public

## 1. Summary

- 1.1 This report provides background information for the establishment of the Police and Crime Committee's Safeguarding Working Group. This Group will gather evidence on behalf of the London Assembly Police and Crime Committee for use in its investigation into safeguarding.

## 2. Recommendations

- 2.1 **That the Committee agrees to establish an investigation into Safeguarding, as set out in the attached scoping report, and establish a Working Group to gather evidence on behalf of the Committee, as set out in paragraph 4.3.**
- 2.2 **That the Committee agrees the Membership and a Chair of the Safeguarding Working Group.**
- 2.3 **That the Committee agrees to convene meetings of the Working Group on 13 February and 13 March 2014, in place of the scheduled full Police and Crime Committee meetings on those dates.**

## 3. Background

- 3.1 Safeguarding children is everyone's responsibility. As defined by the Department for Education, it includes: protecting children from maltreatment; preventing impairment of children's health or development; ensuring that children grow up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care; and taking action to enable children to have the best outcomes.<sup>1</sup>
- 3.2 Children are best protected when professionals are clear about what is required of them individually and how they need to work together. The police have an essential role to play in the identification and protection of children at risk and have a responsibility to share information with other agencies. Section 11 of the Children's Act 2004 states that each police authority (now the Mayor's Office for Policing and Crime in London – MOPAC) and chief police officer of each police force must make sure that they protect and promote the welfare of children.
- 3.3 MOPAC has a legal responsibility to hold the Met to account for duties in relation to safeguarding children. The Police Reform and Social Responsibility Act 2011 states: 'The police and crime

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<sup>1</sup> Department for Education (March 2013) [Working together to safeguard children](#)

commissioner must, in particular, hold the chief constable to account for the exercise of duties in relation to the safeguarding of children and the promotion of child welfare that are imposed on the chief constable by sections 10 and 11 of the Children Act 2004.<sup>2</sup>

## 4. Issues for Consideration

4.1 It is proposed that the Police and Crime Committee undertake an investigation to examine the Met's approach to safeguarding following high profile cases and reviews, such as The Munro Review of Child Protection (2011).<sup>3</sup> It will examine the structural changes that have taken place in the Met, including the establishment of the Sexual Offences, Exploitation and Child Abuse command (SOECA) in June 2013, and assess the early findings from the roll out of MASH (multi-agency safeguarding hubs) in London. The investigation will also look at specific examples of abuse such as female genital mutilation (FGM), domestic violence and child sexual exploitation. A full scoping document for the investigation is attached to this report as appendix 1.

4.2 The investigation's proposed terms of reference are:

- To examine the Met's approach to safeguarding and how they engage with key partners.
- To assess the level of Met resources available to tackle child abuse.
- To evaluate MOPAC's strategic oversight.
- To establish what more the Met and MOPAC could do to ensure their approach fully supports children at risk and reflects best practice.

### Working Group

4.3 It is proposed that the Committee should establish a Safeguarding Working Group to gather evidence on its behalf. The Safeguarding Working Group would report its findings to the Police and Crime Committee which may then make recommendations to the Mayor's Office for Policing and Crime and/or the Met. The PCC can establish working groups (non-decision making bodies) by using its subsidiary powers under section 34(1) of the GLA Act 1999, as applied to the PCC by virtue of the Police Reform and Social Responsibility Act 2011. And, accordingly, standing order 9.1H allows the PCC to '*appoint informal groups of its members...to make recommendations back to the Committee*'

4.4 The term of reference for the Safeguarding Working Group would be as follows:

- To gather evidence on behalf of the Police and Crime Committee in relation to the Met's approach to safeguarding children in London and report back to the Committee which may then make recommendations on this issue.

## 5. Legal Implications

5.1 The Police and Crime Committee has the power to do what is recommended in this report.

## 6. Financial Implications

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<sup>2</sup> [Police Reform and Social Responsibility Act 2011](#)

<sup>3</sup> Department of Education (2011) [The Munro Review of Child Protection](#)

6.1 There are no financial implications arising directly from this report.

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<b>Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985</b>
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List of Background Papers: There are none.
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