1. **Purpose of the report**

Scrutiny are asked to note and comment on the contents of the report.

2. **Links to the Royal Greenwich high level objectives**

2.1 This report relates to the Council’s agreed high level objectives as follows:

- Support and protect children and families in need

3. **Introduction and Background**

3.1 In February 2018 Ofsted, CQC, HMICFRS and HMI Probation undertook a Joint Targeted Area Inspection (JTAI) of the multi-agency response to children who go missing, who are at risk of child sexual exploitation and who are at risk of criminal and other forms of exploitation through gangs. The subsequent report stated:

“There is strong partnership working in Greenwich and a shared commitment to improving services to all children at risk of harm. Strategic arrangements for the management and oversight of the multi-agency response to children who go missing and are at risk of exploitation are well developed.”

3.2 The JTAI identified areas of practice strength which included:

- Strong partnership and shared commitment from all partner agencies to work together and improve outcomes for this cohort of children.
- Strategic arrangements for the management and oversight of the multi-agency response to children who go missing and are at risk of exploitation are well developed.
- High profile work leads to increased investment and development of new and innovative approaches such as GRASP.
• Effective GSCB and good links across strategic boards.
• Evidence of impact from the activity of the GSCB – section 11 audits, multi-agency deep dive, challenge, influence, learning through training and awareness raising.
• Practitioners in the MASH are confident and knowledgeable about their area of business and support staff across the partnership by delivering training and development sessions.
• Effective Preventative Work through VOCU training sessions in school, community safety and YOT, VCS. Organisations understand thresholds and know how to make referrals to MASH and Early Help services.
• Calm and reflective approach to leadership in children’s social care and a commitment to learning and developing child focused practice.
• Performance management and a wide range of audit activities are well embedded leading to the identification of areas for improvement and action plans to address the issues.
• Children's views are well captured and help inform planning.
• Political support has ensured that resources for children’s services are protected.
• Clear commitment from the local police to developing a resilient and coordinated structure in which to safeguard children.
• Strong commitment by health leaders contributing to the work of GSCB and local strategic groups.
• Public health commissioners have made good progress in ensuring that front line services meet needs.
• A strong YOS with staff who understand that building trusting and meaningful relationships is especially important with this group of children.

3.3 The JTAI also identified areas for further development which included:

• The understanding and response to risk is variable across all of the agencies and for some children not sufficiently explored or known because information sharing is not robust enough.
• When a new concern is referred to social care about a child whose case is already open it is not always prioritised to lead to a timely response.
• Not all assessments include enough analysis of historic factors or multi-agency information or sufficient analysis of the complex and dynamic nature of children’s needs and the impact on children and their families.
• Multi-agency plans do not always evidence a strong enough grip or focus to allow services keep pace with changing events in a young person’s life.
The MPS have a pan London profile however locally there is a lack of analytical capability and currently no local police profile in relation to children going missing and child sexual exploitation.

The contribution of health staff to operational meetings was less effective than strategic meetings.

Low level of referrals from community health services reflect that there is no specific emphasis on exploitation as a significant priority area.

The GSCB could strengthen its work by evidencing the impact and outcomes of the work is has done so far and by having specific priorities for individual members and for sub groups to include timescales.

3.4 See appendix A for the full report.

3.5 A multi-agency workshop was held to develop these findings into a JTAI Action Plan. See appendix B.

3.6 The Multi-Agency Action Plan was submitted to Ofsted in July and is being progressed and is monitored by the Strategic Multi-Agency Child Exploitation Group. (SMACE)

3.7 The plan was last reviewed and updated in September 2018. The plan is scheduled for further review by SMACE in January 2019.

3.8 In November 2018, OFSTED published their report on the findings of the three JTAIs completed in Dorset, Southend-on-Sea and Royal Greenwich. “Protecting children from criminal exploitation, human trafficking and modern slavery” See appendix C. The report identified good practice and many of these examples were from the practice they saw in Royal Greenwich. The report concluded that:

- All children are vulnerable to exploitation, not just specific groups.
- Children’s needs and safety must come first. Well-trained practitioners need to respond to the range of risks they face and ‘stay with’ the child.
- Not all agencies in local areas are sharing their intelligence to enable them to recognise, understand and respond to the risks of exploitation to children.
- Agencies should learn from, and build on, successful multi-agency work to respond to child sexual exploitation while also developing best practice on wider exploitation.
The GSCB Multi-Agency Action Plan has actions to address all of these findings that are already being progressed.

4. **Summary of progress to date**

4.1 The Strategic Multi-Agency Child Exploitation (SMACE) group has met monthly. Terms of reference and membership have been agreed. The group is co-chaired by the Senior Assistant Director for Children’s Social Care and the Police. There was some initial drift in progressing the SMACE due to several changes in Police leadership and a change in leadership in Children’s Social Care. However, the group is now functioning well with good attendance and commitment from all partners.

4.2 The SMACE is a strategic partnership group which is responsible for working collaboratively to ensure a tactical response to Child Exploitation including child sexual exploitation (CSE), criminal exploitation, missing, county lines, gangs and modern day slavery. The group focuses on the prevention, intervention, diversion and disruption and monitors the progress of the Joint Targeted Area Inspection (JTAI) action plan in order to reduce the impact and risk of child exploitation across the community.

4.3 Actions from the JTAI Action Plan completed to raise awareness across the partnership of child exploitation include:

- The Violent Organised Crime Unit (VOCU) attended the school Designated Safeguarding Leads’ (DSL) meeting in May to raise awareness and understanding of gang activity in Royal Greenwich. The session included supporting DSL’s to spot early warning signs and highlighted the need to report incidents to the Police.
- Early Help presented information on their work with vulnerable adolescents to the Health Safeguarding Group.
- Awareness raising sessions with RG foster carers and our children’s home.
- Child exploitation is incorporated into many Greenwich Safeguarding Children Board (GSCB) training courses and there are also specific courses on CSE and on-line safety.
- Safer Communities deliver a range of courses which includes gangs, CSE and trafficking.
- In October 2018 the GSCB held their annual conference on “Safeguarding Children from Gangs: What Works?” The conference included presentations from national and local experts and workshops.
on supporting gang affected boys, supporting gang affected girls, interactive mock Greenwich Risk and Adolescents Safeguarding Panel (GRASP) and Early Help with children at risk of exploitation. The conference was well-attended by colleagues from across the partnership and positively received. The presentations are available at the Greenwich Safeguarding Children Board website. www.greenwichsafeguardingchildren.org.uk

4.4 Actions completed to promote good practice in relation to child exploitation include:

- The development and dissemination of a “Contextual Risk Early Identification Tool” designed to support practitioners in universal and targeted services and in particular schools to help link what may seem like unrelated concerns and a general sense of unease about the child’s welfare and to differentiate between general worrying teenage behaviour and concerns that may suggest a degree of risk, including grooming for and active child exploitation, which could be sexual as well as criminal.
- The GSCB Neglect Strategy and Practice Guidance has been finalised and widely disseminated which includes guidance on adolescent neglect and the resulting increased vulnerability to exploitation
- The joint Adult Safeguarding Board and GSCB “See the Adult. See the Child” protocol has been launched which includes awareness raising for both child and adult facing services of exploitation and is underpinned by a whole family approach
- Education is a key protective factor for all children and in the same way that safeguarding is everyone’s business, “education is everyone’s business” is being promoted across the partnership. This includes ensuring that absence of vulnerable adolescents from school is clearly understood as a risk factor
- Guidance for all practitioners from The Children’s Society on sharing soft intelligence with the Police in relation to exploitation has been disseminated

4.5 A range of audit and data analysis actions have been progressed which include:

- Attendance of health professionals at child protection conferences, results pending.
- Dip sample of GP records to ensure that child protection conference records are on children’s medical files, which they are.
- Thematic audit by Children's Social Care on Missing Children, results pending.
- GSCB Neglect Survey of practitioners across the partnership which included a focus on adolescents. Results indicated a need to continue to promote awareness of the issue.

4.6 Other work from the JTAI Multi-Agency Action Plan that is also being progressed includes:

- A task and finish group is underway to develop a multi-agency framework for adolescent risk. There are representatives from Health, Police, SEND, Safer Communities, Youth Offending Services and Children's Social Care.
- A task and finish group looking at persistent absence including children who are on child protection and child in need plans. Consideration is being given to extend the contract of “Welfare Call” to include children on a child protection plan to provide real time information on attendance.
- A review of the Greenwich Risk Adolescent Safeguarding Prevention (GRASP) meeting has been completed and its recommendations are being considered and progressed. Following this review additional business support to GRASP will be provided by Children’s Social Care to improve data collection and therefore reporting ability in relation to identifying themes.
- To be informed by the results of the Missing audit, a multi-agency task and finish group on Missing is being progressed.
- Work with the Head Teachers’ Partnership is underway to look at the use of fixed term exclusions to develop a strategy and training to reduce their use.
- A successful bid to the Department for Education with Lewisham and Bexley for early adopters funding for testing out the new safeguarding arrangements which includes exploring different ways of sharing learning with frontline practitioners with exploited children identified as a priority area.
- Tiath, a Barnardo’s funded project, started in Sept 2018. Year 1 is focused on working with the borough on assessment and intervention for those children where there are concerns of sexually harmful behaviour. Years 2 and 3 will widen the network to include schools, children’s social care and early help.
4.7 The JTAI Action Plan will continue to be monitored by the SMACE. Two particular future actions to note include:

- The need to increase analytical capacity across the partnership to enable well-informed, agile problem profiles alongside information to help individual risk reduction. It is hoped that this may be achieved through the Knife Crime and Serious Youth Violence Task Group initiatives.
- The GSCB will be repeating the multi-agency audits on children who go missing, who are at risk of child sexual exploitation and who are at risk of criminal and other forms of exploitation through gangs to measure the impact of our JTAI improvement actions to date. This is planned for Spring 2019.

5. **Conclusions**

Children who go missing, who are at risk of child sexual exploitation and who are at risk of criminal and other forms of exploitation through gangs are a complex cohort to engage with, and high risk in terms of outcomes. This group of vulnerable children remain a high priority for Royal Greenwich, the GSCB and the wider partnership. Work is evolving across London to develop best practice in relation to this group. Royal Greenwich are engaged with the wider developments and using good practice identified elsewhere to inform our multi-agency practice and the Knife Crime and Serious Youth Violence Task Group initiatives.

The JTAI Action Plan will continue to be progressed, monitored and will need to evolve in response to changing need and understanding.

6. **Report Appendices**

The following documents are to be published with and form part of the report:
- Appendix C: Protecting children from criminal exploitation human trafficking modern slavery November 2018