



Cost effective public sector partnering

Linda Everard – Head of Internal Audit,
Southend on Sea



Auditing Across Public Sector Partners

Southend-on-Sea Borough Council
Cliff Nicholson Award Winners

Linda Everard, Head of Internal Audit

What will the session cover?

- Introduce the Audit Team
- Explain the basis of the submission
- Highlight its impact and benefits
- Provide tips on how to do this

Introducing the Audit Team



How did it all start?



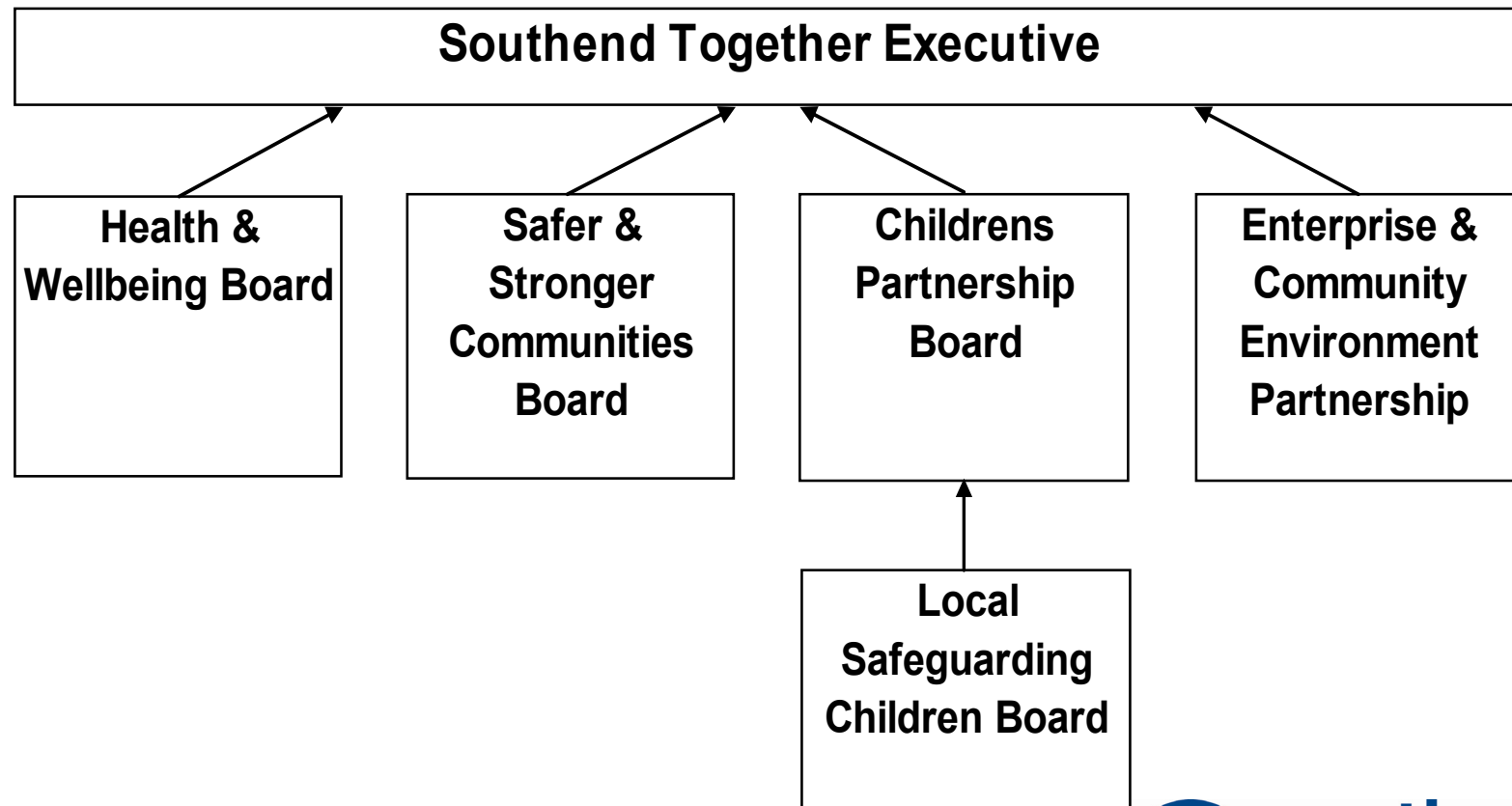
- Concerns
 - How reliable are other service providers' governance arrangements?
 - Are partners working well together to provide cost effective services?
- Question
 - Is there a role for internal audit here?

So what did we do?

- Established the Cross Partner Internal Audit Working Group (the Group)
- To provide a mechanism to:
 - audit the services and systems across organisations
 - develop common work programmes
 - co-ordinate timing of reviews

What was the partnership structure?

LOCAL STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIP



Who are our key partners?

Southend-on-Sea Borough Council

Castle Point Borough Council

Rochford District Council

Essex County Fire & Rescue Services

Essex Police Authority

Essex Probation Service

South Essex Partnership University NHS Foundation Trust

Southend University Hospital NHS Foundation Trust

NHS South East Essex

South Essex Homes

Southend Association of
Voluntary Services



What did the Group deliver?

1. Cross Partner Audit Committee Member Workshop: Governance and Partnerships.
2. Governance Arrangements of Key Strategic Partnerships
3. Local Safeguarding Children Board: Serious Case Review

Align internal audit with key assurance requirements of partners' chief officers

Audit Committee Member Workshop

- Question: How do we ensure other service providers' governance arrangements are OK?
- Agreed to:
 - share assessments of specific processes
 - use a common framework to do this
- Raised awareness of audit committee and the role of internal audit in this

Governance Arrangements Review

- Task: Were governance arrangements robust and being consistently applied?
- Value: Presented a unified view and shared good practice
- Impact: Improved governance arrangements, using common standards

Serious Case Review

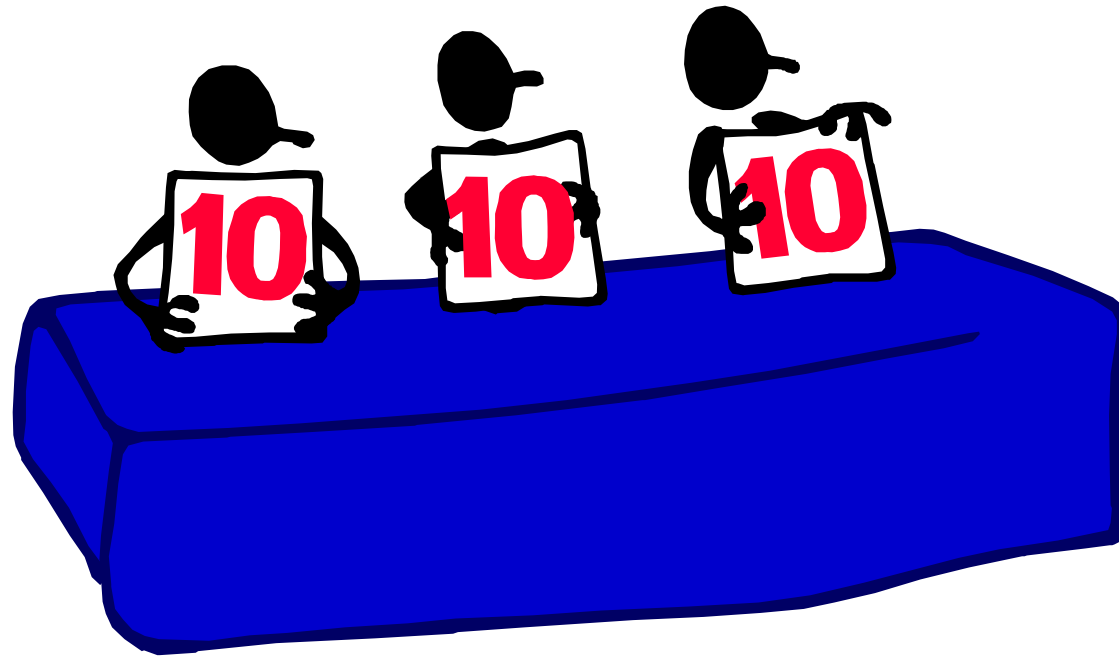
- Task: Are serious case review action plans being implemented effectively?
- Key findings:
 - national focus on initial investigation
 - less on ensuring recommendations implemented
 - action required not always well defined
- Value: Presented an evidenced based opinion covering the whole process

Serious Case Review

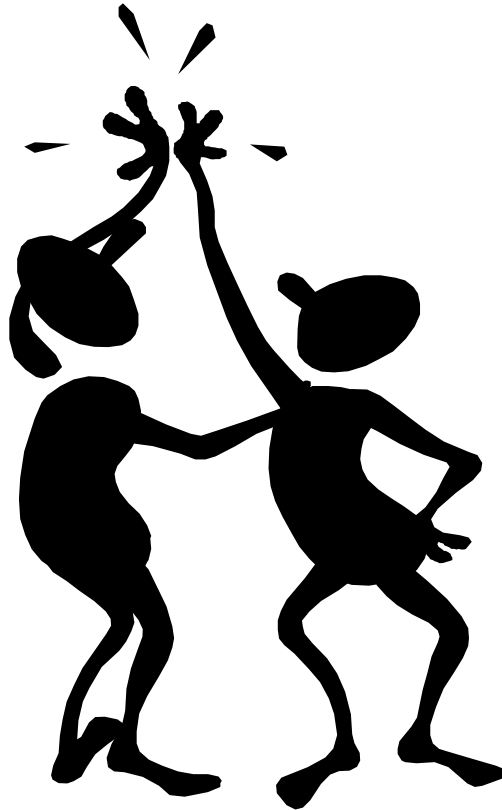
- Identified:
 - actions requiring further work
 - ways to strengthen monitoring arrangements
 - an ongoing role for internal audit

By working together we have helped partners strengthen these arrangements, directly contributing to improving the overall safety of children in our area.

*And the verdict on the serious case
review audit was.....*



And how did we feel about that...?



So what is new?

- Held another Cross Partner Audit Committee Member Workshop
- Continued working with officers on serious case review arrangements

Audit Committee Member Workshop Revisited

- How do we ensure other service providers' governance arrangements are OK?
 - Map evidence already available
 - Standardise if possible and share cost effectively
- Do we continue auditing across partners? If yes, how do we identify jobs and fund this work?
 - Establish a senior manager / member group
 - Meet twice a year to identify audits and funding

Serious Case Review Revisited

- Further action includes:
 - helping to improve the format of the action plan template used
 - helping to identify actual control weaknesses when internal independent review of child protection case files are undertaken
 - advising on how to draft SMART actions

So what are the benefits?

- Audit a whole activity at a point in time
- All use the same work programme
- Consistency of audit judgements
- Understand all partners' issues
- Identify and share good practice

A simple, cost effective way of providing assurance on collaborative working arrangements.

But the challenges are

- Deciding on the membership
- Selling the concept
- Identifying audits
- Securing funding
- Dealing with operational issues

So has it all been plain sailing?



But is it worth the effort?

Yes!

- Because we can:
 - really make a difference to people's lives
 - help improve services
- Because it's fun.....!

Questions?

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