

COUNCILLOR SPEAKS OF AARON TRAGEDY GUILT

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A Senior Swansea councillor has said she feels guilty over the tragic death of a baby killed by his mother's partner. Pennard councillor Margaret Smith criticised failings in the multi-agency approach in the Aaron Gilbert case.

"I hope everyone feels as guilty as I do," she said.

"When there are too many fingers in the pie, nobody takes responsibility."

Members of Swansea Council's health and social care scrutiny board will consider a report into how the social services department deals with child protection issues next month.

It follows an independent report by the Swansea Safeguarding Children Board (SSCB) which found that all agencies involved in the Aaron Gilbert case have lessons to learn.

Aaron was beaten to death two years ago.

Hard-drinking Andrew Lloyd punched, bit and kicked the 13-month-old Townhill baby.

His mother, Rebecca Lewis, was convicted of familial homicide for not doing enough to protect the toddler from the violence.

The SSCB's report into how social services reacted was launched in the wake of the convictions.

It revealed that the council had received calls about Aaron's welfare, but that letters sent to his mother apparently went to the wrong address.

Sketty councillor June Stanton said: "We really need to make sure that we have the correct addresses, because the letter was sent to the wrong address.

"More time was wasted writing, we should have gone up there."

Chairman of the committee, Morriston councillor John Davies, said: "Information systems in this IT-dominated world didn't work properly, so it's important that we investigate them to ensure that our procedures and information sharing are up to date."

Head of child and family services, Mark Roszkowski, said: "Errors were made and lessons have to be learned.

"There are a number of issues among them that all agencies have to ask themselves such as are there appropriate safeguard systems in place so if mistakes are made by individuals they will be picked up."