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|  Overview & Scrutiny Committee 13 January 2015 | | Agenda Item No. 10 |
| Title | Children's Safeguarding and the role of the Warwickshire Safeguarding Children Board | |
| For further information about this report please contact | Bill Hunt Deputy Chief Executive 01926 456014 bill.hunt@warwickdc.gov.uk | |
| Wards of the District directly affected | All | |
| Is the report private and confidential and not for publication by virtue of a paragraph of schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972, following the Local Government (Access to Information) (Variation) Order 2006? | No | |
| Date and meeting when issue was last considered and relevant minute number | | |
| Background Papers | None | |

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| Contrary to the policy framework: | No |
| Contrary to the budgetary framework: | No |
| Key Decision? | No |
| Included within the Forward Plan? (If yes include reference number) | No |
| Equality and Sustainability Impact Assessment Undertaken | n/a |

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| Officer/Councillor Approval | | |
| Officer Approval | Date | Name |
| Chief Executive/Deputy Chief Executive | | |
| Head of Service | | |
| CMT | | |
| Section 151 Officer | | |
| Monitoring Officer | | |
| Finance | | |
| Portfolio Holder(s) | | |
| Consultation & Community Engagement | | |
| n/a | | |
| Final Decision? | Yes | |
| Suggested next steps (if not final decision please set out below) | | |
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1. **SUMMARY**

- 1.1 The Council has appointed 2 Member Children's Champions and part of their remit is to promote awareness amongst elected members of the child safeguarding and welfare issues and the activities and processes undertaken by this Council. As part of their regular dialogue with the officer Children's Champion they have requested that the Scrutiny Committee receives a report on the role of the Warwickshire Safeguarding Children Board and how this Council contributes to its work.

2. **RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 2.1 That Committee notes the information in the report and determines whether it wishes to undertake any further scrutiny activity in respect of its contents.

3. **REASONS FOR THE RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 3.1 The Children's Act 2004 created statutory responsibilities for district councils in the field of Children's Safeguarding. Section 10 of the Act places a reciprocal duty on the Children's Services Authority for an area (in our case the County Council) and local district councils within that area to co-operate in inter-agency work to improve children's well-being. Section 11 places a duty on named agencies, including district councils, to safeguard and promote the welfare of children.
- 3.2 The Act also required Children's Services Authorities to establish and maintain local Safeguarding Children Boards and for those agencies with Section 10 responsibilities to support the operation of those Boards. Consequently this Council has been a member of the multi-agency Warwickshire Safeguarding Children Board (WSCB) since its inception in October 2005. The WSCB has a statutory responsibility to ensure that sound arrangements are in place to protect children within Warwickshire, to promote the welfare of children and ensure this is done by coordinating the activities of its members and promoting interagency cooperation and collaboration in these areas.
- 3.3 To discharge its statutory responsibilities the WSCB has to ensure that it:
- Produces local inter-agency safeguarding procedures
 - Reviewing the deaths of all children in its area to identify learning which may prevent future child deaths and conducting Serious Case Reviews into the deaths of any children where child abuse or neglect are known or suspected, or cases where children are seriously harmed by abuse or neglect and poor multi-agency working may have been a factor,
 - Publishing an annual report on the effectiveness of child safeguarding arrangements in the area
- (NB the 2013/14 Annual Report can be found here:)
- 3.4 The WSCB consequently makes periodic assessments of the effectiveness of both the overall safeguarding arrangements and the effectiveness of each individual member's own arrangements, through the Section 11 audit process. The outcome of the last such audit for this Council was reported to Executive in September 2014. The Children's Champion and Member Children's Champions are now monitoring the effective implementation of the Action Plan that was agreed as a result of the audit. An update on progress on the Action Plan will be provided to Committee as part of the end of year report on safeguarding.

- 3.5 The WSCB has an independent chair, David Peplow, who is an experienced chair also serving as Chair of the Thurrock Local Safeguarding Children Board. He is a former senior police officer with many years' experience of child abuse investigations.
- 3.6 The Board is comprised of the following members:
- Senior managers from Warwickshire County Council (WCC), one of whom will be the Service Manager for Child Protection
 - Warwickshire Police's child protection lead (with a rank of Superintendent or above)
 - A senior manager from the local Probation Trust
 - A senior manager from each of the Clinical Commissioning Groups within the WSCB area
 - A senior manager from NHS England
 - A senior manager representing each of the NHS and Foundation Trusts within the WSCB area
 - The Regional Manager, or their representative, of the Children & Family Court Advisory and Support Service (CAFCASS)
 - The Head of Service for the Youth Justice Service
 - Representatives from the 5 District and Borough Councils
 - A representative from WCC's Adult Social Care Services (who is also a member of the Warwickshire Adult Safeguarding Board)
 - WCC's Educating Safeguarding Manager
 - A representative from the agencies within Warwickshire working with victims of Domestic Abuse
 - A representative from the Voluntary and Community Sector
 - Two lay members representing the local community
- 3.7 WSCB Board meetings are also attended by the following advisors who, as they are not full members, would not have voting rights if a vote was needed:
- The WSCB Development Manager (a full time post within WCC that supports the work of the Board)
 - A senior lawyer from WCC
 - The Designated Nurse for child protection
 - The Designated Doctor for child protection
 - The WCC Lead member for Children's Services
- 3.8 The WSCB directly employs 3 staff, the Development Manager, an Inter-agency Training Officer and an Administrator. The posts are hosted by WCC but funded through contributions made by the WSCB's member organisations. In addition the Child Death Overview functions are managed and supported by a team of two, the Child Death Overview Process (CDOP) Manager and an assistant. This team supports the CDOP arrangements across Coventry, Solihull and Warwickshire, with the posts jointly funded by WCC, Coventry City Council and Solihull Metropolitan Borough Council, in addition to the funding each of these upper tier councils provides to their respective Safeguarding Children Board.
- 3.9 The full Board meets quarterly but between meetings the majority of its work is undertaken by staff from individual agencies working within formally constituted sub-committees of the main Board. There are currently sub-committees responsible for:
- Child Sexual Exploitation
 - Child Death Review Panel
 - Health

- District Councils
- Schools, Learning & Education
- Systems, Procedures & Guidelines
- Strategy & Communication
- Special Cases
- Performance, Monitoring & Evaluation

3.10 The latest workplans for each of these sub-committees are attached as appendices One to Eight (NB There is no workplan for the Child Death Review Panel as this is convened as and when required). In addition there is a Chairs Sub-Committee, chaired by David Peplow and attended by the Chair of each of the other sub-committees which agrees the agenda for the full Board meeting, monitors progress against individual workplans and deals with day to day operational matters beyond the remit of the Development Manager.

3.11 A debate is currently being held by the WSCB as to whether there is a continuing need for the District Council sub-committee. This was established in the early days of the WSCB as the district and borough councils had previously had any statutory safeguarding responsibilities and had, consequently, not been members of the Area Child Protection Committee arrangements that preceded Local Safeguarding Children Boards. The current WSCB Chair is of the view that as the understanding of their safeguarding role has now become embedded, evidenced by the latest s11 audit returns, that the need for a sub-committee looking at single agency issues is no longer necessary and this work could be subsumed within the workplans of the other sub-committees. A verbal update on this issue will be provided to Committee.

3.12 Further information on the work of the WSCB is available within its 2013-14 Annual Report : <http://apps.warwickshire.gov.uk/api/documents/WCCC-850-306>

4. **POLICY FRAMEWORK**

4.1 The Council's statutory duties are set out within the Children's Act 2004. However, the principles of child safeguarding and the promotion of children's welfare are relevant to all the Council's activities.

5. **BUDGETARY FRAMEWORK**

5.1 There are no budgetary implications arising from this report.

5.2 The Council made a financial contribution of £2,502 towards the overall costs of the WSCB in 2014/15, with the funding evenly split between the General Fund and Housing Revenue Account.

5.3 The WSCB's expenditure in 2013/14 was £198,835 and it received an income of £207,946 from the following sources:

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| • WCC | £91,497 |
| • Health (CCGs) | £32,952 |
| • Police | £17,908 |
| • Probation | £8,295 |
| • CAFCASS | £550 |
| • District/Borough Councils | £10,260 |
| • CSWP | £1,025 |
| • Training Income | £800 |
| • Balance c/f | £45,059 |

6. RISKS

- 6.1 If the Council does not effectively participate in the WSCB that it would be in breach of its statutory safeguarding responsibilities.

7. ALTERNATIVE OPTION(S) CONSIDERED

- 7.1 No alternative options have been considered