Executive Summary

The Apprenticeship, Skills, Children and Learning Act 2009 set a requirement for the Local Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB) to publish an Annual Report on the effectiveness of safeguarding in the local area.

The third annual report of West Sussex LSCB addresses the activity and challenges identified by the (LSCB) during the year 2011-12. It recognises achievements and progress being made, and realistic challenges that still remain for partners in safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people.

Recommendation

That the Cabinet Member for Children and Families receive the Local Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB) Annual Report 2011-12 on behalf of the County Council.

1. Purpose of this report

1.1 The Local Safeguarding Children Board is a multi-agency partnership whose functions are set out in primary legislation and regulation. The core objectives of the LSCB are to co-ordinate and ensure the effectiveness of the arrangements made by the wider partnership to safeguard and promote the welfare of children in the area of the local authority.

1.2 The Apprenticeship, Skills, Children and Learning Act 2009 set a requirement for the Local Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB) to publish an Annual Report on the effectiveness of safeguarding in the local area. The revision of ‘Working Together’ national guidance reinforces this message and is likely to require that the annual report be submitted to the Chief Executive and Leader of the Council together with the Police & Crime Commissioner and Chair of the Health and Well-being Board when new guidance is published later in 2012.

1.3 The LSCB Annual Report has been presented to West Sussex County Council Cabinet and to the Children & Young People’s Select Committee as part of a new initiative to highlight the work of the LSCB. It is hoped that this will
afford an opportunity for key Member groups within the County Council to gain a deeper understanding of the role of the LSCB and to identify any issues they might wish the LSCB to consider as part of any future work plan.

2. **LSCB Annual Report 2011 - 12**

2.1 This third annual report of West Sussex LSCB addresses the activity and challenges identified by the Local Safeguarding Children Board during the year 2011-12. It recognises achievements and progress being made, and realistic challenges that still remain for partners in safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people.

2.2 The report outlines the achievements in 2011-12 and areas for development in 2012-13. Areas for development are reflected in the relevant Business Plans for each year. The Business Plan for 2012-13 can be found on the WSCC website pages for the LSCB.

2.3 The Business Plan actions for 2011-12 have been fully completed. These focussed on the areas needing to be developed following the Ofsted Inspection in December 2010, and the action plans arising from two West Sussex Serious Case Reviews.

2.4 Key areas of progress were:

- Multi agency models and guidance for working with Children affected by Neglect, and those children affected by parental Mental Ill health were developed and introduced to the children’s workforce across all partner agencies during the year.

- Work to monitor and evaluate multi-agency practice has been a major focus of the work of the LSCB during the period covered by this report. This includes the development and embedding of multi agency auditing of child protection practice. This activity has identified improvements in practice across agencies as well as areas for development that were reported to the LSCB and Improvement Board for further action.

- Child Protection and Safeguarding Procedures are available online and are compliant with ‘Working Together 2010’ current national guidance on interagency working to safeguard and promote the welfare of children. These procedures aim to provide clarity for all agencies across the whole of Sussex and it is an expectation that they will be followed by partner agencies.

- A new Serious Case Review was undertaken during the year and submitted to OFSTED and the Department of Education within approved time scales.

2.5 Key areas for development in the year ahead are:

- The development of projects in three primary areas of risk to children: Children affected by Domestic Abuse, Children affected by Child Sexual Exploitation and Children affected by Neglect
‘Learning the lessons’ is a key benefit from the completion of a serious case review. Reviews usually identify a range of recommendations for action by agencies. Progress against the action plans in respect of the Serious Case Review submitted in early 2012 are being closely monitored across all agencies.

Monitoring safeguarding practice by the audit of multi agency activity and the scrutiny of single agency reports is an important function for the LSCB. This is achieved on a sustainable level through the year and provides reassurance to the Board about the quality of child protection activity. There are also planned case file reviews undertaken across agencies with a focus on particular risk areas, for example, children affected by parental substance misuse.

2.6 The Annual Report is also required to identify challenges to the Children’s Trust Board (Think Family Partnership) which will support improvements in safeguarding across services for children and young people. These challenges have a focus on achieving early help; the importance of e-Safety and training for the wider workforce. The specific challenges are set out in detail within the report.

3. **Equality - Customer Focus Appraisal**

A Customer Focus Appraisal is not required for this decision.

4. **Resource Implications and Value for Money**

Not applicable.

5. **Risk Management Implications**

Not applicable.

6. **Crime and Disorder Act Implications**

Not applicable.

7. **Human Rights Act Implications**

Not applicable.

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**Appendix:**
Local Safeguarding Children Board Annual Report 2011-12

**Background Papers:**
None