FUTURE STRUCTURE OF THE BLACKPOOL LOCAL SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN’S BOARD

1.0 Purpose of the report:

1.1 To present the option proposed for the replacement of the Local Safeguarding Children's Board (LSCB) to comply with the new area children’s safeguarding arrangements.

2.0 Recommendation(s):

2.1 To approve in principle the revised arrangements for the Blackpool, Blackburn with Darwen and Lancashire Safeguarding Children Strategic Partnership Board to replace the Blackpool Local Safeguarding Children’s Board in line with the Statement of Principles outlined in the report.

2.2 To note that the current Serious Case Review arrangements will be replaced by Child Safeguarding Practice Reviews.

2.3 To note that the existing Child Death Overview Panel will continue to exist in the form outlined in paragraph 5.2.

2.4 To delegate to the Director of Governance and Partnerships to sign off the final terms of reference and memberships on behalf of the Council and note that these will also be approved at the first meeting of the bodies and by the Police and Clinical Commissioning Groups.

3.0 Reasons for recommendation(s):

3.1 This will provide a consistent vision and overarching strategic direction for safeguarding children across Blackpool, Blackburn with Darwen and Lancashire which the three safeguarding partners (Local Authority, Police and Clinical Commissioning Groups) are agreed.
It also continues to provide local area operational delivery based on local need, vulnerability and risk.

The proposed new arrangements clearly meet the Association of Independent Chairs of Local Safeguarding Children Boards’ published set of overarching principles (reference paragraph 5.5). The proposals are also supported by designated representatives at Lancashire County Council and Blackburn with Darwen Council.

3.2a Is the recommendation contrary to a plan or strategy adopted or approved by the Council? No

3.2b Is the recommendation in accordance with the Council’s approved budget? Yes

3.3 Other alternative options to be considered:

Other alternatives structures would in effect see the arrangements continue with three safeguarding arrangements established in each local authority. It is not considered that this will be effective and would reduce the opportunity to establish a consistent vision, thresholds and strategic direction for safeguarding children across the Pan Lancashire footprint. It is recognised that there is a need for local area operational groups to drive forward local issues/need and the proposed structure below and attached addresses this.

4.0 Council priority:

4.1 The relevant Council priority is: “Communities: Creating stronger communities and increasing resilience”.

5.0 Background information

5.1 Under the Children Act 2004, as amended by the Children and Social Work Act 2017, Local Safeguarding Children Boards (LSCBs), set up by local authorities, will be replaced. Under the new legislation, the three safeguarding partners (Local Authorities, Chief Officers of Police and Clinical Commissioning Groups (CCGs) must make arrangements to work together with relevant agencies (as they consider appropriate) to safeguard and protect the welfare of children in the area.

5.2 Also under the new guidance following from the Act, the child death review partners (Local Authorities and Clinical Commissioning Groups and relevant partners) must set up child death review arrangements. These will remain the Child Death Overview Panels with consideration given to future options for a model of delivery as other partnerships mature. It will have specific responsibilities for:

- reviewing all deaths of children normally resident in the local area and, if they
consider it appropriate, for any non-resident child who has died in their area;
• analysing of information from all deaths reviewed;
• identifying any matters relating to the death, or deaths, that are relevant to the welfare of children in the area or to public health and safety and to consider whether action should be taken in relation to any matters identified;
• preparing and publishing reports on:
  – what they have done as a result of the child death review arrangements in their area, and
  – how effective the arrangements have been in practice.

In the interim the Council is suggesting the status quo remain in respect to the Child Death Overview Panel.

5.3 The current Serious Case Review arrangements will be replaced by Child Safeguarding Practice Reviews, which may be conducted at local or national level. The National Child Safeguarding Practice Review Panel was established on 29 June 2018 and transitional guidance has been published setting out the responsibility of safeguarding partners when a serious incident occurs from that date onwards. This arrangement will remain until such time as the new safeguarding arrangements are implemented locally. Working Together to Safeguard Children (July 2018), sets out the statutory guidance to which all new safeguarding arrangements must adhere. This guidance sets out specific detail of the functions to be carried out by new arrangements. Alongside this transitional guidance was published. These proposals have been reviewed to ensure specific compliance with the responsibilities set out in these guidance documents.

5.4 Under the guidance it is permissible for the new arrangements to cover more than one local authority area with the same principle applying for the arrangements agreed by Clinical Commissioning Groups and Chief Officers of Police in their role as one of the three safeguarding partners.

5.5 The Association of Independent Chairs of Local Safeguarding Children Boards has published a set of overarching principles to guide the establishment of new safeguarding arrangements. These principles are:

• Inclusive arrangements
• Strong oversight of performance and practice
• Listening to children and championing their rights and interests
• Adequate resources and expertise to hold all to account
• Focus on learning and improvement
• Facilitating leadership and safeguarding in the face of competing priorities
• Prevalence, pathways and gaps.
5.6 This report sets out a recommended course of action for the three Local Safeguarding Children Boards in Blackpool, Blackburn with Darwen and Lancashire to be replaced by new arrangements that will cover all areas. It is proposed that the new arrangements are called the Blackpool, Blackburn with Darwen and Lancashire Safeguarding Children Strategic Partnership Board.

5.7 Alongside the approval of the framework for the new arrangements by Blackpool, Blackburn with Darwen and Lancashire Council’s full detailed arrangements for this partnership will be agreed by the governance boards of the police and Clinical Commissioning Groups as set out earlier in this report.

5.8 Following agreement, arrangements for internal partnership governance and the business support functions will be completed by the relevant chief officers of each of the named safeguarding partners as required.

5.9 To inform these proposals, representatives from each council and representatives from other safeguarding partners have been in discussions by way of a working group. Other partners have been kept informed that discussions were ongoing but they do not have a decision making role in how the arrangements are established.

5.10 The working group has agreed proposals set out in this paper for the new arrangements based on guidance good practice and lessons learned from other authorities, outlined in Appendix 6a.

5.11 To be effective, the new arrangements will link to other strategic partnership work happening locally to support children and families. This will include other public boards including Health and Wellbeing Boards, Safeguarding Adult Boards, Channel Panels, Improvement Boards, Community Safety Partnerships, the Local Family Justice Board and Multi-Agency Public Protection Arrangements (MAPPAs).

5.12 To achieve these requirements Blackpool, Blackburn with Darwen and Lancashire Safeguarding Children Strategic Partnership Board will bring together agencies under a new local framework which organises the safeguarding work of partner agencies across all areas.

5.13 The main alternative is for each local authority area to develop their own safeguarding arrangements as is the case now. However, this would mean there being three separate strategic partnerships and would reduce the opportunity to establish a consistent vision, thresholds and strategic direction for safeguarding children across the Pan-Lancashire footprint. It was recognised that there was a need for local area operational groups to drive forward local issues and the future structure is outlined.
5.14 Geographical Area

- The Blackpool, Blackburn with Darwen and Lancashire Safeguarding Children Strategic Partnership Board will co-ordinate safeguarding services and act as a strategic leadership group across the towns and county. Activity by the partnership will incorporate identifying the needs of children and young people living in diverse urban and rural areas and ensuring that effective action is taken to safeguard them.

- The Strategic Partnership Board will also include those Relevant Agencies that the local authorities, Police and Clinical Commissioning Groups see as important to drive forward the safeguarding arrangements of children in these areas.

- Driving forward effective local arrangements requires attention to the detail of what works and where improvement is needed. In order to achieve this level of detail across the diverse areas of need, the new arrangements will be supported by joint thematic sub groups and will include reporting and scrutiny of some key functions in particular geographical areas, or in themes, for example similar ward characteristics on deprivation.

- The new arrangements will be subject of review and this will include analysis of future opportunities to bring together any of the groups to establish a joint group where the effectiveness of the co-ordination and scrutiny of arrangements across the three geographical council areas can be sustained and improved.

- In order to ensure clarity about the accountability and governance for the Clinical Commissioning Groups covering the area, a Memorandum of Understanding will include arrangements between Blackpool, Blackburn with Darwen and Lancashire Safeguarding Children Strategic Partnership Board.

- Each local authority will remain responsible for fulfilling its own statutory and legislative duties to safeguard and promote the welfare of children.

- The District Councils in Lancashire will continue to have essential safeguarding responsibilities. In order to uphold their responsibilities safeguarding arrangements will be developed for the District Councils to actively participate in their existing joint arrangements to co-ordinate their safeguarding duties.
5.15 **Independent Scrutiny and Role of Lay Members**

- The role of independent scrutiny is to provide assurance in judging the effectiveness of multi-agency arrangements to safeguard and promote the welfare of all children in a local area, including arrangements to identify and review serious incidents and conduct child safeguarding practice reviews, (previously known as serious case reviews).

- It is proposed that there is ongoing independent scrutiny delivered through the role of an independent chair of the Strategic Partnership. A key feature of effective Local Safeguarding Children’s Centre the role of the independent chair will provide the opportunity for the scrutiny across the three combined local authority areas with demonstrable independence and a sufficient degree of authority to ensure that the agencies respond positively and work to address areas of weaker practice.

- Young people and members of the community will have an essential role in shaping service development across all agencies and contributing to the scrutiny processes that hold agencies to account.

- It is proposed that the role of other existing partners and lay members, including the involvement of young people, is incorporated within the work of the partnership groups so that their influence, challenge and contributions can impact directly on specific areas of work delivered by the partnership. It will be important also that the voice of the child is heard through practice audit, in order to inform strategic development.

5.16 **Chief Officer Group/Strategic Partnership**

- Strong leadership is critical for the new arrangements to be effective in bringing together the various organisations and agencies within the partnership. The statutory safeguarding partners across Blackpool, Blackburn with Darwen and Lancashire have equal and joint responsibility for local safeguarding arrangements.

- In order to ensure that the responsibilities of the partnership are being effectively discharged, it is proposed that the Chief Officer Group includes representation from the following (including all areas covered by different organisations listed below):
  - Blackpool and Blackburn with Darwen and Lancashire County Council: Chief Executives (or their nominee);
  - Blackpool and Blackburn with Darwen and Lancashire County Council: Elected
Member for Children and Young People;

- Blackpool and Blackburn with Darwen and Lancashire County Council Director of Children’s Services (statutory role);
- All Clinical Commissioning Group from the Lancashire 14 areas Chief Executive (or their nominee);
- Lancashire Constabulary Chief Constable (or their nominee);
- Lancashire Police and Crime Commissioner (or their nominee).

The Chief Officer Group will:

- speak with authority for the safeguarding partner they represent, take decisions on behalf of their organisation or agency and be empowered to commit them on policy, resourcing and practice matters;
- hold their own organisation or agency to account on how effectively they participate in and implement the local arrangements;
- play an active role, facilitating and driving action beyond institutional constraints and boundaries.
- In situations that require a clear, single point of leadership, all safeguarding partners will decide who would take the lead on issues that arise. The detailed governance arrangements will explicitly set out how this will be achieved, mindful of the ongoing responsibilities for each Director of Children’s Services for the safety of children in their area (as set out in section 18 of the Children Act 2004).

The Chief Officer Group will:

- publish a Memorandum of Understanding to ensure that there are transparent governance arrangements and decision making processes;
- publish a plan setting out local arrangements and how they will be implemented;
- ensure that the new arrangements are implemented within the prescribed timescales and meet the requirements of national guidance;
- publish a business plan to monitor the effectiveness and drive forward improvements in local safeguarding arrangements across the area;
- review and report on the effectiveness of the implementation of the new arrangements, including the effectiveness of any sub groups;
- review and report on the effectiveness of local safeguarding arrangements to drive forward improvement with other public boards including Health and Wellbeing Boards, Safeguarding Adult Boards, Channel Panels, Improvement Boards, Community Safety Partnerships, the Local Family Justice Board and Multi-Agency Public Protection Arrangements (MAPPAs);
- publish an annual report;
- respond to recommendations from local and/or national child safeguarding practice reviews;
- drive forward learning and organisational development to improve
safeguarding arrangements.

- In the event that Chief Officers (of the three statutory partners) are unable to reach agreement, it is proposed that each agency be allowed to record a single vote to obtain a majority decision. In the event that deadlock is reached the Independent Chair shall have the casting vote.

- Agree which Relevant Agencies will be members of the strategic partnership

5.17 Support for the Chief Officer Group /Strategic Partnership

- The Chief Officer Group will establish its own arrangements within available budget but local area operational groups will be required to co-ordinate the business plan and the work of the partnership groups to improve safeguarding arrangements and to inform the Chief Officer Group/strategic partnership.

- The local area operational groups will drive the agenda for the stakeholder events and ensure that partner agencies and members of the community are active participants in improving safeguarding arrangements. The voice of the child and engagement with the many varied communities across Blackpool, Blackburn with Darwen and Lancashire are essential elements for improving practice.

5.18 Local Area Operational Groups

It is suggested that there are also Local Area Operational groups reflecting the following three geographical areas:

- Blackpool and North Lancashire (Blackpool, Fylde, Lancaster and Wyre Council areas)
- Central and South Lancashire (Chorley, Preston, South Ribble and West Lancashire Council areas)
- Blackburn with Darwen and East Lancashire (Blackburn with Darwen, Burnley, Hyndburn, Pendle, Ribble Valley and Rossendale Council areas).

It is suggested that these groups are also chaired by the independent chair of the Strategic Partnership. This will provide a consistent approach and ensure a golden thread of independent scrutiny across the safeguarding agenda. These groups will have local representation to from the three key partners as well as any other relevant agencies the groups feel are necessary to discharge their function in best safeguarding children and young people.

5.19 Established Sub Groups

In considering the efficiency and effectiveness of sub groups to support the Strategic Partnership and Local Area Operational Groups some already operate on a Pan
Lancashire and Joint Children’s and Adult footprint and it is felt this is the most effective way to continue. Appendix 6b outlines the proposed sub groups to support the children’s safeguarding partnerships.

5.20 Implementation

Publication of a local plan

Once agreed, local safeguarding arrangements must be published and include:

- arrangements for the safeguarding partners to work together to identify and respond to the needs of children in the area;
- arrangements for commissioning and publishing local child safeguarding practice reviews;
- arrangements for independent scrutiny of the effectiveness of the arrangements.

The plan must also include:

- who the three local safeguarding partners are, especially if the arrangements cover more than one local authority area;
- geographical boundaries (especially if the arrangements operate across more than one local authority area);
- the relevant agencies the safeguarding partners will work with; why these organisations and agencies have been chosen; and how they will collaborate and work together to improve outcomes for children and families;
- how all early years settings, schools (including independent schools, academies and free schools) and other educational establishments will be included in the safeguarding arrangements;
- how any youth custody and residential homes for children will be included in the safeguarding arrangements;
- how the safeguarding partners will use data and intelligence to assess the effectiveness of the help being provided to children and families, including early help;
- how inter-agency training will be commissioned, delivered and monitored for impact and how they will undertake any multiagency and interagency audits;
- how the arrangements will be funded;
- the process for undertaking local child safeguarding practice reviews, setting out the arrangements for embedding learning across organisations and agencies;
- how the arrangements will include the voice of children and families;
- how the threshold document setting out the local criteria for action aligns with the arrangements.
5.21 **Timescale for publication of the plan**

Safeguarding partners have up to 12 months, from 29 June 2018, to agree their local arrangements and which relevant agencies they consider appropriate should work with them to safeguard and promote the welfare of children in their area.

They must have published their arrangements by 29 June 2019, but may do so at any time before the end of that period.

5.22 **Implementation of the new arrangements**

The three chief officers will agree a publication date for the new arrangements. Following publication of arrangements, safeguarding partners have up to three months from the date of publication to implement the arrangements. The implementation date should be made clear in the published arrangements. All new local arrangements must have been implemented by 29 September 2019.

If the safeguarding partner arrangements are in place and ready to operate before the child death review partner arrangements for a local area, the safeguarding partners may begin work, without waiting for the child death review partner arrangements to begin.

Once the arrangements have been published and implemented, the three Local Safeguarding Children Boards in Blackpool, Blackburn with Darwen and Lancashire will cease to exist.

5.23 **Does the information submitted include any exempt information?**  No

5.24 **List of Appendices:**

Appendix 6a: Principles for Decision Making
Appendix 6b: Proposed Sub Groups

6.0 **Legal considerations:**

6.1 As set out in the report

7.0 **Human resources considerations:**

7.1 There may be Human Resource implications and these are being considered as the staffing structure to support these arrangements are finalised. Work with human resources support teams across all three local authorities will take place.
8.0 Equalities considerations:
8.1 None.

9.0 Financial considerations:
9.1 While the costs of the revised arrangements and the split of those costs between three individual Councils and the budgets of partner establishments have not yet been confirmed, it is anticipated that no additional costs will be required to implement the model. In fact it is likely that there will be financial savings or additional work for the same cost arising from the development of the Pan-Lancashire model. Part of the future development of the new model will involve discussions regarding the split of costs and these will involve the Council’s finance team. If the costs are greater than the existing model then the Council would need to consider withdrawing its involvement.

10.0 Risk management considerations:
10.1 There is a risk to child protection and safeguarding if the change to these arrangements is not made effectively. Key steps in this report seek to minimise that risk.

11.0 Ethical considerations:
11.1 None.

12.0 Internal/external consultation undertaken:
12.1 No specific consultations have taken other than with the three responsible agencies as part of the multi-agency working group outlined above who have considered these options.

13.0 Background papers:

14.0 Key decision information:
14.1 Is this a key decision? No
14.2 If so, Forward Plan reference number:
14.3 If a key decision, is the decision required in less than five days? No
14.4 If yes, please describe the reason for urgency:

15.0 Call-in information:

15.1 Are there any grounds for urgency, which would cause this decision to be exempt from the call-in process? No

15.2 If yes, please give reason:

TO BE COMPLETED BY THE HEAD OF DEMOCRATIC GOVERNANCE

16.0 Scrutiny Committee Chairman (where appropriate):

Date informed: Date approved:

17.0 Declarations of interest (if applicable):

17.1

18.0 Executive decision:

18.1

19.0 Date of Decision:

19.1

20.0 Reason(s) for decision:

20.1

21.0 Date Decision published:

21.1

22.0 Executive Members in attendance:
23.0  Call-in:

24.0  Notes:

24.1