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Council

24 June 2014

**Name of Cabinet Member:**

Children and Young People – Councillor Ruane

**Scrutiny Chair Approving Submission of the report:**

Education and Children's Services – Councillor Abbott, (Chair of the Scrutiny Board 2013/14)

**Ward(s) affected:**

All

**Title:**

Serious Case Review Report into the Death of Daniel Pelka – Progress Report from Education and Children's Services Scrutiny Board

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**Is this a key decision?**

No

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**Executive Summary:**

Daniel Pelka was murdered in March 2012 by his mother and stepfather. Following their conviction in July 2013, and subsequent sentencing in August 2013, the Daniel Pelka Serious Case Review (SCR) report was published on Tuesday 17th September 2013.

In line with statutory guidance a SCR was commissioned to investigate and analyse the circumstances into Daniel's abuse and death. A SCR is held whenever a vulnerable child dies or is seriously injured or impaired and abuse or neglect is known or suspected to have been a factor.

The SCR report made 15 recommendations to local partners, covering domestic abuse, referral and assessment processes, training of staff, practice in schools and health as well as the requirement to disseminate messages to the Children's Workforce.

The extra-ordinary meeting of the Council which took place on 10<sup>th</sup> October 2013 passed a resolution requesting that it receive a 6 monthly update report from Education and Children's Services Scrutiny Board (2) on delivery against the multi-agency action plan agreed through the independent Local Safeguarding Children Board.

**Recommendations:**

1. Council is recommended to:
  - a) Note the work of the Education and Children’s Services Scrutiny Board (2) carried out to date and endorse proposed future action.

**List of Appendices included:**

None

**Other useful background papers:**

Agenda and papers, including the Serious Case Review Overview Report, for the Education and Children’s Services Scrutiny Board (2) meeting held on Thursday 26<sup>th</sup> September 2013  
<http://democraticservices.coventry.gov.uk/documents/s13038/Daniel%20Pelka%20Serious%20Case%20Review%20SCR.pdf>

Agenda and papers, including progress on the implementation of recommendations after three months, for the Education and Children’s Services Scrutiny Board (2) meeting held on Thursday 16<sup>th</sup> January 2014  
<http://democraticservices.coventry.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=569&MId=9974&Ver=4>

Agenda and papers, including progress on the implementation of recommendations after six months, for the Education and Children’s Services Scrutiny Board (2) meeting held on Thursday 27<sup>th</sup> March 2014  
<http://democraticservices.coventry.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=569&MId=9976&Ver=4>

Agenda and papers, including progress on council actions arising from the serious case review after six months, for the Education and Children’s Services Scrutiny Board (2) meeting held on Thursday 3<sup>rd</sup> April 2014  
<http://democraticservices.coventry.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=569&MId=10137&Ver=4>

**Has it been or will it be considered by Scrutiny?**

The Education and Children’s Services Scrutiny Board (2) has considered the Serious Case review and progress reports on the dates shown above.

**Has it been or will it be considered by any other Council Committee, Advisory Panel or other body?**

No

**Will this report go to Council?**

Yes – 24<sup>th</sup> June, 2014

**Report title:**

Serious Case Review Report into the Death of Daniel Pelka – Progress Report from Education and Children's Services Scrutiny Board

**1. Context (or background)**

1.1 Following the publication of the Serious Case Review publication in September 2013, the Education and Children's Services Scrutiny Board (2) has considered progress reports from the Coventry Safeguarding Children Board. The extra-ordinary meeting of the Council which took place on 10<sup>th</sup> October 2013 passed a resolution requesting that it receive a 6 monthly update report from Education and Children's Services Scrutiny Board (2) on delivery against the multi-agency action plan agreed through the independent Local Safeguarding Children Board. This report summarises the activity of the Scrutiny Board and the progress made. The detailed progress reports considered by the board are available on the Council's website, links to which are provided on page 2 of this report, together with detailed minutes of the meetings.

**2. Options considered and recommended proposal**

2.1 The Education and Children's Services Scrutiny Board (2) has held three meetings to consider the SCR and progress against recommendations. Representatives of members of the Coventry Safeguarding Children Board (CSCB) were asked to attend the meetings and officers from Coventry City Council, Coventry and Rugby Clinical Commissioning Group, Coventry and Warwickshire Partnership NHS Trust, NHS England, University Hospitals Coventry and Warwickshire NHS Trust, West Midlands Police all participated. In addition to the Independent Chair of the CSCB, other independent safeguarding experts who had contributed to the SCR, analysis and progress monitoring also contributed to the meetings.

2.2 The Scrutiny Board considered the SCR In September 2013, shortly after it was published. The Scrutiny Board questioned and sought assurance from representatives of the CSCB about progress on a wide range of issues particularly focussing on: record keeping, information sharing and working arrangements between agencies; how incidents of domestic violence are being addressed in child protection; the effectiveness of quality and audit processes; how the voice of the child is heard; leadership and performance of the CSCB; and resourcing, particularly in children's social care. The Scrutiny Board asked for further clarification on a number of issues which were provided and published.

2.3 On 16<sup>th</sup> January 2014, the Scrutiny Board considered a progress report on implementation of recommendations from the SCR. They again questioned representatives of the CSCB on progress against the original recommendations and the issues raised at the previous Scrutiny Board meeting in September. They returned to issues including changes in the way domestic violence is now being dealt with and plans for the development of a multiagency safeguarding hub, information sharing between agencies and how improvements are being monitored and evidence. The Scrutiny Board raised concerns about: the availability of and access to safeguarding training for school staff and governors; arrangements for communicating domestic violence alerts to schools and nurseries; and the government's rejection of funding approved by the Coventry Schools Forum to support safeguarding work. The Scrutiny Board identified the issues that it particularly wanted addressing by the CSCB at the next review meeting.

- 2.4 On 27<sup>th</sup> March 2014, the Scrutiny Board considered a progress report on implementation of recommendations at six months, together with the deeper analysis that had been completed at the request of the Minister for Children and Families. The independent authors of the both the progress and deeper analysis reports attended to answer questions. Again, the Scrutiny Board reviewed progress and outstanding issues in relation to joint working between partners on a range of issues. In particular they focussed on a number of issues relating to the health sector including health visitor training, the use of whole family records and the levels of engagement from GPs. They also discussed the importance of early intervention and asked that the Early Help Strategy Action Plan be shared with the Scrutiny Board. In the week before the meeting, Ofsted had published its report into Children's Services and the effectiveness of the local safeguarding children board, both judged as inadequate and while this was to be the subject of a full council meeting, issues raised in the report also informed the Scrutiny Board's questions.
- 2.5 In addition, on 3<sup>rd</sup> April 2014 the Scrutiny Board also considered a progress report from the City Council on the actions arising from the SCR for which it is directly responsible. This explored in more detail resourcing, capacity and culture issues in Children's Services, progress on information sharing and changes to arrangements for notifications to schools and nurseries and how the thresholds, procedures and responsibilities under the Common Assessment Framework are understood and applied consistently within schools, social care and other agencies.
- 2.6 During this period, a task and finish group of the Scrutiny Board looked into how the voice of the child is currently heard by children's social care and the ways in which it could be improved. Their report was approved by the Scrutiny Board on 3<sup>rd</sup> April and the 15 recommendations were accepted by the Cabinet Member (Children and Young People) on 8<sup>th</sup> April.
- 2.7 Over this period, the Scrutiny Board acknowledged the progress that had been made in response to the SCR, while recognising the scale of the challenges that still remain, many of which were highlighted in the Ofsted report. The Scrutiny Board will set its work programme for 2014/15 at its first meeting of the new municipal year and will ensure that it continues to review progress and outstanding areas of concern. The Scrutiny Board has asked to receive the Annual Report of the CSCB in July and will continue to ensure that issues identified by the SCR are being addressed in the Scrutiny Board's work. In relation to the Council's specific responsibilities, at its extraordinary meeting of 10<sup>th</sup> April 2014, the Council asked that Scrutiny receive regular updates from the Improvement Board for Children's Services and the Board will scrutinise these.
- 2.8 The Education and Children's Services Scrutiny Board will continue to maintain oversight of progress made by the CSCB and the Children's Services Improvement Board. In addition to oversight of Children's Services, Scrutiny also has designated committees with responsibilities for other related issues including Crime and Disorder and for Health. Scrutiny will ensure through its work programme that relevant Boards also test out how well priorities and learning from the SCR are being embedded in day to day working.

### **3. Results of consultation undertaken**

- 3.1 No consultation has been undertaken in relation to this report. Partner agencies have been involved in identifying and carrying out actions in response to the SCR.

#### **4. Timetable for implementing this decision**

- 4.1 The 2014/15 scrutiny work programme will be developed and agreed at the initial meetings during June and July and will continue to reflect the issues identified by the Education and Children's Services Scrutiny Board.

#### **5. Comments from Executive Director, Resources**

- 5.1 Financial Implications  
There are no financial implications arising from this report.
- 5.2 Legal implications  
There are no legal implications arising from this report.

#### **6. Other implications**

**6.1 How will this contribute to achievement of the Council's key objectives / corporate priorities (corporate plan/scorecard) / organisational blueprint / Local Area Agreement (or Coventry Sustainable Community Strategy)?**

The work of the Education and Children's Services Scrutiny Board (2) supports the Council's corporate priorities to protect and support the City's most vulnerable people and to keep children safe from harm.

**6.2 How is risk being managed?**

There are no additional risks arising from this report.

**6.3 What is the impact on the organisation?**

There are no additional organisational impacts arising from this report.

**6.4 Equalities / EIA**

There are no additional equalities issues arising from this report.

**6.5 Implications for (or impact on) the environment**

None

**6.6 Implications for partner organisations?**

Partner organisations are involved through the Coventry Safeguarding Children Board.

**Report authors:**

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| Legal: Julie Newman  | Senior Solicitor                                    | Resources                          | 10.06.14                 | 11.06.14                                  |
| Cllr Abbott  | Chair Education and Children's Services SB2 2013/14 |                                    | 10.06.14                 | 10.06.14                                  |
| Cllr Innes   | Chair Education and Children's Services SB2 2014/15 |                                    | 11.06.14                 | 12.06.14                                  |

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