

REPORT TO:	FINANCE & MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE	AGENDA ITEM:
DATE OF MEETING:	4th DECEMBER 2008	CATEGORY: DELEGATED
REPORT FROM:	DIRECTOR OF CORPORATE SERVICES	OPEN
MEMBERS' CONTACT POINT:	SASHA RYAN (5726)	DOC:
SUBJECT:	SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN AND VULNERABLE PEOPLE POLICY	REF:
WARD (S) AFFECTED:	ALL	TERMS OF REFERENCE: FM05

1.0 Recommendations

- 1.1 It is recommended that the Safeguarding Children and Vulnerable People Policy and action plan be adopted and published.

2.0 Purpose of Report

- 2.1 To present the Council's response that fulfils statutory duties in its services under section 11 of the Children Act 2004 through the adoption of a Safeguarding Children and Vulnerable People Policy and action plan that is attached as an appendix.

3.0 Background

- 3.1 The Council provides services for, and works with, children and vulnerable adults in a variety of settings. Most of these services play a significant role in the lives of children and vulnerable adults including:
- Housing
 - Community Safety
 - Leisure and Community Services
 - Environmental Health
 - Benefits Services.
- 3.2 The Children Act 2004 placed new obligations on District and Borough Councils in relation to Safeguarding Children and Young People.
- 3.3 Section 11 of the Children Act 2004 places a duty on key persons and bodies, including District Councils **'to make arrangements to ensure that in discharging their functions they have regard to the need to safeguard and promote the welfare of children'**.
- 3.4 The Council also has the responsibility to work with partners to ensure that vulnerable adults, who are at risk of abuse, receive protection and support.

- 3.5 Such arrangements enable the Council to demonstrate clear community leadership through setting an example of best practice. It will also ensure that at all levels within the organisation there is an understanding and awareness of the importance of every aspect of safeguarding children and vulnerable people. This includes responsibilities to co-operate with all partners within the statutory, voluntary and community sector in information sharing and raising awareness.

Responsibility

- 3.6 Safeguarding Children and vulnerable adults is 'everybody's business' and we all share a responsibility for safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and vulnerable people. This involves ensuring the safety of children and vulnerable adults who come into contact with those working for the Council (both staff and Members), and enabling staff and Members to act appropriately if they have concerns about the safety or welfare of a child or vulnerable adult. In their role as community representatives, Members will have close contact with all sections of the community, including children and vulnerable adults and this is likely to increase as the role of Elected Members in the community develops.

The Policy

- 4.1 The purpose of the Policy is to ensure that the Council fulfils its statutory duties in all its services under section 11 of the Children Act 2004. It will also develop and maintain a culture that reflects a commitment to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and vulnerable people.
- 4.2 The Policy encompasses procedures and standards relating to:
- Responsibilities and Principles
 - Recognition of Poor Practice, Abuse and Bullying
 - Prevention of Abuse including codes of behaviour, recruitment, training and disclosure checks
 - Referral Procedures.
- 4.3 The Policy initially developed, with support from the District Council's Safeguarding Children Policy Group, this has since been disbanded and replaced with the South Derbyshire and South Dales Safeguarding Children Management Team, which is attended by the Council's Sport and Youth Development Manager. The remit of the group is to co-ordinate local work designed to safeguard and promote the welfare of children.
- 4.4 The associated action plan outlines key actions to ensure that we meet our statutory obligations in regard to new legislation, such as the new vetting and barring scheme, and continue raising awareness of safeguarding children and vulnerable adults. A key action is outlining levels of training for key posts that work closely with children and vulnerable adults and identifying those staff groups who may need training.
- 4.5 Last year Members undertook general awareness training in relation to safeguarding children and members of staff who are involved routinely with children and their families i.e. front-line housing staff have undertaken

Common Assessment Framework training (CAF). This is a standardised assessment that's designed to get a complete picture of a child's additional needs at an early stage and encourages information sharing between practitioners in cooperation with the child and their family.

Definitions

- 4.6 The Policy covers all children up to the age of 18 years of age who are affected by the services delivered by or on behalf of the Council. Many of the principles set out in this document also relate to vulnerable adults. These are defined as people aged 18 and over who may be vulnerable due to mental or other disability or illness and may not be able to protect themselves against abuse.

Lead Agencies

- 4.7 Derbyshire County Council's (DCC) Children's Social Care and the Police are the lead agencies in the district with regard to child protection, and DCC's Adult Social Services is the lead agency with regard to vulnerable adults. However, the Council also recognises that everyone has a responsibility for child protection and protecting vulnerable adults, including all employees and Members.

5.0 Financial Implications

- 5.1 There are a number of provisions contained in the action plan, which have financial implications including training for designated officers, staff training and publicity costs. These costs will be met from existing budgets.

6.0 Corporate Implications

- 6.1 Keeping children safe is the responsibility of the Council as a whole. As such this has implications for all Council Directorates, and for Elected Members in their role as Community representatives.
- 6.2 Within the Council's Corporate Plan 2008/11 a priority under the theme 'Safer and Healthier Communities' is safeguarding children and vulnerable adults. The Safeguarding Children and Vulnerable People policy and related action plan will enable the Council to deliver on this priority.

7.0 Community Implications

- 7.1 The Children Act 2004 requires that Borough and District Councils ensure that all services provided by the Council have adequate procedures in place. This includes third party services, contractors and local community groups and organisations who have received funding from the Council.
- 7.2 The adoption of this Policy will meet not only a statutory requirement but also provides evidence of community leadership on such a sensitive matter. Working with other public bodies such as the Police and DCC, children and vulnerable people in the District will be provided with a structured framework to protect them from harm and promote their fair and proper treatment.

8.0 Conclusions

- 8.1 The Safeguarding Children and Vulnerable People Policy is an essential document to enable the Council to develop best practice which ensures the well-being of children and vulnerable adults who come into contact with all of its services.

Background Papers

The Children Act 2004