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| REPORT TO: | FINANCE & MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE | AGENDA ITEM: 11 |
| DATE OF MEETING: | 21st March 2013 | CATEGORY: DELEGATED |
| REPORT FROM: | CHIEF EXECUTIVE | OPEN |
| MEMBERS' CONTACT POINT: | Head of Corporate Services Kevin Stackhouse (01283 595811) Kevin.stackhouse@south-derbys.gov.uk | DOC: u/ks/live files/OD reports/safeguarding/draft fm report |
| SUBJECT: | Safeguarding Children, Young People & Vulnerable Adults Policy and Action Plan 2012/13 | |
| WARD (S) AFFECTED: | All | TERMS OF REFERENCE: FM 14 |

1.0 Recommendations

1.1 That the Committee:

- a) Adopt and publish the proposed *Safeguarding Children, Young People & Vulnerable Adults Policy and Action Plan 2012/13* as attached at **Appendices A and B**.
- b) That a Members 'champion' for Safeguarding is appointed in order to progress and take forward safeguarding issues, within the Council and local community.

2.0 Purpose of Report

- 2.1 To present a revised Safeguarding Children, Young People & Vulnerable Adults Policy that sets out the Council's responsibilities to protect and promote the welfare of children, young people, and vulnerable adults using or receiving services provided or commissioned by the Council.
- 2.2 The Policy is also to support Council officers, elected Members and volunteers in fulfilling their statutory responsibilities.

3.0 Detail

Background

- 3.1 In response to the Children's Act 2004 that placed new obligations on the Council in relation to safeguarding children and young people, a *Safeguarding Children and Vulnerable People* Policy was approved by the Committee in December 2008.
- 3.2 This Policy was supported by a corresponding action plan that identified responsible officers and target dates.

Safeguarding Audit

- 3.3 In June 2012, the Central Midlands Audit Partnership, working in conjunction with the Council, carried out an audit that focused on evaluating the adequacy of the corporate safeguarding policy and that appropriate governance arrangements were in place to ensure a strategic approach to safeguarding.
- 3.4 The audit confirmed key controls were in place regarding the Council's 'safeguarding' Policy and representatives from the Council had been attending inter-agency meetings. However, following recent corporate restructuring exercises and a change in reporting lines had meant that monitoring arrangements needed to be improved.
- 3.5 The audit also identified that between 2007 and 2011, a significantly low number of some 38 staff and 16 Members had attended some form of training related to safeguarding.
- 3.6 Therefore, in light of the findings from the audit, the Council's *Safeguarding Children, Young People & Vulnerable Adults* Policy and Action Plan have been updated accordingly

Revised Children, Young People & Vulnerable Adults Policy

Principles

- 3.7 Since safeguarding is 'everyone's business,' the revised Policy sets out the Council's responsibilities to ensure children, young people and vulnerable adults are kept safe from harm.
- 3.8 The revised Policy has been developed in consultation with Derbyshire County Council (the lead agency for the protection of children, young people and vulnerable adults) and Council Departments.

Purpose and scope

- 3.9 The purpose of the revised Policy is both to protect and promote the welfare of the children, young people and vulnerable adults using or receiving services provided or commissioned by the Council, together with supporting the Council's officers and elected members in fulfilling their statutory responsibilities.
- 3.10 The revised Policy recognises Derbyshire County Council's role as the lead agency for the protection of children and vulnerable adults. The role of South Derbyshire District Council is not to investigate allegations of abuse, but it is the responsibility for all Council Members, employees, volunteers and contracted service providers to take action when they suspect or recognise that a child, young person or vulnerable adult may be a victim of harm or abuse.
- 3.11 Therefore, the revised Policy must be read in conjunction with supplementary guidance and procedures that can be found on the intranet at <http://harvey/corporate/organisationaldevelopment/policy/equalities/Safeguarding/>

Governance

- 3.12 The Council's strategic approach to safeguarding has been strengthened by identifying a nominated lead officer, the Head of Corporate Services who is responsible for the coordination, monitoring and reporting the progress of the subsequent action plan to deliver the revised Policy.
- 3.13 The governance arrangements between the Council and Northgate Public Services have now been clearly defined to ensure that the roles and responsibilities for reviewing, updating, implementing and monitoring progress of the Policy are properly assigned.
- 3.14 Contact officers have been identified in each department of the Council and those services delivered through Partnership arrangements. These individuals provide both support and assistance to the safeguarding lead officer, who has the responsibility for coordinating the escalation of any safeguarding issues to the statutory authority.
- 3.15 Safeguarding issues have been brought under the remit of a refreshed internal equalities group which was re-launched in October 2012. This internal group is chaired by the Head of Corporate Services.

Member Champion

- 3.16 Further to paragraphs 3.9 to 3.15 above, and in accordance with 'best practice' there is a need for this Committee to identify a Lead Member who will 'champion' safeguarding issues both within the Council and the local community.
- 3.17 This would help to demonstrate the Council's integrity in achieving its corporate aim to protect and promote the welfare of children, young people and vulnerable adults using or receiving services provided or commissioned by the Council.

Training

- 3.18 The Council's HR system provides a central record of all training activity, and this is to be updated with details of any relevant safeguarding training courses attended by staff and Members across the Council.
- 3.19 Based on information provided by each service area, a list of job roles has been produced for the purposes of undertaking safeguarding training. A training plan for these job roles is to be produced as part of the refreshed policy, and will outline the level of training required for posts and levels of responsibility. This will include Officers who have direct contact with children, young people and vulnerable people, such as Safer Neighbourhood Officers and Sports & Leisure Development Officers, together with those Officers who have indirect contact as part of policy or an enforcement role, such as Licensing Officers and Human Resources staff.
- 3.20 Provision of general awareness training for all Members will be provided.

Action Plan

- 3.21 The implementation of the revised 'Safeguarding' Policy is through the actions listed in an Action Plan attached at **Appendix B**.

- 3.22 A key action is outlining levels of training for key posts that work closely with children, young people and vulnerable adults and identifying those staff groups that may need training.
- 3.23 The main anticipated outcomes for delivering the composite Equalities and Safeguarding Action Plan is to ensure that the Council has properly documented and formally approved strategy and implementation plan in place. The governance structures clearly define roles and responsibilities and reporting lines for safeguarding. Safeguarding is adequately incorporated within the Council's recruitment and training procedures.

Monitoring

- 3.24 Delivery of the Policy will be monitored on a quarterly basis by the internal Equalities and Safeguarding Group chaired by the Head of Corporate Services.
- 3.25 Progress will also be reported to this Committee on annual basis as part of the Corporate Equalities Report in June each year.

4.0 Financial Implications

- 4.1 There are no specific financial implications relating to this report.

5.0 Corporate Implications

- 5.1 The Council must carry out its responsibilities by ensuring that the needs and interests of children, young people and vulnerable people are considered by all Members, employees and contracted providers, when taking decisions in relation to service provision.
- 5.2 This Policy supports the Council's officers and elected members in fulfilling their statutory duties.
- 5.3 The Council's governance arrangements in respect of safeguarding issues have been clearly defined and strengthened.
- 5.4 The Council's approach to safeguarding issues will now be effectively communicated and properly disseminated across all Council services.
- 5.4 The Council will maintain an organisational culture and ethos that reflects the importance of safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and vulnerable people.

6.0 Community Implications

- 6.1 The Children's Act 2004 places a duty on the *Council 'to make arrangements to ensure that in discharging their functions they have regard to the need to safeguard and promote the welfare of children.'* 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.
- 6.2 The adoption of this Policy and Action Plan meets both the statutory requirements and also provides evidence of community leadership on such a sensitive matter.
- 6.3 Working in partnership with lead agencies, other public bodies and organisations, children, young people and vulnerable adults in the District, will be provided within a structured framework to protect them from abuse, harm and promote their fair and proper treatment.

Equality Implications

- 6.4 As a service provider the Council is committed to equalities and fairness, and as such, the Council will endeavour to work with parents and other relevant parties in planning and organising activities that ensure all children, young people and vulnerable adults are able to take part at levels appropriate to their needs.
- 6.5 Therefore, this Policy contributes to the meeting of the Public Sector Equality Duty of the Equalities Act 2010

7.0 Background Papers

Central Midlands Audit Partnership, '*South Derbyshire DC -Safeguarding Audit Report*' (June 2012)

Derbyshire Safeguarding Children's Board, '*Safeguarding Children's Procedures,*' (2008)
Derby Safeguarding Board & Derbyshire Adults at Risk Partnership Board, '*Safeguarding Adults Policy & Procedures,*' (2012)