

Cherwell District Council

Executive

6 June 2016

Safeguarding Policy and Internal Review Update

Report of Director of Operational Delivery

This report is public

Purpose of report

To consider an update of the Council's joint safeguarding policy and receive an update on the progress made to date on implementing the recommendations from the internal safeguarding review.

1.0 Recommendations

The meeting is recommended:

- 1.1 To approve the updated joint Safeguarding policy as attached at Appendix 1.
- 1.2 To note the work carried out to date to implement the agreed recommendations from the internal review.

2.0 Introduction

- 2.1 The Council has an approved joint safeguarding policy with South Northamptonshire Council that is reviewed at least on a triennial basis or more frequently according to changes in legislation and/or emerging good practice. A review of the policy is due now due to the introduction of duties around the prevention of terrorism and anti-extremism as well as a general update being required following the joint internal review of Safeguarding undertaken last year. The updated policy document is attached at Appendix 1.
- 2.2 In addition, the opportunity has been taken to provide the Executive with an update on progress made to date on the approved recommendations from the 2015 joint internal review and a revised action plan for any outstanding items. This is attached at Appendix 2.

3.0 Report Details

- 3.1 The Council has duties and responsibilities for safeguarding children and vulnerable adults under a range of legislation. District councils have a statutory 'duty to cooperate' to safeguard children as prescribed in The Children Act (1989). This includes engagement with the Local Safeguarding Children Board. In addition, District councils have a duty 'to make arrangements to ensure that in discharging their functions they have regard to the need to safeguard and promote the welfare of children' under Section 11 of The Children Act 2004. Further guidance is contained within Working Together to Safeguard Children (2014). Duties and responsibilities to safeguard vulnerable adults are set out in various pieces of legislation and guidance including The Care Standards Act (2000) and The Care Act (2014).
- 3.2 The Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act (2006) sets out statutory requirements preventing the employment of 'unsuitable people' to work with children and vulnerable adults. District councils must ensure they practice safe recruitment and selection and have human resources policies and practice that deal effectively with safeguarding concerns.
- 3.3 District councils have very limited direct responsibilities for safeguarding - particularly they do not have responsibility for (and indeed should not) determine whether abuse has or is taking place nor do they have responsibility for investigating incidents or allegations as to whether abuse has taken place or making judgments about whether abuse has taken place.
- 3.4 The responsibilities of district councils are to put in place a safeguarding policy and procedures, to ensure that staff, managers and elected members are aware of the policy and procedures, to provide training and development on safeguarding, to know what the signs of abuse are and to know when and how to report concerns. This includes the making of referrals to the statutory agencies including the county councils and the police.
- 3.5 District councils should make a contribution to plans to safeguard and promote the wellbeing of individual children and vulnerable adults, including contributing to multi-agency planning through Child Protection Plans, the Common Assessment Framework and Team Around the Child meetings and assessments and plans made under the Care Act for vulnerable adults and vulnerable young people aged 16+ under transition arrangements.
- 3.6 District councils must also ensure that children and vulnerable adults are safeguarded within those services that they directly provide or those that they commission, through the provision of safe environments and safe working practices. This includes ensuring safeguarding standards are in place where external organisations use District Council land or premises, whether or not a charge is made to do so.
- 3.7 Finally, district councils must engage with local partnership arrangements including the Local Safeguarding Children Board and The Adult Safeguarding

Board. This has proved problematic in Oxfordshire with recent chairmen vacancies for both Safeguarding Boards.

- 3.8 The joint internal review resulted in a series of recommendations and a six monthly report is now due on progress. This is attached at Appendix 2. Good progress has been made in most areas but training is the significant issue that requires attention and further input. There is no central register of training undertaken by staff or an evaluation of the training taken and its impact that is easily accessible. Through appraisal records, staff record their training and managers have oversight of this and should be aware of who needs refresher training or new training following new legislation. However, a more systematic and automated process needs to be put in place which is under development.

4.0 Conclusion and Reasons for Recommendations

- 4.1 The revised joint policy is comprehensive and makes reference to the latest legislation providing a robust and thorough Safeguarding Policy document. The procedures for reporting a concern are clear and reference the new See it Report it intelligence gathering system.

5.0 Consultation

None

6.0 Alternative Options and Reasons for Rejection

- 6.1 The following alternative option has been identified and rejected for the reasons as set out below.

Option 1: Not to update the policy; this is not a viable alternative given the change in duties placed upon Local Authorities

7.0 Implications

Financial and Resource Implications

- 7.1 The implementation of a joint policy has no financial implications. The financial implications of the recommendations outlined in the approved action plan following the joint internal review have already been noted and approved.

Comments checked by
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Legal Implications

- 7.2 The policy now reflects the duties placed on local authorities and, provided it is adhered to, ensures compliance.

Comments checked by Kevin Lane, Head of Law and Governance
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8.0 Decision Information

Key Decision

Financial Threshold Met: No

Community Impact Threshold Met: No

Wards Affected

All

Links to Corporate Plan and Policy Framework

Cherwell: Safe, Clean and Green – work with partners to ensure the District remains a low crime area, reducing the fear of crime, tackling anti-social behaviour and focussing on safeguarding our residents and businesses.

Lead Councillor

Councillor Tony Ilott, Lead Member for Public Protection

Document Information

Appendix No	Title
1	Joint Policy for Safeguarding Children and Vulnerable People
2	Internal Safeguarding Review Recommendations, Action and Progress Update
Background Papers	
None	
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