

# EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

15th November 2011

## SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN AND VULNERABLE ADULTS POLICY

Relevant Portfolio Holder	Councillor Juliet Brunner, Community Safety & Regulatory Services
Portfolio Holder Consulted	Yes
Relevant Head of Service	Judith Willis, Acting Head of Community Services
Wards Affected	All Wards
Ward Councillor Consulted	N/A
Key Decision	

### 1. SUMMARY OF PROPOSALS

To approve the adoption of the Safeguarding Children, Young People and Vulnerable Adults Policy and Procedure attached as Appendix 1.

### 2. RECOMMENDATIONS

**The Executive is asked to RECOMMEND to Council that**

**the Safeguarding Children, Young People and Vulnerable Adults Policy and Procedure attached at Appendix 1 of the report be approved.**

### 3. KEY ISSUES

#### Financial Implications

- 3.1 The Policy recommends that in accordance with national guidance Criminal Record Bureau (CRB) checks are renewed every 3 years. A CRB check currently costs £44 and the Council currently has 224 employees with CRB checks. This equates to £3300 per annum (based on an even split over 3 years). The budget for CRB's is contained within each Head of Service budgets.

#### Legal Implications

- 3.2 District Councils have a duty under Section 1 of the Children Act 2004 to ensure that their functions are discharged with regard to the need to safeguard and promote the welfare of children. Section 11 of this Act sets out specific duties and the key features are:
- a) senior management commitment to the importance of safeguarding and promoting children's welfare;
  - b) a clear statement of the agency's responsibilities towards

children available for all staff;

- c) a clear line of accountability within the organisation for work on safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children;
- d) service development that takes account of the need to safeguard and promote welfare and is informed, where appropriate, by the views of children and families;
- e) staff training on safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children for all staff working with or (depending on the agency's primary functions) in contact with children and families;
- f) safe recruitment procedures in place;
- g) effective inter-agency working to safeguard and promote the welfare of children; and;
- h) effective information sharing.

3.3 Working Together to Safeguard Children 2006 Statutory Guidance comments specifically on the following, which have overlap with the duties and work of district councils:

- a) Housing authorities and registered social landlords (RSLs) – both generally in their roles as assessors of need and contact with families, but specifically in the provision of accommodation for vulnerable 16 and 17 year olds. Supporting People arrangements should reflect identification of particular vulnerabilities, including the protection of the public and specifically children by considering the safe and controlled accommodation of sex offenders;
- b) Sport, culture and leisure services – staff, volunteers and contractors who provide services have a varying degree of direct contact with children and their families and arrangements and codes of practice need to be in place to govern the provider and ensure that matters of concern are noticed and reported;
- c) Community Safety Partnerships – domestic abuse, risk from sex offenders, bullying, adolescent vulnerability, and anti-social behaviour all have a vulnerability and safeguarding component where risks of children are both direct and secondary. Local Safeguarding Children Boards are asked to monitor the numbers of child and young people who are victims of crime as well as ensuring that young offenders' vulnerabilities are properly considered.

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- 3.4 In respect of Vulnerable Adults, Local authorities also have the responsibility to work with partners to ensure that vulnerable adults, who are at risk of abuse, receive protection and support.
- 3.5 The Legal Services Manager has been consulted with regard to the legal implications.

**Service/Operational Implications**

- 3.6 Redditch Borough Council currently has service specific Safeguarding Policies for Children's Centres and Leisure and Cultural Services.

It is proposed that a new updated corporate Policy and Procedure be adopted as detailed in Appendix 1.

- 3.7 The Policy covers the safeguarding of both children and young people and vulnerable adults. This is in line with recent recommendations by the Worcestershire Safeguarding Board.
- 3.8 In the past cultural or leisure services within District Council's have been given responsibility for leading on the safeguarding agenda. However, there is a corporate responsibility for the Council and its partner's functions to ensure that children and young people grow up in a safe environment and vulnerable adults are safeguarded. This role also extends to the funding and grant giving, work with the voluntary & community sector, our community leadership, our housing function and community safety responsibilities. Therefore it is proposed that the corporate lead will be the responsibility of the Head of Community Services.
- 3.9 The Policy includes the need for a Senior Manager, with 2 deputies, to be appointed as Safeguarding Advisors. The role of the Safeguarding Advisor is to provide advice and guidance to other Council Officers in adhering to the Policy and procedures, together with ensuring the Council regularly reviews its duties in respect of safeguarding. In the absence of the Head of Community Services, the two deputies will be the Head of Leisure and Cultural Services and Head of Housing.
- 3.10 In line with national good practice guidance the Policy requires the renewal of CRB checks every 3 years. The Government announced in July that they are currently reviewing the CRB vetting and barring scheme. The Policy will be updated to reflect any changes.
- 3.11 An Officers working group has been established to regularly review the policy and council procedures to ensure satisfactory compliance. The initial tasks of the Working Group being to review the CRB procedures as new Government guidance is received; to establish a training

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programme for Officers and Members; to undertake an audit of the Council's duties in respect of Section 11 of the Children's Act 2004; and to ensure that all Council contracts and grant funding include a clause to ensure that appropriate safeguarding standards are met by third parties.

## **Customer / Equalities and Diversity Implications**

- 3.12 The policy will assist in ensuring that all customers, in particular vulnerable residents, are adequately safeguarded and their welfare promoted.

## **4. RISK MANAGEMENT**

If the proposed policy is not accepted, the Council will potentially be at risk of not administering its legislative duties as set out in Section 3.2.

## **5. APPENDICES**

Appendix 1 - Safeguarding Policy and Procedure

## **6. BACKGROUND PAPERS**

Children Act 2004.

Working Together to Safeguard Children 2006 Statutory Guidance.

## **7. AUTHOR OF REPORT**

Name: Judith Willis  
E Mail: Judith.willis@bromsgroveandredditchbc.gov.uk  
Tel: (01527) 534149