

WYRE FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL

CABINET
21 AUGUST 2008

Safeguarding Children Policy

	OPEN
SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITY STRATEGY THEME	Meeting the needs of children and young people
CORPORATE PLAN AIM	A Better Quality of Life A Well Run and Responsive Council
CABINET MEMBER:	Councillor Marcus Hart
HEAD OF SERVICE	Head of Community and Partnership Services
CONTACT OFFICER:	Kay Higman ext 2902
APPENDICES	Appendix A: Safeguarding Children Policy 2008-2011 Appendix B: Safeguarding Children Implementation Plan <i>The appendices to this report have been circulated electronically and a public inspection copy is available on request. (See front cover for details).</i>

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To update the Council's Safeguarding Children Policy.

2. RECOMMENDATION

The Cabinet is asked to RECOMMEND to Council that:

- 2.1 The Safeguarding Children Policy be adopted by the Council for 2008 to 2011, with a formal review of the policy to be carried out in 2011.**

3. BACKGROUND

- 3.1 The Safeguarding Children Policy for Wyre Forest District Council fulfils a requirement for all agencies to have embedded corporate procedures to protect children from harm and to ensure compliance with Government legislation. (Working Together to Safeguard Children 2006 and Section 11, Statutory Guidance, Children Act 2004)
- 3.2 Section 11 Statutory Guidance 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'**.

- 3.3 Such arrangements relate to the Council demonstrating Community Leadership by setting an example of best practice and ensuring that at all levels within the organisation there is an understanding and awareness of the importance of every aspect of safeguarding. This includes responsibilities to co-operate with all partners within the statutory, voluntary and community sector in information sharing and raising awareness.
- 3.4 The Safeguarding Policy encompasses procedures and standards relating to:-
- a) Responsibilities and Principles
 - b) Recognition of Poor Practice, Abuse and Bullying
 - c) Prevention of Abuse including codes of behaviour, recruitment, training and disclosure checks for employees and Members
 - d) Referral Procedures

It provides a generic statement on what parents, customers, young people and can expect from the Council, as minimum standards, in the area of child protection

- 3.5 The Head of Community and Partnership Services from Wyre Forest District Council represents all District Council's on the Worcestershire Safeguarding Children Board. The representative on the Safeguarding Board Executive Group is the Cultural Services Manager for Community and Partnership Services and the Wyre Forest District Council Designated Safeguarding Advisor role is undertaken by the Council's Community Development Manager. This level of involvement and representation illustrates the commitment this Council has to an important area of work.
- 3.6 The Safeguarding Children Policy was adopted by the Council in July 2005. The Policy specified a review date of July 2008 within the procedures.
- 3.7 The procedures contained within the policy aim to ensure that all Wyre Forest District Council provision is a safe, enjoyable and a positive experience for children and young people as participants and for employees whose involvement is integral to the development of quality opportunities and services.
- 3.8 The Council has a Safeguarding Children Implementation Group, which has been responsible for ensuring the action plan associated with the policy has been delivered. The Implementation Plan is available in Appendix B.
- 3.9 In 2005, Wyre Forest District Council was the first of the District Councils in Worcestershire to adopt a policy for Safeguarding Children. The other District Councils have subsequently used this Council's policy as the basis for their own.
- 3.10 The Wyre Forest District Council Safeguarding Children Policy embeds current best practice within it's procedures and as such, reflects the continued implementation of policy that gives due regard to the need for the Council to safeguard children and promote children's welfare.

4. KEY ISSUES

- 4.1 The Safeguarding Children Policy has been reviewed and updated to incorporate current best practice, particularly in relation on Criminal Record Bureau checks. The main changes in the policy relate to terminology and contact details.

- 4.2 Section 3 - Prevention of Abuse sets the framework for this Council's policy on staff and Member Criminal Record Bureau (CRB) checks and training and recruitment procedures. These procedures are in place to protect children and young people and those adults / employees / and Members in positions of responsibility, trust and Community Leadership.
- 4.3 Heads of Service will ensure that CRB or "self declaration" forms are completed, as appropriate by employees within their respective Divisions in accordance with the definitions of "direct" and "indirect" contact within Section 3 of the policy.
- 4.4 Members of Wyre Forest District Council will be required to complete a self declaration form and will have the option to complete an enhanced CRB should they wish.
- 4.5 Heads of Service will be required to complete a self declaration form and have the option to complete an enhanced CRB check should they wish.

5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 Any additional financial implications for the Council will be met from within existing budgets.

6. LEGAL AND POLICY IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 The Safeguarding Children Policy 2008 – 2011 is an updated policy incorporating minor amendments. This policy is in accordance with the Council's responsibilities under Section 11, Statutory Guidance of the Children Act 2004.
- 6.2 If as a result of this policy there are implications for employees' conditions of service, (i.e. a different level of CRB check is deemed necessary) appropriate negotiation and consultation will be undertaken in accordance with the following guidance in the Personnel Handbook.
- Recruitment and Selection Process (Section 1 – Appointment – Access to Children)
 - Disciplinary Policy and Procedures (Section 8 - 13.4 - The Criminal Records Bureau – Disclosures)

7. RISK MANAGEMENT

- 7.1 The Council has an implementation group which is in place to ensure that the practices and procedures outlined within the policy are embedded into the Council's working to minimise any risk associated with children and young people and safeguarding.
- 7.2 The Safeguarding Policy mitigates the risks to children and young people, employees and Members in relation to services, activities, procedures and practice in child protection and safeguarding within the Council.
- 7.3 In accordance with this Council's Risk Management Policy a structured and focussed approach to managing both Corporate and operational risk is required and has been applied in the review of the Safeguarding Children Policy.

8. CONCLUSION

8.1 Safeguarding Children is a key policy for Wyre Forest District Council and this document will ensure that child protection remains a priority. The policy highlights the commitment of all involved in ensuring that our procedures are continuously reviewed, improved and in line with government legislation and best practice.

9. CONSULTEES

- CMT
- Cabinet Member for Leisure Services Councillor Marcus Hart

10. BACKGROUND PAPERS

- Safeguarding Children Policy 2005
- Working Together to Safeguard Children (HM Government)
- Statutory Guidance on making arrangements to safeguard and promote the welfare of children under section 11 of the Children Act 2004 (HM Government)