

REPORT TO: PLACE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE, EXECUTIVE, COUNCIL

**Date of Meetings: 9 June 2016
14 July 2016
26 July 2016**

Report of: Corporate Manager Policy, Communications and Community Engagement

Title: Safeguarding

Is this a Key Decision?

No

Is this an Executive or Council Function?

Council

1. What is the report about?

To seek approval for an updated joint Devon district councils safeguarding policy and provide an update on safeguarding work that Exeter City Council is currently undertaking.

2. Recommendations:-

That Scrutiny Committee Place and Executive support, and Executive recommend to Council the adoption of the updated joint safeguarding policy.

3. Reasons for the recommendation:

The safeguarding policy has been updated to reflect recent changes in legislation and has been written as a joint policy for all district councils in Devon to work to.

4. What are the resource implications including non financial resources:

The report is an update on the policy and related ongoing work by officers to meet safeguarding requirements. There are no specific resource implications other than training and awareness raising programmes to ensure all staff understand their responsibilities and what to do to manage enquiries and referrals.

5. Section 151 Officer comments:

There are no additional financial implications contained in this report. Any training requirements would be expected to be covered from the Councils corporate training budget.

6. What are the legal aspects?

6.1 The Children Act 2004, specifically Section 11, places a duty on key people and public bodies, including district councils, to make arrangements to ensure that their functions are discharged with regard to the need to safeguard and promote the welfare of children.

6.2 The Care Act 2014 requires local authorities and relevant partners (including district councils) to co-operate with each other when exercising any respective functions which are

relevant to care and support. This co-operation can be at a strategic level or related to individual cases.

- 6.3** There are a number of other pieces of legislation that cover all aspects of safeguarding under which the council has specific duties and these are listed in the policy document.

7. Monitoring officer Comments

The Monitoring Officer agrees that the Policy recommended to Members is a necessary step to ensure compliance with the Council's statutory obligations.

8. Report Details:

8.1 Policy

- 8.2 The city council has had a safeguarding children and vulnerable adults policy in place since 2006 which has been subject to review and minor amendments as and when there have been changes in the law and developments in best practice.

- 8.3 In the last eighteen months there have been major changes in legislation not least the Care Act 2014 which places a duty on authorities to co-operate when exercising functions which are relevant to care and support. Authorities are also being asked to work together to respond to new issues under the safeguarding banner that perhaps previously had been considered low risk and/or the responsibility of specific organisations, for example modern slavery, child sexual exploitation and violent extremism.

- 8.4 To respond to this increasingly complex area of work the safeguarding leads for each of the district councils in Devon have been meeting regularly to find ways of working together. This includes the development of a joint policy document to provide a framework of understanding about what safeguarding is and how to respond across the county.

- 8.5 Members are asked to endorse this document.

8.6 Procedures

- 8.7 Within the city council a new group has been set up of those officers with a key responsibility for safeguarding in order to develop clarity around procedures and share learning and good practice.

- 8.8 These officers, referred to in the guidance as Designated Professionals (DPs), represent Housing Customer Relations, Housing Options, Benefits, Environmental Health and Licensing and RAMM but are able to respond to a referral or request for advice from anywhere in the council.

- 8.9 The revised procedures for making a referral have now been published on the intranet, publicised via City News and will be highlighted in training to staff.

- 8.10 If the joint policy is agreed the next steps will be to look at whether there are aspects of guidance and procedures that can be agreed between districts.

- 8.11 ECC safeguarding officers are now linked into the MACSE (Missing and Child Sexual Exploitation) group. Information is sent on people and locations of concern to the Safeguarding Lead and Housing Options and this is shared with Environmental Health and Licensing. Links can then be made with the ASBAT (Anti-social Behaviour Action Team) and StAG (Street Attachment Group) meetings to ensure issues are not being missed.

8.12 Governance and audit

8.13 The joint meeting of district leads now has direct contact with the chairs of both of the statutory Safeguarding Adults and Safeguarding Children boards. The Safeguarding Children Board Manager also regularly attends this meeting to provide updates on strategic developments and decisions and receive feedback on issues for the districts.

8.14 The council is normally subject to a peninsula wide audit against section 11 of the Children Act. This is facilitated by Devon Safeguarding Children Board (DSCB). The audit is currently being revised following the Cornwall Safeguarding Boards' decision to opt out from the process and it is unlikely that it will be carried out this year.

8.15 The districts group have agreed in principle with the DSCB that in future the districts response to the audit can be a joint document highlighting areas of good practice and areas for further work in specific authorities.

8.16 There is no current audit process for safeguarding adults but now that the board is on a statutory footing it is anticipated that some form of audit will be set up in the near future.

8.17 Internal safeguarding training and awareness raising

8.18 An updated version of the safeguarding e-learning module is being rolled out shortly to all staff and will form part of the corporate induction programme. A toolbox talk for manual staff is being developed from this.

8.19 A training needs matrix is being developed to identify the levels of training need for different teams across the council and the types of specialist training they might require.

8.20 Designated Professionals are updated regularly on Devon County Council's safeguarding training sessions and the new learning partnership with Teignbridge provides further opportunities for training sessions on specialist subjects.

8.21 An e-learning module and toolbox talk on preventing violent extremism will be rolled out to all staff after the safeguarding module to update staff on the new duty to have due regard to the need to prevent people from being drawn into terrorism as laid out in the Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015.

8.22 External safeguarding training and awareness raising

8.23 A free training event for hotels and restaurants in partnership Devon and Cornwall Police, Devon and Somerset Fire and Rescue Service and Public Health England was held on 28 January. Focused on health and safety, this also covers emerging threats such as modern slavery, child sexual exploitation and counter terrorism.

8.24 Training is also being delivered to taxi drivers and businesses that form part of the evening and night time economy on child sexual exploitation in conjunction with the Community Safety Partnership.

8.25 Prevent

8.26 All districts and Devon County Council have applied to a one off Home Office fund of up to £10,000 each to support implementation of the Prevent duty. It has been agreed to pool this money to develop projects across the county such as increasing the number of qualified trainers to a comprehensive training and awareness raising programme for schools and public authorities.

9 How does the decision contribute to the Council's Corporate Plan?

In promoting safeguarding and protecting the wellbeing of children, young people and adults with care and support needs the safeguarding policy meets contributes directly to two strands of the Corporate Plan:

- Provide services to meet customers' needs
- Support Exeter's communities

10 What risks are there and how can they be reduced?

The council safeguarding officers work closely with both Devon Safeguarding Adults Board and Safeguarding Children Board as well as other district council officers. This ensures best practice and that the council is kept up to date with any issues. The council is also subject to an annual audit carried out on behalf of the Safeguarding Children Board.

Safeguarding is included on the Corporate Risk Register.

11 What is the impact of the decision on equality and diversity; health and wellbeing; safeguarding children, young people and vulnerable adults, Economy safety and the environment?

The policy and associated work has a direct impact on equality and diversity, health and wellbeing and safeguarding. An equality impact assessment has been conducted which is appended to this report.

12 Are there any other options?

No.

Bruce Luxton, Corporate Manager Policy, Communications and Community Engagement

Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1972 (as amended)

Background papers used in compiling this report:

None

Contact for enquiries:

Democratic Services (Committees), Room 2.3, (01392) 26115