

Somerset West and Taunton Council

Executive – 24 February 2020

Safeguarding Policy

This matter is the responsibility of Executive Councillor Member Cllr Smith-Roberts

Report Author: Scott Weetch, Community Resilience Manager

1. Executive Summary / Purpose of the Report

To seek approval for an updated Safeguarding Policy.

2. Recommendations

2.1 Executive is asked to approve the Safeguarding Policy as at Appendix A

2.2 Delegation be provided to the relevant Corporate Director in consultation with the portfolio holder, to make any subsequent amendments required as a result of legislative or operational changes. The Safeguarding Policy will be reviewed annually and approved by the Senior Management Team.

3. Risk Assessment (if appropriate)

3.1 There is an ongoing risk associated with having incomplete or insufficient Safeguarding arrangements. The Policy goes some way to mitigating this

4. Background and Full details of the Report

4.1 The Council has a statutory responsibility and a duty of care to ensure that in discharging its functions, regard is given to the need to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and young people under the age of 18 and vulnerable adults. This includes working in line with safeguarding guidelines and reporting issues of safeguarding to the appropriate authorities and partner agencies.

4.2 Safeguarding should be embedded within the organisation as it cuts across all services and functions of the Council. It cannot and must not operate in isolation.

4.3 The Safeguarding Policy has been reviewed to ensure that it reflects current legislation, countywide procedures and working practices at the Council. It is attached as Appendix A.

- 4.4 The updated document is designed to outline the legislative requirements in respect of safeguarding and the duties that are placed on the Council in this regard. It also specifies the duties and responsibilities of various officers of the Council in respect of safeguarding.
- 4.5 Training is an important aspect of safeguarding and it is mandated that all staff complete e-learning on safeguarding with specialist courses being provided as necessary. All staff also receive initial information as part of their induction. The Council has access to a variety of training and staff will have access to such training as is commensurate with their role and duties to ensure learning is current and relevant. This is likely to include, but not limited to Sheltered Housing officers, estates officers, homelessness staff and other key customer facing positions such as Revenues and Benefits officers and trades staff.
- 4.6 The Council will also encourage and, where possible, help to facilitate, Safeguarding training for those who work with us from the Voluntary and Community Sector (VCS).
- 4.7 As the duties also extend to Elected Members, it is appropriate to hold periodic awareness sessions with Councillors.
- 4.8 An important part of safeguarding work is participation in County-wide partnerships where good practice can be shared and also ensures that all partners are working to similar standards. The Council adheres to agreed information sharing protocols.
- 4.9 Subject to approval, it is intended to promote awareness of the Safeguarding Policy with staff via the internal communications and more formally through our online learning portal which requires staff to understand and accept the policy. The Council will also continue to coordinate and champion safeguarding through regular internal 'Safeguarding Leads' meetings. Raising awareness is a key component of good governance in this area.
- 4.10 In addition, following adoption of the policy, next steps include:
- i. Development or updating of existing procedures:
 1. Procedures for Children's Early Help or Safeguarding Concerns and Child Sexual Exploitation
 2. Procedures for Adults at Risk concerns
 3. Guide for staff (do's and don'ts working with children and adults)
 4. Disclosure and Barring Service requirements – cross checking against key roles
 5. Prevent, Modern Day Slavery, Female Genital Mutilation and Domestic Abuse
 - ii. E-learning oversight to ensure training is being utilised
 - iii. Re-establish Safeguarding Champions roles.
 - iv. Bite-sized bespoke training - For front-line staff and members
 - v. Communications and Promotion internally
- 4.11 All council policies should include a safeguarding consideration, where necessary. To ensure that Safeguarding is always considered, it is included as part of the Corporate template for reports.
- 4.12 There is an Annual Section 11 Audit carried out by Somerset County Council to review policy and procedure across the county. This is currently in progress for the year 2020/21. Any findings from that Audit will be actioned accordingly.

5. Links to Corporate Strategy

5.1 This policy sits across all priority streams and outcomes.

6. Finance / Resource Implications

6.1 The implementation of this policy is not expect to incur any additional costs over and above existing budgets and resources. Paid-for training courses will be funded within the current training budget. Duties and responsibilities apply to existing staff with no additional capacity requirements identified at this stage.

7. Legal Implications (if any)

7.1 These are set out in detail under item 4 of the Policy. In particular, the Council has obligations under the Care Act 2014, sections 42-46; and the Children Act 2004, section 11 which 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.

8. Climate and Sustainability Implications (if any)

8.1 No anticipated impacts

9. Safeguarding and/or Community Safety Implications (if any)

9.1 These are considered as part of the overall report and aims of the policy.

10. Equality and Diversity Implications (if any)

10.1 Adequate safeguarding arrangements help to ensure that those with protected characteristics are embedded in our policy framework and that sufficient protections are in place to ensure the safety and wellbeing of those individuals and groups. An Equality Impact Assessment has been undertaken and has found no adverse impacts.

11. Social Value Implications (if any)

11.1 The Public Services (Social Value) Act came into force on 31 January 2013. It requires people who commission public services to think about how they can also secure wider social, economic and environmental benefits.

11.2 Safeguarding is a feature of commissioning in as much as providers must have adequate safeguarding policies in place or statement of safeguarding intent.

12. Partnership Implications (if any)

12.1 Arrangements to ensure safeguarding cut across a number of partnership arrangements and partners e.g. Somerset County Council, the Safer Somerset Partnership. See also section 15 below.

13. Health and Wellbeing Implications (if any)

13.1 Safeguarding is intrinsically linked with Health and Wellbeing, which is a key outcome for the policy and actions that result from it.

14. Asset Management Implications (if any)

14.1 None

15. Data Protection Implications (if any)

15.1 It is essential that safeguarding concerns are able to be raised, discussed and resolved in a multi-agency environment where it is appropriate to do so. As such, sufficient data and information sharing agreements must be in place to enable and support such discussion whilst also protecting the rights and freedoms of individuals. Such arrangements exist and are regularly reviewed.

16. Consultation Implications (if any)

16.1 None

17. Scrutiny/Executive Comments / Recommendation(s) (if any)

17.1 None

Democratic Path:

- **Scrutiny / Corporate Governance or Audit Committees – No**
- **Executive – Yes**
- **Full Council – No**

Reporting Frequency: **Once only** **Ad-hoc** **Quarterly**
 Twice-yearly **Annually**

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