

# Communities, Housing & Environment Committee

18 October 2016

Is the final decision on the recommendations in this report to be made at this meeting?

Yes

## MBC Safeguarding Policy for Children & Vulnerable Adults

<b>Final Decision-Maker</b>	Communities, Housing & Environment Committee
<b>Lead Head of Service</b>	John Littlemore, Head of Housing and Community Services
<b>Lead Officer and Report Author</b>	Matt Roberts, Community Partnerships & Resilience Manager
<b>Classification</b>	Non-exempt
<b>Wards affected</b>	All

### This report makes the following recommendations to this Committee:

1. That the Committee adopts the safeguarding policy to be used by the Council and gives delegated authority to the Head of Housing & Community Services to make any necessary operational amendments in consultation with the Chairman and Vice Chairman of the Communities, Housing and Environmental Committee.
2. That the Committee approve the formation of the MBC Safeguarding Forum which will oversee the implementation of the policy and be responsible for reviewing it on an annual basis to ensure that changes in legislation or working practices are included.
3. That the Committee requests that the Head of Housing & Community Services reports back to a future meeting on the training that should be undertaken by Councillors and takes this opportunity to refresh the training assessment for officers and report back on the appointment of Designated Officers within relevant teams.
4. That the Committee appoints a Member Safeguarding Champion.

### This report relates to the following corporate priorities:

- Keeping Maidstone Borough an attractive place for all – By ensuring that all staff, contractors and elected Members understand the Council's Safeguarding obligations, children and vulnerable adults who are at risk harm can be referred to the appropriate agencies. Also has a positive impact on helping to reduce crime and anti-social behaviour.

### Timetable

<b>Meeting</b>	<b>Date</b>
Communities, Housing and Environment Committee	18 October 2016

# MBC Safeguarding Policy for Children & Vulnerable Adults

## 1. PURPOSE OF REPORT AND EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1 Maidstone Borough Council has a statutory and moral responsibility to safeguard those at risk of harm. This policy has been written to give staff, contractors and elected Members guidance around relevant legislation, signs and types of abuse and what to do next to refer the concern to the most appropriate agency so that the subject of concern can receive suitable help.
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## 2. INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

- 2.1 In October 2015 the Mid Kent Audit team undertook a review of MBC's safeguarding arrangements, whilst they found the Council is satisfying its statutory obligations and had no immediate concerns to report they gave the controls a 'weak' rating, stating that; 'further improvements are needed to provide greater resilience to these arrangements and to ensure safeguarding risks are being adequately managed'.
  - 2.2 This policy will be made available to staff along with relevant training provided on the basis of the level of contact with members of the public or whether the member of staff will be acting as a 'Designated Officer' and will be supporting their teams in discharging their safeguarding duties.
  - 2.3 Safeguarding training will be provided on three levels, the majority of training will be provided through online training provided to all staff.
  - 2.4 Staff coming into regular contact with the children and vulnerable members of the public will receive a half day, classroom based training session. A second training session will be provided on Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE).
  - 2.5 Designated Officers will receive a half day training session on how to act in an advisory capacity to help colleagues to assess and suitably refer any safeguarding concerns identified but will also be expected to take a further training session on thresholds for referrals, this training will be provided through the Kent Safeguarding Children's Board (KSCB).
  - 2.6 It is proposed that a Safeguarding Forum be created to oversee Maidstone Borough Council's safeguarding policy and practice. This group will include managers from Kent County Council's Early Help & Preventative Services, Specialist Children's Services and Adult Social Care. The Forum will provide a platform to share best practice, learning and allow for discussion on new legislation and how all organisations can work to better safeguard children and vulnerable adults.
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### **3. AVAILABLE OPTIONS**

- 3.1 Option one: Do nothing: this is not recommended as the current safeguarding policy is out of date and does not reflect changes in legislation and best practice.
- 3.2 Option two: Adopt this policy subject to amendments that may need to be made, such as inclusion of a list of Designated Officers and finalised terms of reference for the Safeguarding Forum once it has been agreed and approved by its members. Adopting this policy would also mean approving the delivery of training once an assessment of the levels of training required.
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### **4. PREFERRED OPTION AND REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 4.1 Option two is the preferred option. If the Council does not provide staff with a policy which captures legislative changes and current best practice then the organisation will not be able to adequately discharge its duties.
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### **5. NEXT STEPS: COMMUNICATION AND IMPLEMENTATION OF THE DECISION**

- 5.1 An assessment of the level of training for every councillor to be combined with a refresh of the existing officer training programme. This was completed a year ago but within that time new members of staff have joined the organisation and some existing staff have changed job roles.
- 5.2 The Policy and further information on safeguarding should be made available via the Council's Intranet. Ideally this should include a referral system so that all concerns raised can be centrally logged and recorded.
- 5.3 Maidstone Borough Council's Safeguarding Forum will be set up, meetings to be arranged on a quarterly basis.
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### **6. CROSS-CUTTING ISSUES AND IMPLICATIONS**

<b>Issue</b>	<b>Implications</b>	<b>Sign-off</b>
<b>Impact on Corporate Priorities</b>	This policy will contribute to keeping Maidstone Borough an attractive place for all – By ensuring that all staff, contractors and elected Members understand the Council's Safeguarding obligations, children and vulnerable adults who are at risk harm can be referred to the appropriate agencies.	Head of Housing & Community Services

<b>Risk Management</b>	The adopted policy will contribute to reducing the risk of the Council failing to achieve the standard of safeguarding required.	
<b>Financial</b>	There are no financial implications in this report.	
<b>Staffing</b>	Contained within the report.	
<b>Legal</b>	Assuming that the Council discharges its duties adequately there would not be any legal implications	
<b>Equality Impact Needs Assessment</b>		
<b>Environmental/Sustainable Development</b>		
<b>Community Safety</b>	The policy supports the key priority identified by the Safer Maidstone Partnership's Plan under Community Resilience.	
<b>Human Rights Act</b>		
<b>Procurement</b>		
<b>Asset Management</b>		

## 7. REPORT APPENDICES

The following documents are to be published with this report and form part of the report:

- Appendix A: MBC Safeguarding Policy for Children & Vulnerable Adults
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