

MAIDSTONE BOROUGH COUNCIL

CABINET MEMBER FOR COMMUNITY SERVICES

**REPORT OF ASSISTANT DIRECTOR OF CUSTOMER SERVICES
AND PARTNERSHIPS**

Report prepared by Jacqueline Bobb

Date Issued: 18th March 2010

1. WORKING WITH CHILDREN POLICIES

1.1 Key Issue for Decision

- 1.1.1 The Cabinet Member is asked to consider and approve the attached Corporate Policy and Procedures.

1.2 Recommendation of Assistant Director of Customer Services and Partnerships

- 1.2.1 That the Cabinet Member approves the updated Child Protection and Safeguarding Children Policy and Procedures.

- 1.2.2 That the Cabinet Member approves the new Working With Children Policies which sit underneath the overarching Child Protection and Safeguarding Children Policy and Procedures.

- 1.2.3 That the Cabinet Member delegates authority to agree future minor changes to these policies or additional underpinning policies to the Assistant Director of Customer Services and Partnerships, who is the designated Child Protection Officer for the Council.

1.3 Background and Reasons for Recommendation

- 1.3.1 Since the adoption of the Child Protection and Safeguarding Children Policy and Procedures (CPSCPP) by the Council in May 2007, the Child Protection and Safeguarding Children working group have developed a series of underpinning policies relating to working with children in consultation with relevant internal departments and external agencies. The Safeguarding Children and Child Protection Policy and Procedures apply to all staff whose work involves contact with children and young people under 18 years of age and statemented ("vulnerable") young people under the age of 25.

- 1.3.2 Many of these policies were already in use by individual departments and approved by relevant internal departments and external agencies, however it was felt to be good practice for these policies to be adopted by the Council as a whole to ensure safeguarding is embedded corporately.
- 1.3.3 In developing the working with children policies it became evident that the overarching CPSCPP needed minor amendments to bring it up to date with current legislation. The amendments have been made in consultation with the relevant agencies.
- 1.3.4 In addition to being good practice, operating under corporate policies is a requirement of some partner organisations such as Ofsted, Kent Police and Kent County Council so that policies are in place for a wide range of issues regarding working with children. Policies also need to be in place to ensure an acceptable inspection rating.
- 1.3.5 The attached revised Child Protection and Safeguarding Children Policy and Procedures and the new Working with Children Policies have been developed and endorsed by the Child Protection and Safeguarding Children working group. This group is chaired by the Assistant Director of Customer Services and Partnerships and consists of designated officers who work or come in contact with children.
- 1.3.6 In addition consultation has taken place with other professionals within the council and external agencies such as Ofsted, Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS), KCC Youth Service and KCC Child Protection and Safeguarding Children Team.
- 1.3.7 The proposed policies are compliant with the Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage (May 2008 edition) and the Kent and Medway Safeguarding Children Handbook (Kent Children's Safeguarding Board).
- 1.3.8 Other local authorities/organisations' policies were referred to in the development of these policies to ascertain best practice, such as the London Borough of Richmond, Tonbridge and Malling, Early Years' Service, Kent Safeguarding Children's Board and Ofsted.

1.4 Alternative Action and why not Recommended

- 1.4.1 The Cabinet Member could choose not to adopt these policies corporately; however it is felt that this would not be good practice as it may lead to inconsistencies between different services within the Council and may leave the Council open to challenge by external agencies in terms of the council's obligations. This would relate to a range of services for example the contact centre, the museum, the

theatre, parks and open spaces and the running of the leisure centre's.

1.5 Impact on Corporate Objectives

- 1.5.1 These policy and procedure documents will ensure that the Council adopts best practice and complies with key aspects of the Children Act 2004 regarding Safeguarding Children and Child Protection. This will also impact on the Council's objectives of making Maidstone a place that has strong, healthy and safe communities, a place to live and enjoy and a place with efficient and effective public services.

1.6 Risk Management

- 1.6.1 Failure to make arrangements to safeguard and promote the welfare of children could lead to children being left in vulnerable situation and would be a breach of the Children Act 2004; the Council has a duty to co-operate with the Lead Agency (KCC) on this matter. Approval of these documents removes the risk of failure to comply with the law in this respect.

1.7 Other Implications

1.7.1

1.	Financial	x
2.	Staffing	
3.	Legal	x
4.	Equality Impact Needs Assessment	
5.	Environmental/Sustainable Development	
6.	Community Safety	x
7.	Human Rights Act	
8.	Procurement	
9.	Asset Management	

- 1.7.2 There are no expected additional financial considerations following the adoption of the original Child Protection and Safeguarding Children Policy and Procedures in May 2007. Undertaking CRB checks and training staff in their responsibilities has already been accounted for.

1.7.3 The legal implications from the adoption of the original CPSC policy and procedures were that a failure to make arrangements to safeguard and promote the welfare of children would be a breach of the Children Act 2004; the Council has a duty to co-operate with the Lead Agency (KCC) on this matter. Approval of these documents removes the risk of failure to comply with the law in this respect. In addition, it is a requirement of the Hotfoot registration with Ofsted that a comprehensive set of policies and procedures is in place.

1.7.4 The community safety implications are that the additional policies would further ensure compliance with safeguarding obligations across all Council departments.

1.8 Relevant Documents

1.8.1 Appendices

Safeguarding Children and Child Protection Policy

Safeguarding Children and Child Protection Procedures

1.8.2 Background Documents

Safeguarding Children and Child Protection Policy and procedures 2007

IS THIS A KEY DECISION REPORT?

Yes

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No

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If yes, when did it first appear in the Forward Plan?

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This is a Key Decision because:

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Wards/Parishes affected:

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How to Comment

Should you have any comments on the issue that is being considered please contact either the relevant Officer or the Member of the Executive who will be taking the decision.

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