

# APPENDIX J

## WAVERLEY BOROUGH COUNCIL

### EXECUTIVE – 29 NOVEMBER 2011

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#### Title:

#### **SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN AND VULNERABLE ADULTS**

**[Portfolio Holder: Cllr Stephen O'Grady]**

**[Wards Affected: All]**

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#### Summary and purpose:

This report reminds members of the Council's role and responsibilities in relation to safeguarding children and its duties under the Children Act 2004, and its responsibilities for helping to protect vulnerable adults. This report outlines some of the activities undertaken by the Council during 2010/11 and also asks the Executive to approve the revised 'Safeguarding Children and Vulnerable Adults Policy'.

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#### How this report relates to the Council's Corporate Priorities:

This report relates to the Council's Corporate Priorities namely: **Improving Lives** – Improving the quality of life for all, particularly the more vulnerable within our society.

#### Equality and Diversity Implications:

Children and vulnerable adults are more at risk than most from neglect, abuse and harm. It is important that public services take appropriate measures to safeguard children and vulnerable adults who are not in a position to protect or speak out for themselves.

#### Climate Change Implications

There are no climate change implications.

#### Resource/Value for Money Implications:

These are addressed in paragraph 23 of this report.

#### Legal Implications:

Waverley has a legal obligation under the Children Act 2004 to work with Surrey County Council as the lead authority to promote the safeguarding of children.

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#### Background

1. In 2003, the Government published the Green Paper '*Every Child Matters*'. This was associated with its response to the Victoria Climbié Inquiry Report, which recommended the need for a change in the way local authorities and

other agencies were organised to deal adequately with children's services. The Green Paper proposed changes to maximise opportunities and minimise risks for all children and young people. The focus was around the needs of all children, young people and families to improve the outcomes and close the gap between the disadvantaged and those who are not.

2. *'Every Child Matters'* identified five outcomes as central to the well-being of children and young people:
  1. physical and mental health and emotional well-being - "to be healthy"
  2. protection from harm and neglect - "to stay safe"
  3. education, training and recreation - "to enjoy and achieve"
  4. the contribution made by them to society - "to make a positive contribution"
  5. social and economic well-being – "to achieve economic well-being"
3. The Children Act 2004 created a clear accountability for children's services, to enable improved joint working between agencies and secure a greater focus on safeguarding children. The Act established a better basis for the integrated planning, commissioning and delivery of children's services and confers duties on district and borough councils.
4. These duties relate to children and young people from birth up to the age of 18, or up to the age of 25 if the young person has a learning difficulty or other disability. Where 'children' are referred to in this report it includes any child or young person within these age ranges.
5. In addition to the statutory duty to safeguarding children, the Council also has a similar responsibility (though the statutory duties are lesser) in respect of vulnerable adults.

### **Why is this relevant to Waverley?**

6. Although the prime responsibility for looking after children lies with Surrey County Council – as a Social Services and Education Authority – other public bodies come into contact with children and families. The Children Act 2004 makes clear that public authorities should work together to look after the needs of children. In particular, we all have responsibilities to ensure that children are protected from abuse, harm and/or neglect.
7. Waverley provides a range of services and has contact with children and families in a variety of ways and through the services it provides, for example:
  - Leisure centres, play areas, sports grounds
  - Disabled Facilities Grants for families with disabled children
  - Museum of Farnham
  - Dealing with Homeless families
  - Visiting peoples homes – e.g. planning, environmental health, housing, building control staff

8. From time to time councillors, staff or contractors may come across situations where it may appear that a child or vulnerable adult is being abused, harmed or neglected. Whilst these may be rare occasions, it is important that people understand it is our duty to think carefully about what they have seen and, if they feel uncomfortable or worried about the situation, to know that Waverley as an organisation would expect and support the councillor, staff or contractor to report the matter onto Surrey County Council so that it can be properly assessed. It is important to develop a culture to support the safeguarding of children and vulnerable adults.
9. During the past year (2010/11) there have been a small number of referrals to Social Services, which have been followed up and support provided to the families concerned. The Council has also assisted Surrey County Council with a Serious Case Review.

**What is Waverley doing to promote the 'Every Child Matters' agenda and working to safeguard Vulnerable Adults?**

10. At an organisational level, a number of arrangements have been put in place to promote keeping children safe, develop awareness of the issues, and provide a structure to what we do.
11. As Portfolio Holder for Children and Young People, Cllr Stephen O'Grady is the designated lead councillor for safeguarding issues.
12. The Chief Executive, Mary Orton, is the 'designated lead officer' for safeguarding.
13. An officer working group operates as the 'Waverley Children and Vulnerable Adults Safeguarding Board'. All Heads of Service and members of staff with a particular remit for working with children or providing services (directly or through contractors) are members of the Board, which meets regularly.
14. In order to support the Chief Executive, the Head of Community Services chairs Waverley's Children and Vulnerable Adults Safeguarding Board.
15. In 2007, the Council adopted a Safeguarding Children Policy. A recent Audit exercise recommended that this policy should be reviewed and refreshed. As it so happened, officers were planning a review so as to also incorporate the issues around safeguarding vulnerable people. The safeguarding policy has therefore been reviewed and revised to take account of the need to also safeguard vulnerable people. A copy of the revised 'Safeguarding Children and Vulnerable People Policy' is attached at Annexe 1 and the Executive is invited to endorse the policy for adoption by the Council. In January 2010, the Executive approved a Youth Strategy for Waverley, which aligns with the Surrey Children and Young People's Plan and is consistent with Waverley's revised Safeguarding Policy.

16. Waverley has a robust approach to ensuring that staff (and applicants for posts) who have contact with children or access to sensitive records have enhanced Criminal Records Bureaux (CRB) checks. All posts have been reviewed in detail against the CRB criteria in the last year, and are now revisited by Heads of Service on a quarterly basis.
17. The Council's contractors are required, as part of their contract conditions, to have in place appropriate policies and procedures for safeguarding children. Safeguarding is expressly included in the requirements for all new contractors. These are reviewed as part of the regular contract monitoring meetings.
18. There is an awareness-raising programme for all staff including posters around the Council's buildings, and regular reminders through cascade briefings and other communication methods. Annual staff performance reviews (appraisals) are also used to raise awareness of safeguarding responsibilities. Formal training is given to new staff at induction; and for those staff who have more contact with children, there is further training, as appropriate. Waverley also has access to the specialised Surrey Safeguarding Children's Board training programme.
19. Where the Council awards grants to organisations working with children, young people or vulnerable adults, it expects such organisations to have robust policies and procedures to cover safeguarding issues. Organisations that cannot evidence such policies and procedures will not be awarded grant-aid.

### **Working with Surrey County Council**

20. Surrey County Council has the prime responsibility for safeguarding children and Waverley is an active partner in its arrangements for this area of work. Over the past two years the County Council has been establishing and revising its arrangements for co-ordinating services for Children, Young People and Families. The structures are still bedding-down and developing. One of the new bodies formed in autumn 2010 is the South West Surrey Safeguarding Board.
21. The table below shows which councillors and officers from Waverley are members of the groups representing the Council, or other related interests.

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| Surrey Alliance for Children, Young People and Families - <b>Assembly</b>              | Cllr Stephen O'Grady, Portfolio-holder<br>Kelvin Mills, Head of Community Services |
| Surrey Alliance for Children, Young People and Families - <b>Strategic Forum.</b>      | Kelvin Mills – Head of Community Services  |
| South West Surrey (Guildford and Waverley) Children's Alliance – <b>Area Executive</b> | Kelvin Mills, Head of Community Services   |

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| South West Surrey <b>Safeguarding Board</b> | Kelvin Mills, Head of Community Services   |
| Surrey Children's <b>Safeguarding Board</b> | Kelvin Mills, Head of Community Services – representing Surrey Chief Leisure Officer Group and WBC |

22. The Surrey Children and Young People's Plan is the framework document which sets out the main priorities for the Surrey area and its actions and outcomes are 'owned' by all the partners.

### **Resource/Value for Money Implications**

23. There are no resource implications directly arising from this report. However, resources are expended in relation to seeking CRB checks (c£36 per person) and in future registration with the ISA (£64 per person). Resources are also expended in relation to training, though some of this is paid for by partner organisations. Each Borough and District Council makes a contribution of £1,000 to the Surrey Safeguarding Children Board.

### **Conclusion**

24. Keeping children, young people and vulnerable adults safe is everybody's responsibility. Whilst Surrey County Council has a lead role in this area of work – through education and social services - a much wider range of public organisations come into contact with children in different ways and at different times. As a community leader it is important for Waverley to promote the safeguarding agenda within the Borough.
25. In the Waverley context, the Council needs to ensure that it has a culture which supports councillors, staff and contractors in reporting cases where it is believed that a child or vulnerable adult might be harmed, abused or neglected. This will be achieved through awareness raising, training and a supportive management approach. It is encouraging that there have been situations which Waverley's staff have referred to Surrey County Council and support has been provided to those in need.

### **Recommendations**

It is recommended that:

1. the Council affirms its commitment to safeguarding children and vulnerable adults;
2. confirms that:
  - the Portfolio-holder for IT and Children and Young People, Cllr Stephen O'Grady, is the lead councillor for safeguarding;
  - the Chief Executive, Mary Orton, is the Council's named lead officer for safeguarding; and that the Head of Community Services, Kelvin Mills, acts as deputy in this area;

3. endorses the work being undertaken by the Council to help keep children and vulnerable adults safe, and will actively support colleagues, staff and contractors where they believe there is a need to make a referral to Social Services;
4. endorses the Waverley 'Safeguarding Children and Vulnerable Adults Policy' for adoption by the Council.

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#### Background Papers

There are no background papers (as defined by Section 100D(5) of the Local Government Act 1972) relating to this report.

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