

SAFEGUARDING POLICY AND PROCEDURE

Head of Service:	Rod Brown, Head of Housing & Community
Wards affected:	(All Wards);
Urgent Decision?(yes/no)	No
If yes, reason urgent decision required:	
Appendices (attached):	Annex 1 Proposed Safeguarding Policy

Summary

The report outlines the nature of safeguarding concerns and proposes an updated safeguarding policy and procedure which sets out how and when concerns can be escalated for both adult and children safeguarding concerns.

Recommendation (s)

The Committee is asked to:

- (1) Agree the adoption of an updated Safeguarding Policy and Procedure for Children and Adults as set out in Annex 1**
- (2) Agree that minor updates to the Safeguarding Policy and Procedure are delegated to the Head of Housing and Community in consultation with the Director of Housing, Environment and Regeneration and the Chair of Strategy and Resources**

1 Reason for Recommendation

- 1.1 All organisations that work or come into contact with children or vulnerable adults need to have a safeguarding policy and procedures in place. The Council has a duty of care that includes safeguarding for these groups.

2 Background

- 2.1 A life that is free from harm, abuse and neglect is a basic right of every person. The objective of safeguarding is to prevent and reduce the risk of harm to adults and children from abuse or other types of exploitation and impairment of development, while supporting individuals to maintain control over their lives and enabling them to make informed decisions without coercion.

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- 2.2 Safeguarding is recognised as a key responsibility of local authorities. Safeguarding is often recognised as being “Everyone’s business” and local authorities must work together with neighbours, citizens and community members by encouraging them to be alert to neglect and abuse and report concerns
- 2.3 The Council’s existing safeguarding policy was agreed by the Strategy and Resources Committee in November 2018. The existing policy needs to be updated to reflect changes in provision of support across the county and ensure supporting guidance and legislation is up to date.

3 Proposal

- 3.1 Safeguarding is an area of policy and practice that has undergone significant change over recent years. The proposed Safeguarding Policy and Procedure sets out an updated process describing how the Council will meet its obligation to safeguard children and adults in the borough.
- 3.2 The proposed Policy and Procedure for Safeguarding set out in Annex 1, applies to staff, agency workers, volunteers and contractors employed by the Council.
- 3.3 It also applies to Members in their roles as Councillors. Members can report their safeguarding concerns using the guidance set out in the document.
- 3.4 The draft policy and practice document, complements and supports the multi-agency procedures established by Surrey Safeguarding Children’s Board and Surrey Safeguarding Adults Board.
- 3.5 The proposed policy is designed to ensure that people who are at risk experience the process in such a way that is sensitive to individual circumstances, is person-centred and outcome focussed. It is vital for successful safeguarding that the procedures in this policy are understood and applied consistently at an individual, managerial and organisational level.
- 3.6 This proposed policy follows the safeguarding guidelines promoted and adopted by Surrey County Council. The policy contributes to adopting a consistent approach to safeguarding by all boroughs and districts in Surrey.
- 3.7 The proposed policy also provides an update to the approach taken by Surrey County Council to Effective Family Resilience, (page 22, Part 1, section 6) setting out context to children safeguarding and helps understanding of how raising a safeguarding concern will be managed.

4 Risk Assessment

Legal or other duties

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4.1 Impact Assessment

4.1.1 None

4.2 Crime & Disorder

4.2.1 There are direct associations between effective safeguarding and protecting vulnerable people within the borough. A wide range of criminal activity can be disrupted through prompt and effective safeguarding interventions. For example - the supply of drugs across County Lines is associated with coercion and control of vulnerable persons including young persons involved in the transportation and supply of drugs and the occupation of drug users' homes to facilitate exploitation (the practice of *cuckooing*) as well as a wider problem where vulnerable persons are trafficked to areas a long way from home as part of the network's drug dealing business. Effective safeguarding helps neighbours, citizens and community members spot the signs of drug dealing and cuckooing and report their suspicions.

Safeguarding

4.2.2 An effective response to safeguarding requires everyone to know and understand their role in safeguarding. This proposed policy sets out the practice and process as well as the context which will help effective safeguarding responses to be taken.

4.3 Dependencies

4.3.1 None

4.4 Other

5 Financial Implications

5.1 This proposed policy does not have any direct financial implications for the Council.

5.2 The Head of Housing and Community has been identified as the Responsible Officer for safeguarding issues and the Council has also appointed a Community Safety and Enforcement officer who will serve as the primary contact with other agencies regarding safeguarding.

5.3 **Section 151 Officer's comments:** None arising from the contents of this report

6 Legal Implications

6.1 It is important to ensure that both Officers and Members across the organisation are aware of how complaints and concerns about safeguarding are acted upon including how to report their concerns.

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- 6.2 Having an up to date Safeguarding Policy and Procedure will assist the Council in meeting it's statutory responsibilities around safeguarding. This is in addition to the range of statutory responsibilities for local authorities to have effective safeguarding arrangements in place as identified in the Children's Act 1989 and 2004 and more recently the Care Act 2014.
- 6.3 Safeguarding of children depends on two important aspects. 1) Child protection and 2) vetting/barring of adults who work with children. Protection of vulnerable adults is through vetting/barring adults who work in the vulnerable adult workforce sector. Child protection is social work function that rests primarily with Surrey County Council, but also other organisations- particularly schools- that observe children day by day. The vetting and barring in the child/adult workforce is a preventative process managed by the DBS and other policing and crime agencies. While significant responsibility for these aspects of safeguarding rest with other organisations the policy imposes obligations on the Council, its officers and agents to report concerns regarding child and adult safeguarding. These obligations must be reflect in third party agreements between the Council and contractors, suppliers etc.,
- 6.4 The Council's contract standing order(s) will need updating to reflect what is said in the policy at p.19 under "*Council procurement, contracting, commissioning and grant funding*". This should be a joint-review by legal and finance, together with relevant Heads of Service.
- 6.5 **Monitoring Officer's comments:** None arising from the content of this report.

7 Policies, Plans & Partnerships

- 7.1 **Council's Key Priorities:** The following Key Priorities are engaged: Safe & Well – A place where people feel safe, secure and lead healthy, fulfilling lives.
- 7.2 During the COVID pandemic nationally it has been recognised that it has been more difficult to ensure effective safeguarding controls are in place. The proposed Safeguarding Policy and Procedure will help underpin the support for the community, as the borough emerges and recovers from the long period of pandemic lockdown
- 7.3 **Service Plans:** The matter is included within the current Service Delivery Plan.
- 7.4 **Climate & Environmental Impact of recommendations:** None
- 7.5 **Sustainability Policy & Community Safety Implications:** The Council has responsibilities about effective community safety and are lead partners in the Epsom and Ewell Community Safety Partnership which includes concerns about safeguarding.

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- 7.6 The proposed policy and procedure will assist a more effective approach to safeguarding with Surrey County Council and with the Epsom and Ewell Community Safety Partnership.

8 Background papers

- 8.1 The documents referred to in compiling this report are as follows:

Previous reports:

- None

Other papers:

- None