

Agenda Item 18

Executive Board

21 June 2006

PJ/smep



Safeguarding Children Policy for East Devon District Council

Summary

The Council has a legal and moral obligation to protect children within the District. This Policy sets out guidelines for Members and Officers on how this will be addressed.

Recommendation

That the Council adopts this policy.

a) Reasons for Recommendation

The Council has a legal and moral responsibility for childrens' safety and wellbeing. There is a justified public expectation that we carry out this responsibility in a structured and streamlined manner. This policy sets out that framework and guidance for Members and Officers.

b) Alternative Options

The Council may reject or amend this policy.

The policy supports the Council's priorities of 'Achieving thriving balanced communities' and 'Customer Focus'.

c) Risk Considerations

Failure to meet our legal responsibilities could result in censure, compensation claims, and reputation loss as well as the risk of criminal conviction.

d) Policy and Budgetary Considerations

There is no significant additional budgetary implications.

e) Date for Review of Decision

June 2009

1 Main Body of the Report

- 1.1 In the major investigations and reports upon horrific cases of child abuse and neglect such as that relating to Victoria Climbié there were major failings in the way that local government organisations recognised and addressed issues and warning signs.
- 1.2 This highlights the need for a well structured and easily understandable approach to child protection and wellbeing both within the organisation and in our dealings with the wider population.
- 1.3 New countywide arrangements have been put in place to address these issues. Peter Jeffs, Corporate Director – Communities, now jointly represents District Councils' interests and responsibilities on Devon's Local Safeguarding Children Board.

- 1.4 Officers and Members alike sometimes are unsure of what action, activities and safeguards are required are necessary in the widely differing circumstances in which they find themselves. This policy should give a framework for action which relates to a District Council's interests. It has drawn heavily on good practice documents from a wide range of sources but seeks to be clear, straightforward and reasonably concise. As well as having powers and duties for the wellbeing of the population of (and visitors to) the District, we are a "duty to co-operate partner' under the Children Act 2004.
- 1.5 The proposed policy is at Appendix A.

Legal Implications

There are no legal comments.

Financial Implications

No significant financial implications contained within this report.

Consultation on Reports to the Executive

This policy has been sent to relevant partner organisations for comment. No comments have been received to date.

Background Papers

- ❑ Mid Devon District Council Child Protection policies
- ❑ Exeter City Council Child Protection policies
- ❑ Devon-wide Child Protection policies
- ❑ NSPCC guidance

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