

Report to the Cabinet

Report reference: C-013-2015/16

Date of meeting: 23 July 2015



Portfolio: Safer, Greener, Transport

Subject: EFDC Safeguarding Strategy and Action Plan

Responsible Officer: Julie Chandler (01992 564214).

Democratic Services Officer: Gary Woodhall (01992 564470).

Recommendations/Decisions Required:

(1) That Cabinet notes the Council's Safeguarding Strategy and Action Plan 2015 – 2018 and adopts this strategy on behalf of the Council.

Executive Summary:

All organisations that provide services for children, young people and adults with needs for care and support are now required to produce a Safeguarding Strategy and Action Plan as part of the annual self-assessment audits required by Essex Safeguarding Children and Adults Boards (ESCB and ESAB).

These strategies are developed from the findings of the audits and are designed to provide an overview of the status of safeguarding arrangements within organisations and an action plan to address areas in need of improvement.

This report therefore seeks Cabinet approval for the Council's Safeguarding Strategy and Action Plan 2015-2018.

Reasons for Proposed Decision:

The Council is required to produce a Safeguarding Strategy and Action Plan following completion of the annual self - assessment Safeguarding Audit.

Other Options for Action:

None.

Report:

1. Safeguarding Children (and young people) from harm, has been a legislative requirement for all public and voluntary sector organisations since 1989, when the Children Act was initially introduced. Since this time, the Act has been regularly reviewed and updated in accordance with recommendations from Serious Case Reviews and Child Death Reviews. The most recent legislation was introduced in 2004.

2. Safeguarding of Vulnerable Adults has not previously been covered by legislation, although public sector organisations have followed guidance provided by Social Care. However,

from April 2015, the Care Act (2014) introduced a set of new legislative requirements for adults 'with needs for care and support' (The term 'Vulnerable Adults' is longer used).

3. Safeguarding duties and responsibilities for tier 2 local authorities are continually increasing as new issues emerge and legislation such as the Care Act requires a range of changes in the way that Councils need to work to address duties for adults with needs for care and support. These particular changes will impact directly on the work of the Housing Services teams and potentially other services such as Finance and Benefits. As such, the Council's Safeguarding Policy which was agreed by Cabinet in March will need to be updated as and when new issues are identified, that may impact on the District.

4. The Council's new Safeguarding Strategy and Action Plan 2015 – 2018 includes the recent changes in legislation for adult safeguarding and other emerging issues relating to children and young people, and sets out a detailed action plan of how the Council can meet its duties and responsibilities. A significant number of these actions relate to maintaining best practice in safeguarding such as ensuring that staff training is refreshed and updated and that safer recruitment is applied to all roles that have direct contact with families and adults with needs for care and support. Other actions seek to address areas of the Council's work that need improvement in respect to safeguarding such as monitoring safeguarding practice amongst the Council's contractors.

5. The Safeguarding Officer has already started undertaking work to address outstanding actions arising from the assessment process and will be working with corporate colleagues to ensure that there is a 'whole Council' approach towards improvement. This includes ensuring that Elected Members are kept up to date with new and emerging issues and the level of safeguarding cases within the District.

Resource Implications:

Cabinet should refer to the report on Safeguarding Posts which is included within this agenda pack.

Legal and Governance Implications:

Section 11 Children Act legislation and the Care Act 2014.

Safer, Cleaner and Greener Implications:

The District Council is responsible for ensuring that all children, young people and adults in need of care and support are protected from harm and exploitation.

Consultation Undertaken:

Not relevant to this report.

Background Papers:

Cabinet report 02.12.13 - EFDC Safeguarding Audit and resource requirements
Children's Act 2004
The Care Act 2014
Cabinet Safeguarding Report March 2015

Risk Management:

Safeguarding is included as an item within the Councils' Risk Register and within individual Directorate Business Plans. A Safeguarding Strategy document is also currently being produced, which will outline the key actions that need to be undertaken by the Council and the frequency of reviews required.

Due Regard Record

This page shows **which groups of people are affected** by the subject of this report. It sets out **how they are affected** and how any **unlawful discrimination** they experience can be eliminated. It also includes information about how **access to the service(s)** subject to this report can be improved for the different groups of people; and how they can be assisted to **understand each other better** as a result of the subject of this report.

S149 Equality Act 2010 requires that due regard must be paid to this information when considering the subject of this report.

Children, young people and adults in need of care and support (previously described as 'Vulnerable Adults') are affected by this report, in a positive way. The report serves to demonstrate how the Council addresses and meets its' safeguarding duties and responsibilities, in order to ensure the safety and wellbeing of local residents and service users who fall within these categories.

The report refers to the Children's Act 2004 and the new Care Act 2014 which is being launched in April 2015, which provide the key legislative requirements for children, young people and adults in need of care and support.