

Overview & Scrutiny Committee's Comments

Cabinet is asked to note that the Minutes of both Committees were only available in draft format at the point of producing this Report, the points below are taken from these draft documents.

Health and Adult Social Care Overview & Scrutiny Committee commented and Resolved that: -

A number of questions were raised and discussed by members including:

- The Committee supported a requirement for all Councillors to undertake an enhanced DBS check however it was also acknowledged that there was no legal requirement for a DBS check;
- That safeguarding training should be mandatory for all councillors;
- That there should be a clearer definition of what makes someone a vulnerable person or an adult at risk of harm (*NB – This has been amended in the Strategy, with the phrase 'adult at risk' being consistently applied*);
- That having an advanced DBS Check protects councillors and individuals;
- Details around how the DBS Check would be undertaken and the information subsequently used and stored;
- That more work would need to be carried out around the strategy of the policy, including who would make decisions;
- That the information from a DBS check would be considered personal data so would not be subject to freedom of information requests;
- Whether the consequences for officers of not following the policy should also be outlined in the policy document (*NB – This has been made clearer in the Strategy*);
- That a DBS Check shows unspent crimes and an advanced DBS Check also reveals spent crimes. Officers could provide a briefing paper on the differences;
- The Committee wished to express to Cabinet that the DBS Check should be as robust as possible;

RESOLVED that: -

- (a) The policy should include a clearer definition for 'vulnerable person' and 'adult at risk of harm';**
- (b) The consequences for officers who did not follow the policy should be included, in addition to the consequences for councillors;**
- (c) The Committee would express its support for a robust DBS check to Cabinet;**

(d) The Committee unanimously voted in support of recommending mandatory safeguarding training for councillors.

Children's Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee Recommended that Cabinet consider and note the Committee's comments as follows:

- A grammatical error was highlighted at Paragraph 3.2 – it should read “has a responsibility...” instead of “have a...” (*NB - This has been amended*) and in Appendix 1 it should read “sexual abuse by family / people in authority / other young people” instead of “sexual abuse by family people in authority / other young people”
- A Councillor expressed concern that the Strategy would only be available on the Council's website and that a proportion of the Council's residents may not use or have access to the internet. It was requested that consideration be given on how to share the Strategy with a wider audience
- There were discussions regarding the DBS checks and the Committee supported the requirement for anyone from the Council who had contact with children or vulnerable adults to be checked
- In response to a query about BCP Council's procurement of businesses and services, the Committee was advised that the requirement for DBS checks would form part of any relevant contract, which would then be monitored
- In response to a query regarding secondary school children attending businesses for work experience, the Corporate Director advised that it was the responsibility of the Headteacher and School to ensure they were placing students in a safe environment
- A Councillor felt that all Councillors should be enhanced DBS checked as they had access to and dealt with the most vulnerable members of the community
- In response to a query, the Corporate Director advised that she would investigate the cost of a DBS check and the renewal frequency and circulate the information to the Committee
- The Chairman requested consideration be given as to how best to engage all Councillors in awareness of the Safeguarding Strategy and their responsibilities
- With reference to Appendix 1, a Councillor thought the definition of children and young people's age should be extended to include, if considered vulnerable, up to 25 years old. (*NB – This has been made clearer within the Appendix*)
- In response to a query, the Corporate Director advised that female gender mutilation would be classed as extreme physical abuse. A Councillor felt that, due to its severity, a separate category may be more appropriate.