

## Report No.4

### Report to Policy and Resources Committee 17<sup>th</sup> September 2014

#### Review of 'Children and Vulnerable Persons Protection Policy'

##### 1. Purpose of the report

- 1.1. To request the Committee to agree to a review of the Town Council's 'Children and Vulnerable Persons Protection Policy', both the current content and in respect of broadening the scope of its coverage. (See appendix 1 for the existing policy).

##### 2. Background

- 2.1. The recently reported cases of sexual and other abuse in Rotherham between 1997 and 2013 of around 1400 children has highlighted that certain authorities, including Rotherham Borough Council did not act appropriately.
- 2.2. An independent review was commissioned by Martin Kimber Chief Executive of Rotherham Borough Council who later commented "*The council and its partners could and should have done more to protect young people.*"
- 2.3. Victims' Commissioner - Baroness Newlove is reported to have said: "*I'm appalled by the extent of the horrific abuse endured by these vulnerable victims. It's deeply distressing how the authorities failed to protect these young people and their voices were not heard. Everyone involved needs to take responsibility for the shocking failings that this report has exposed. This must not happen again.*"
- 2.4. Professor Alexis Jay, who undertook the review, said there had been "blatant" collective failures by the council's leadership.
- 2.5. Whilst our remit as a Town Council is not as prescriptive as that of a local authority such as Rotherham Borough Council, we do have a duty of care. We already have a 'Children and Vulnerable Persons Protection Policy', but this is mainly slanted towards children and vulnerable adults' protection in respect of staff and contractors.
- 2.6. The current policy does not cover the situation should a complaint or case of abuse be reported by a resident to an individual Councillor or member of staff:
  - What action should be taken by that Councillor or member of staff?
  - How should the complaint be reported and to which authorities?
  - Should the complaint be reported by the Councillor or member of staff themselves to whichever authorities, or by the Town Clerk?
  - How is the Town Council to monitor that satisfactory action has been taken to investigate the complaint?

##### 3. Proposals

- 3.1. To request that a small working party is set up (including the Town Clerk) to review the current Town Council 'Children and Vulnerable Persons Protection Policy'.
- 3.2. That the working party investigates the inclusion in the policy of a reporting procedure and other actions should a case of abuse be reported to a Councillor or member of staff.

3.3. That the working party presents their findings and an amended policy, if appropriate, to Policy and Resources Committee for their agreement and thereafter to the Full Town Council for their endorsement and agreement.

Cllr. Kim Power  
Chair of Policy and Resources Committee  
29<sup>th</sup> August 2014

## Appendix 1

### Malmesbury Town Council CHILDREN AND VULNERABLE PERSONS PROTECTION POLICY

#### **Statement of Intent**

Malmesbury Town Council recognizes that all children, young people and vulnerable adults, regardless of age, disability, gender, racial heritage, religious belief or sexual orientation or identity, have the right to protection from harm and abuse. Malmesbury Town Council shall take all steps that are reasonably practicable to comply with the Criminal Justice and Court Services Act 2000 and all other relevant Acts and Regulations. Malmesbury Town Council shall monitor the conduct of staff to identify any inappropriate behaviour and shall act accordingly and, if necessary, in accordance with its disciplinary procedures.

#### **Staff Engagement**

Malmesbury Town Council shall not allow staff or contractors to have access to children, young people and vulnerable adults where there is any knowledge of that person or persons having any criminal conviction involving children or who are disqualified from working with children. Malmesbury Town Council will remind all employees of their duty to disclose any such information, as required by the Criminal Justice and Court Services Act 2000.

#### **Incident Procedures**

Malmesbury Town Council shall keep a dedicated log of all written and oral statements, along with a record of relevant telephone conversations, in the event of an incident or allegation under this Policy. In the case of a child, young person or vulnerable adult on work experience or training this information will be immediately passed on to the learner's educational institution or primary carer as appropriate. Malmesbury Town Council and staff shall treat all incidents with absolute confidentiality. Malmesbury Town Council shall comply with the Data Protection Act 1998 for the safe and secure storage of all information relating to children's personal details, or details resulting from any incident or allegation arising within the scope of this Policy.

#### **Monitoring and Review**

This policy shall be monitored for effectiveness and shall be reviewed when:

- there has been an incident, whether the allegation is proved or not
- there is a change in the legislation
- there is a major reorganisation with the Town Council.

Malmesbury Town Council will ensure that all staff having contact with children, young people and vulnerable adults are made aware of, understand, and act on this policy.

*Approved and amended by Policy and Resources Committee 11<sup>th</sup> December 2012. Approved by Town Council January 2013*