

## **6. SAFEGUARDING ANNUAL REPORT 2024-25**

### **1. Purpose**

The purpose of this report is to provide assurance that satisfactory safeguarding measures are in place to ensure our legal duty of care to provide a safe environment when children and vulnerable adults access our services.

### **2. Context**

**2.1** Public bodies are required to have due regard to making arrangements to safeguard children and vulnerable adults when delivering their work. The Authority has had a Safeguarding Policy and procedures in place for some time, with the current version ratified at this Committee meeting on 24 January 2025, however this is the first time an annual report has come before Members.

**2.2** In August 2023, the Head of Engagement and former Designated Safeguarding Lead for the Authority, reviewed our safeguarding arrangements. It recommended the Authority annually review the actions taken under the Safeguarding Policy where we specifically commit to:

- Adopt safeguarding guidelines throughout our procedures and make clear the standards of conduct expected of our workforce when engaged in a professional activity.
- Recruit staff and volunteers safely, ensuring all necessary checks are made.
- Share information about child protection and good practice with children, parents/guardians and staff/volunteers.
- Respond swiftly to all suspicions or allegations of abuse.
- Provide effective management for staff through supervision, support and training

**2.3** The review identified some gaps in our safeguarding measures which formed the basis for an action plan to be completed in 2024-25. The annual report summarises the work undertaken and the actions completed. The Safeguarding Working Group (SWG) agreed the report should provide reassurance the Authority has appropriate mechanisms in place and in a state of readiness to respond to any suspicions or allegations made. The report should not contain any details of incidents.

**2.4** A more systematic approach is proposed in 2025-26 to assess the safeguarding measures in place at the Authority, to a standard widely recognised. Using the National Society for the Protection of Cruelty to Children (NSPCC) guidance document *Firstcheck: a step by step guide for organisations to safeguard children*, a checklist has been drafted which is relevant and proportionate to the work of the Authority. This checklist will be used by the Authority's trained and experienced Designated Safeguarding Officers at the first meeting of the SWG, to develop an action plan for 2025-26.

### **3. Proposals**

**3.1** The work undertaken by the Safeguarding Working Group during 2024-25 and summarised in the annual report, which provides protection for children and vulnerable adults who receive our services, is recognised.

**3.2** The proposal for assessing the safeguarding measures in place at the Authority, as set out in the draft Safeguarding Checklist Action Plan 2025-26, is approved.

### **4. Recommendations**

- 1. The Safeguarding annual report 2024-25 (Appendix 1), is noted.**
- 2. The draft Safeguarding Checklist and Action Plan for 2025-26 (Appendix 2), is approved.**

## 5. Corporate Implications

- a. Legal  
Maintaining a safeguarding policy and having effective safeguarding procedures in place aligns with the range of legislation that requires various bodies to ensure that functions are discharged considering the need to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and vulnerable adults. Establishing awareness and knowledge throughout the Authority will also ensure co-operation and collaboration with other organisations to ensure an effective multi-agency approach.
- b. Financial  
There are no additional financial implications, as funds are already available.
- c. National Park Management Plan and Authority Plan  
This report demonstrates how we contribute to the Authority Plan and the National Park Management Plan:  
Objective C – to have highly engaged, healthy and inclusive staff and volunteers.  
Objective 8 - to create opportunities for young people and those from under-served communities to connect with and enjoy the National Park  
Objective 9 – to promote the National Park as a place where there are opportunities for the improvement of physical and mental health and wellbeing.
- d. Risk Management  
The risks are managed according to the responsibilities set out in the Safeguarding Policy 2025 with the Safeguarding Working Group implementing the action plan.
- e. Net Zero  
No issues
- f. Equality  
The Authority's policies and procedures must be compliant with the Authority's legal duty in relation to equality, and include the additional protections provided for children and vulnerable adults who access our services. All risk assessments must identify and address any specific adverse safeguarding impacts on a case by case basis.

## 6. Background papers (not previously published)

None

## 7. Appendices

Appendix 1 – Safeguarding Annual report 2024-25

Appendix 2 - Safeguarding Checklist and action plan 2025-26

## Report Author, Job Title and Publication Date

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## Responsible Officer, Job Title

Phil Mulligan, Chief Executive Officer.