



Leicester
City Council

WARDS AFFECTED
All wards

FORWARD TIMETABLE OF CONSULTATION AND MEETINGS:

**Overview and Scrutiny Management Board
Cabinet**

**15th April 2010
19th April 2010**

Leicester Inter-Agency Domestic Violence Strategy 2009-2014

Report of the Divisional Director for Safer & Stronger Communities

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1** A coordinated community response, with key partners working together, is acknowledged as the only effective way to reduce domestic violence. In light of this, endorsement of the attached Domestic Violence Strategy (appendix A) is requested from Cabinet
- 1.2** The strategy received endorsement from the Safer Leicester Partnership Board on the 29th October. At this meeting City Council Chief Executive, and SLP Board member, Sheila Lock noted that a sustainable resource plan to accompany the work is essential, with contributions necessary from the local authority, private and other public sector stakeholders.

2. SUMMARY

- 2.1** Leicester Domestic Violence Forum Partnership (LDVFP) has developed the second citywide strategy for Domestic Violence, to run from 2009-2014. Domestic Violence impacts negatively on several One Leicester priorities and presents a particularly significant safeguarding issue for both adults and children.

3. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1** Cabinet is recommended to accept the recommendations in respect of future commissioning arrangements for Domestic Violence as outlined in section 5 of this report and to offer endorsement of the Leicester Inter-Agency Integrated Domestic Violence Strategy 2009-2014 in line with the above timescale for progression to cabinet.

4. REPORT

4.1. The Strategy

- 4.2** The strategy includes prevention, support and protection. This encompasses universal services and those targeted at reducing the risk of homicide or other serious injury. Leicester suffers an average two homicides a year related to domestic violence. There are a growing number of reports to the police; in excess of 8000 a year, but many incidents are never reported.
- 4.3** The strategy is fundamental to our attainment of local area agreement target NI32: which is the percentage of Multi Agency Risk Assessment Cases (MARAC) heard (those deemed at the highest level of risk of homicide) that are repeat cases. Domestic Violence cases also frequently involve violent crime, which is monitored in relation to NI20: assault with less serious injury. This is also a current priority target.
- 4.4** The strategy notes significant improvements in the city's response to domestic violence from 2007-2009; the lifetime of the first strategy. These achievements include a new layer of support and intervention for those at highest risk of serious injury or homicide and the attainment of a reward related target for the city.
- 4.5** Key findings from consultation and review:
- Systems are in place to deliver NI 32, but these are not presently secure
 - Need to improve staff confidence in identifying, managing and reducing risk
 - Earlier interventions are required and there is a concern of the lack of attention to prevention work
 - There remain significant under identification and reporting issues, particularly with victim/survivors who are men, lesbian gay bisexual and transgender and those from new and emerging communities
 - Improvements are required for the data collation of police and non-police data, particularly outcome data
 - Young people aged 14-21 need further attention and targeted, appropriate responses whether using or victim of domestic violence
 - Increased reporting and risk identification is presenting capacity challenges
 - There is a need for improvement in the financial underpinnings of the strategy and a collaborative commitment to sustain core services and strategic planning.
- 4.6** It is recognized that Domestic Violence is a key issue within Leicester that cuts across a number of our Local Strategic Partnership priority groups. The Health and Well Being, Investing in Children and Thriving, Safe Communities Boards all currently commission services in respect of addressing this issue. Within the Safer Leicester Partnership and up until its recent restructuring lead responsibility for monitoring and reducing Domestic Violence sat with the Violent Crime Group. The creation of a new Safeguarding Delivery Group whose task is to oversee the effective performance of safeguarding of vulnerable adults in the City has provided an opportunity to raise the profile of Domestic Violence as a key safeguarding issue by placing responsibility for overseeing delivery of the Domestic Violence Strategy with this group.
- 5. Commissioning of services to support the delivery of the Domestic Violence Strategy**

- 5.1** City Council currently spends approximately £1.4 million in relation to direct domestic violence services. This encompasses Supporting People Fund of £934,627; Homelessness Grant of £16,000, Community Safety at £50,000 and £133,800 on voluntary sector grants. In addition to this £287,077 is managed for the Independent Domestic Violence Advisor Service, funded through area based grant, reward money and Ministry of Justice funding.
- 5.2** As is clear from the above breakdown, funding of Domestic Violence is currently largely through external grants. This presents a significant risk to the sustainability of this work and is not reflective of the critical nature of this issue in respect of safeguarding of vulnerable adults and children and young people. In order to reflect the importance of this work to achieving key outcomes in respect of safeguarding, partner agencies including the City Council will have to identify ways of mainstreaming spend in this area.
- 5.3** The commissioning of services in respect of addressing Domestic Violence currently sits across a number of different priority boards. This has led to a degree of fragmentation and a lack of a joined up approach in respect of ensuring best value. The Health and Well Being Board who commission a range of housing related support services through the Supporting People Fund in respect of meeting the needs of Domestic Violence Victims have by reviewing their contracts achieved significant efficiency savings without any loss of service provision. Other contracts in respect of providing services to children who have experienced Domestic Violence and the Independent Advocacy service are also in urgent need of reviewing but this needs to happen within the context of an overall commissioning plan for this work.
- 5.4** A multi agency group was pulled together and has had one initial meeting with the purpose of agreeing how best to address the above issues. It was the view of this group that there was a need to develop a Commissioning Plan that brought together under one lead responsibility for commissioning services to deliver the outcomes outlined within the Domestic Violence Strategy and to future proof such work going forward.
- 5.5** Since that meeting took place and as a means of addressing under performance and increasing it's effectiveness the Safer Leicester Partnership has undergone a restructure. Under the revised structure responsibility for Domestic Violence sits under a newly formed Safeguarding Delivery Group. In the light of this and as a means of making more effective use of resources it would seem to make sense for this group to oversee the development of a Commissioning Plan which brings together all of the current commissioning streams and:
- Explores the creation of a crisis, or justice centre, where sexual violence and domestic violence services are co-located thus reducing administrative and accommodation costs.
 - Reviews the voluntary sector grant contribution to children's work in refuges and the helpline in respect of preventative and educative work with children and young people to ensure best value and that this work has synergy with and adds value to other funded work.
 - Reviews the current housing related support capacity to allow for funding of Independent Domestic Violence Advisors (Divas), the sanctuary type scheme (ASK) and further floating support
 - Explores opportunities to embed work in respect of Domestic Violence into the core service planning of partners as a means of future proofing.

To progress the above and following some initial consultation with other priority board leads and commissioners the recommendation would be that a cross priority group of officers be formed to take this work forward in the first financial half of this year.

6. FINANCIAL, LEGAL AND OTHER IMPLICATIONS

6.1. Financial Implications (*Provided by Rod Pearson (29) 8800*).

Leicester City Council currently spends approximately £1.4 million in relation to domestic violence services. The funding sources are as follows:

Funding Source	Amount
Supporting People (ABG)	£941,511
Homelessness Grant	£16,000
Community Safety Grant	£50,000
Main Stream (Vol Sector)	£133,800
IDVA (ABG, Reward money, Ministry of Justice)	£287,077
TOTAL	£1,428,383

It can be seen from the above that the largest funding source is through the Supporting People (ABG). The only mainstream (general fund) funding is the £133,800 paid at present to the voluntary sector.

The report (para 5.2) talks of the need to 'mainstream' spend in this area. This implies a desire to have a guaranteed and ongoing funding stream as a minimum from the Council's base budget, and would mean reprioritising some budgets or using them differently. This may have an impact on other services. Given the overall outlook for the public sector finances, there must be some risk attached to the ongoing level of grant funding.

The strategy does not pre-empt future funding, although there is a growing recognition of the importance of adult safeguarding which means some priority is likely to attach to the service area in future notwithstanding the financial outlook.

The report proposes that all commissioning is undertaken by the Safeguarding Delivery Group which is part of the Safer Leicester Partnership. This would mean that the council would pass £133,800 of mainstream funding to be managed by the partnership.

In the event of any future funding shortfall the council currently has no additional mainstream funding available to support the Domestic Violence Strategy. Clearly future commissioners will have to carry out a risk assessment of the available funding streams before making long term spending decisions.

6.2 Legal Implications (*Provided by Joanna Bunting extension (29) 6450*):

Obligations under the Crime & Disorder Act 1998 and particular section 17. The Crime and Disorder Act 1998 promotes the practice of partnership working to reduce crime

and disorder and places a statutory duty on police and local authorities to develop and implement a strategy to tackle problems in their area. In doing so, the responsible authorities are required to work in partnership with a range of other local public, private, community and voluntary groups and with the community itself.

- 6.3** Section 17 of the Act recognises that there are key stakeholder groups who have responsibility for the provision of a wide and varied range of services to and within the community. In carrying out these functions, section 17 places a duty on them to do all it can to reasonably prevent crime and disorder in their area. Some elements of the Domestic Violence, Crime and Victims Act (2004) are yet to be brought in, including bringing the multi-agency risk assessment conferences onto a statutory footing.
- 6.4** It is also understood that families have brought legal cases against local authorities and police authorities in relation to failure to protect human life under the Human Rights Act 1998.

7. OTHER IMPLICATIONS

OTHER IMPLICATIONS	YES/NO	Paragraph Within the Report	References
Equal Opportunities	YES	Domestic violence is a cause and effect of inequality.	
Policy	YES	There are policy implications within the strategy, including human resource issues, thresholds and inter-agency working.	
Sustainable and Environmental	YES	The sustainability of core services is referred to throughout the strategy.	
Crime and Disorder	YES	Yes, to work in partnership to reduce crime and disorder.	
Human Rights Act	YES	Protection of life and life free from torture and inhumane treatment.	
Elderly/People on Low Income	YES	Domestic violence affects all ages and there is a cross over with safeguarding adult's issues. People on low income can have reduced safety options.	

8. RISK ASSESSMENT MATRIX

Risk	Likelihood L/M/H	Severity Impact L/M/H	Control Actions (if necessary/appropriate)
Sustainability due to lack of finance	H	H	Divisional Director (Safer & Stronger Communities) is investigating the potential for mainstreaming this area of work with partners. As a result of the above, a resource plan will be produced.

L – Low
M – Medium
H - High

9. BACKGROUND PAPERS – LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972

As outlined in the strategy

10. CONSULTATIONS

The strategic objectives have not changed since the first strategy, and no significant changes to services are committed within the strategy document.

Consultation on the principles and emerging issues was carried out throughout the construction of the strategy, with partner agencies, senior and frontline practitioners, and members of the public. Comments were taken into account in the final strategy document and direct quotes from service users are included. Outlined below are some of the agencies which have contributed;

- Police
- Refuges
- Probation
- Victim Support
- Floating Support/Outreach Providers
- Integrated Response Project
- City Council
- NHS Leicester
- Service users

10. REPORT AUTHOR

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Key Decision	Yes
Reason	Is significant in terms of its effect on communities living or working in an area comprising more than one ward
Appeared in Forward Plan	Yes
Executive or Council Decision	Executive (Cabinet)