
POLICY DEVELOPMENT: DOMESTIC VIOLENCE RECOMMISSIONING

Purpose of Report

1. At this Committee's meeting on 2 December 2015, Members accepted the offer from Councillor De'Ath to provide an update on the Domestic Violence Re-commissioning process and in particular, the report by SafeLives¹ commissioned by the South Wales Police and Crime Commissioner. This report provides Members with background information to support this scrutiny; the SafeLives report is attached at **Appendix A**.

Background

2. The Integrated Partnership Strategy, What Matters 2010-20, includes a work stream to reduce domestic and sexual violence. The City of Cardiff Council's Corporate Plan 2016-18 builds on this with a commitment to '*Implement a fully re-commissioned domestic violence support service to meet the requirements of new legislation which ensures more integrated provision by March 2017*'². The South Wales Police and Crime Commissioner's Plan³ also contains a commitment to tackle violence against women and girls.
3. At Committee on 2 December 2015, Members heard that the City of Cardiff Council, the Vale of Glamorgan Council and the South Wales Police and Crime Commissioner are working together to plan the re-commissioning of domestic violence services in Cardiff and the Vale of Glamorgan. As part of this work, the

¹ SafeLives is a national charity dedicated to ending domestic abuse

² Priority 2, Supporting Vulnerable People, Corporate Plan 2016-18

³ South Wales Police and Crime Reduction Plan 2016-21

South Wales Police and Crime Commissioner has commissioned a report, by SafeLives, to inform the joint commissioning process. Members also heard that work was ongoing to implement a Gateway to gender specific supported accommodation, including refuges, although this had not yet been implemented. In addition, Members heard that a Domestic Abuse Executive had been established, with subgroups, to take this work forward and to fully consider the requirements of the new legislation.

4. At the meeting, Councillor De'Ath offered to return to Committee in March 2016 to provide an update on the above. Members accepted this offer and scheduled the update for this meeting.

SafeLives Report

5. The SafeLives report 'Domestic Abuse Commissioning Strategy' (January 2016) is attached in full at **Appendix A**. This report identifies that areas within South Wales report one of the highest levels of high risk cases in the UK, with an estimated 9,200 victims of domestic violence at high and medium risk. The report builds on previous work in recommending a community-based response to domestic abuse in South Wales, which requires:
 - a) A clearly coordinated strategic plan across all key commissioners supplemented by stronger governance and leadership;
 - b) A single 'front door' for all referrals to identify the risk, needs and vulnerabilities of each members of the family as early as possible;
 - c) Larger teams of community based support workers in 3-4 large teams to offer specialist support to victims at high and medium risk;
 - d) A clear offer of longer term recovery and 'step down' to reduce repeat victimization;
 - e) Effective communication with victims and their families about the support on offer.
6. The report highlights that a regional approach to domestic abuse strategy is being piloted in Gwent and that, depending on the success of this pilot, the Welsh Government has indicated that it wishes to roll out the model. The SafeLives reports recommends the following:

- a) The creation of a new regional strategy for domestic abuse for South Wales to provide leadership, accountability and coordination – with a regional Strategic Partnership consisting of senior leaders and operational decision-making groups at sub-regional level;
- b) The establishment of a common outcomes framework for providers and commissioners;
- c) Reconfiguration of Supporting People funding – pooling it with other funding streams for domestic abuse to enable victims of domestic abuse to live independently in their own homes through receiving community based support;
- d) Rebalancing provision to support victims at serious risk of murder and harm.

7. The report also states that, *'Until a regional approach is possible, we recommend building on existing collaboration to create as much integration and coordination as possible between Cardiff and the Vale of Glamorgan.'*⁴

Way Forward

8. Councillor Daniel De'Ath, (Cabinet Member, Safety, Engagement and Democracy), Sarah McGill, (Director of Communities, Housing and Customer Services) and Jane Thomas, (Assistant Director of Communities and Housing), will be in attendance to give a presentation which will provide an update on work since the publication of the SafeLives report and to answer Members' questions.

Legal Implications

9. The Scrutiny Committee is empowered to enquire, consider, review and recommend but not to make policy decisions. As the recommendations in this report are to consider and review matters there are no direct legal implications. However, legal implications may arise if and when the matters under review are implemented with or without any modifications. Any report with recommendations for decision that goes to Cabinet/Council will set out any legal implications arising

⁴ Page 9, SafeLives report attached at Appendix A

from those recommendations. All decisions taken by or on behalf of the Council must (a) be within the legal powers of the Council; (b) comply with any procedural requirement imposed by law; (c) be within the powers of the body or person exercising powers on behalf of the Council; (d) be undertaken in accordance with the procedural requirements imposed by the Council e.g. Scrutiny Procedure Rules; (e) be fully and properly informed; (f) be properly motivated; (g) be taken having regard to the Council's fiduciary duty to its taxpayers; and (h) be reasonable and proper in all the circumstances.

Financial Implications

10. The Scrutiny Committee is empowered to enquire, consider, review and recommend but not to make policy decisions. As the recommendations in this report are to consider and review matters there are no direct financial implications at this stage in relation to any of the work programme. However, financial implications may arise if and when the matters under review are implemented with or without any modifications. Any report with recommendations for decision that goes to Cabinet/Council will set out any financial implications arising from those recommendations.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Committee is recommended to:

- i) Consider the report, **Appendix A** and the information provided at the meeting,
- ii) Agree any comments, observations and recommendations that they wish to send to the Cabinet Member, and
- iii) Agree the way forward with regard to future consideration of this issue.

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25 February 2016