



CABINET REPORT

Report Title	DRAFT Northamptonshire Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence Strategy 2019-2022
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AGENDA STATUS: PUBLIC

Cabinet Meeting Date:	16 October 2019
Key Decision:	YES
Within Policy:	YES
Policy Document:	NO
Service Area:	Community Safety and Engagement
Accountable Cabinet Member:	Cllr Anna King
Ward(s)	All Wards

1. Purpose

- 1.1 Developed at the request of Northamptonshire's Community Safety Board, the draft Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence Strategy 2019-2022.
- 1.2 The strategy reflects the Board's priorities of improving support to vulnerable people and ensuring that, wherever possible, people receive early help and support in order to prevent any escalation of harm.
- 1.3 The Strategy is designed to improve the co-ordination of local services that prevent and respond to domestic abuse and sexual violence, to enable everyone to understand the contribution that they can make as individuals and organisations, and improve how we work together to keep people safe and improve the life chances of children, young people and adults who are affected by domestic abuse and sexual violence.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1 Cabinet are recommended to:
 - 2.1.1 Consider and adopt the draft Countywide Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence Strategy 2019-2022.

- 2.1.2 Commit to work with partner agencies to ensure the development and delivery of the strategy and associated action plans, through the community safety governance structures that are proposed.
- 2.1.3 Receive further reports on the implementation and progress of this strategy as and when necessary.

3. Issues and Choices

3.1 Report Background

- 3.1.1 Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence continues to be a major concern within our county.
- 3.1.2 Offences involving violence against the person accounted for 80.5% of Domestic Abuse offences, which equates to 36.0% of all recorded violent crimes (Northants Police, May 2019). Those acts of violence without injury, which includes stalking and harassment, account for 2 out of every 3 domestic violence offences.
- 3.1.3 Northamptonshire Police have identified an increasing trend in the repeat victimisation rate for victims of Domestic Abuse within the last 12 months. In April 2019 Police data identified that 39.3% of domestic crime recorded involved a repeat victim, as did 45% of all domestic related crime and non-crime incidents.
- 3.1.4 Between September 2017 and September 2018 a total of 16,139 incidents were recorded by Northamptonshire Police, in 14,425 of these cases children were found to have been present. The impact that such exposure to abuse can have upon a child has been subject to significant research and it is known that adverse childhood experiences may impact significantly on all areas of a child's development.
- 3.1.5 Sexual offences within Northamptonshire in the last year have been increasing however this is a national trend and Northamptonshire is not an outlier. In July 2019 Northamptonshire Police data indicated that sexual violence made up 3.78% of all crime in the last year and during this period the Force saw an 18% increase in reported rapes and 17.3% increase in reported other sexual offences.
- 3.1.6 Local data on Female Genital Mutilation within Northamptonshire is limited with no local criminal prosecutions.

3.2 Issues

- 3.2.1 Domestic abuse, sexual violence and Coercive Behaviours cause significant harm to those people affected within our communities. In order to reduce the level of abuse, we need to prioritise prevention, provision and protection methods at the earliest opportunity.

3.2.2 The strategy has five strategic objectives and by 2022 the ambition is that across the county we will have:

3.2.3

- i) Developed targeted prevention and intervention initiatives that evidence can demonstrate have impact and deliver the outcomes that are required. We will work as a partnership to review current services and commission further services based on need and outcomes.
- ii) Improved everyone's responses to people affected by Domestic Abuse, Sexual Violence and Coercive Behaviour by ensuring that appropriate awareness raising is undertaken, training is delivered to those in our organisations and communities and everyone knows how to recognise signs, be responsive to these signs, respond appropriately to disclosure and know which service they can access in order to get support for the victim.
- iii) Ensure appropriate access to services for children, young people and adults affected by Domestic Abuse, Sexual Violence and Coercive Behaviour by developing and embedding clear referral and service pathways that can effectively support service users regardless of their gender, race, ethnicity and sexuality.
- iv) Developed safe and appropriate accommodation options for those who are victim of abuse. We will adopt a new approach to supporting victims, where possible keeping them safe in their own homes using a range of interventions or facilitating access to alternative housing such as social housing and refuge.
- v) Appropriate civil and criminal justice response to Domestic Abuse, Sexual Violence and Coercive Behaviour incidents that ensures perpetrators are dealt with effectively by adopting a case management approach within the criminal justice system that is seamless and utilises all available disposals including the new Conditional Caution and Perpetrators programme. In addition victims will have been supported in utilising the appropriate Civil Court Orders to prevent re-victimisation.

3.3 Choices (Options)

3.3.1 Decide not to adopt the Countywide Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence Strategy 2019-2022.

3.3.2 Adopt the Countywide Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence Strategy 2019-2022 and the commitment to work with partner agencies to ensure the development and delivery of the associated action plans.

4. Implications (including financial implications)

4.1 Policy

4.1.1 The Strategy will allow a consistent policy approach across Northamptonshire.

4.2 Resources and Risk

4.2.1 There is an expectation that the Community Safety Board will take the lead on the governance for the Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence Strategy for Northamptonshire 2019-2022 and that the Health and Wellbeing, Safeguarding Adults and Safeguarding Children's board will all contribute to this. The Community Safety Board will identify a lead co-ordinator responsible for each strategic objective and be able to report progress to the Board

4.2.2 The Strategy does not require any additional financial commitment. There is an assumption that the existing commitment to the Sunflower Centre and MARAC (Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conference) continues. This cost is £23,742 and is within existing budgets.

4.3 Legal

4.3.1 There are no legal implications at present arising from this report. Legal advice has been sought in relation to specific actions to ensure what is proposed is in accordance with relevant statutory provisions and council policy.

4.4 Equality and Health

4.4.1 Anyone can be a victim of Domestic Abuse, Sexual Violence or Coercive Behaviour and anyone can perpetrate it. Victims are female and male, and may be in heterosexual, same sex or non-intimate relationships. Abuse may occur amongst all groups regardless of protected characteristics, including age, religion, race, disability, education or economic status.

4.4.2 Many abused victims find it difficult to function in their daily lives because of the effects of abuse. Absences from work due to injuries or visits to the doctor often cause them to lose their jobs, making them less able to leave their abusive situations.

4.4.3 The abuse experienced by victims who are Black, Asian or from a minority ethnic group as well as those who have been refugees can be further complicated by other relevant abusive factors such as forced marriage. Women from Black, Asian or minority ethnic communities are likely to face additional barriers to receiving the help that they need; the most profound barrier being communication for non-English speakers.

4.4.4 Research shows that 1 in 4 Lesbian, Gay and Bi-sexual people will experience domestic abuse along with 80% of the Trans community. Nationally LGBT reporting to the Police is underrepresented due to a number of barriers that

include a reluctance to report, confidence in being taken seriously and responses that are insensitive to same sex partners.

4.4.5 Regardless of the age at which the abuse occurred or whether the perpetrator was known to the victim or not, the violation, shame and stigma will have an impact on health and wellbeing and feeling able to seek support for the effects may be a process that can take months or years.

4.4.6 The Domestic Abuse Strategy makes a positive contribution to the equalities agenda in Northampton, focusing on the most vulnerable people within our communities. All proposed actions and initiatives will be appropriately screened to achieve maximum positive impact for the community and to ensure there are no unintended negative consequences.

4.5 Consultees (Internal and External)

Countywide Community Safety Board
Northamptonshire County Council
National Probation Service
District and Borough Councils
Nene Clinical Commissioning Group
East Midlands Ambulance Service
Adult and Children's safeguarding Boards
Northamptonshire Police
Office of Northamptonshire Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner
Cabinet Member for Community Safety, NBC
Head of Housing and Wellbeing, NBC
Legal Services, NBC
Finance, LGSS
Service Providers, including; Northamptonshire Domestic Abuse Service, Sunflower Centre, Eve, Serenity and Northamptonshire Rape Crisis

4.6 How the Proposals deliver Priority Outcomes

4.6.1 This Strategy is consistent with the aims of the council's Corporate Plan and contributes to a wide range of the Council's priority outcomes, including; 'to work with partners to reduce violent crime, anti-social behaviour and hate crime' and 'to build stronger and more resilient communities'.

5. Background Papers

5.1.1 National Strategy to end Violence against Women and Girls 2016-2020

6. Next Steps

6.1 Action plans to be further developed and governance arrangements to be put in place to ensure delivery of the strategy.

**George Candler
Chief Executive**

Appendices:

1. Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence Strategy 2019 - 2022