

READING BOROUGH COUNCIL

REPORT BY EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF ECONOMIC GROWTH & NEIGHBOURHOODS

TO:	Housing Neighbourhoods and Leisure Committee		
DATE:	6 November 2019	AGENDA ITEM:	
TITLE:	Domestic Abuse Strategy 2019-22		
LEAD COUNCILLOR:	Cllr James	PORTFOLIO:	Neighbourhoods
SERVICE:	Neighbourhoods	WARDS:	All
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1. PURPOSE OF REPORT AND EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1 This report summarises the draft Domestic Abuse Strategy for Reading, 2019-22 (Appendix 1) and the report on the recently completed consultation (appendix 2). The report also recommends that the committee adopts the draft strategy in appendix 1, as the live Domestic Abuse Strategy for Reading 2019-22.
- 1.2 Appendix 1 - Draft Domestic Abuse Strategy
- 1.3 Appendix 2 - Consultation Summary
- 1.3 Appendix 3 - Equality Impact Assessment

2. RECOMMENDED ACTION

- 2.1 That Housing Neighbourhoods and Leisure Committee approve the draft strategy as the adopted Domestic Abuse Strategy for Reading 2019- 2022.

3. POLICY CONTEXT

- 3.1 After the successful delivery of the 2015-18 Domestic Abuse Strategy for Reading a refreshed strategy is required. The attached draft strategy for 2019-22 will support the delivery of both the Community Safety Partnership and the Berkshire West Children's Safeguarding Partnership strategic plans.
- 3.2 The draft strategy is impacted but both the Draft Domestic Abuse Bill 2019 and the Children and Social Work Act 2017, plus associated draft statutory 'Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) and Health Education guidance'.

4. THE PROPOSAL

- 4.1 The existing Domestic Abuse Strategy for Reading ended in 2018 and new refreshed strategy is required.

- 4.2 A consultation exercise on the attached draft Domestic Abuse Strategy 2019-22 (appendix 1) was completed from the 19th August 2019 to the 13th September 2019. A summary of the consultation responses is included in the report (appendix 2).
- 4.3 The priorities within the draft strategy were developed via a series of workshops with members of the Domestic Abuse Strategy Group (DASG), a sub-group of the CSP. They reflect the group's aspirations to move the practices and approach of partners in Reading forward in specific areas, and it is assumed that the progress made during the previous strategy will be embedded by agencies as part of their 'business as usual' and therefore continued. Data will continue to be monitored by the DASG and any changes in performance or outcomes will be challenged regularly. The respondents to the consultation strongly agreed with the priorities so they remain as follows:
- 4.4 The priorities within the draft strategy for 2019-22 are as follows:

Priority 1 -Raising awareness about domestic abuse with a focus on:

- **Workforce Development** - Continue to ensure a knowledgeable and well trained workforce.
- **Healthy Relationship Education** - increasing the resilience of Young People to negative relationships and behaviour.
- **Engagement with marginalised communities** - Encouraging those experiencing abuse to seek help at an earlier stage

Priority 2: Developing a multi-agency approach to working with perpetrators - Working with strategic partners to create a perpetrator approach to reduce and prevent repeat Domestic Abuse.

Priority 3 - Improving our partnership response to Coercive Control -Training professionals to understand and identify coercive control, so as to increase and better manage disclosures.

5. CONTRIBUTION TO STRATEGIC AIMS

5.1 The draft strategy supports the delivery of the following Corporate Plan priorities:

1. To protect and enhance the lives of vulnerable adults and children
2. Keeping Reading's environment clean, green and safe

5.2 It also supports the delivery of the following Strategic Aims

1. To promote equality, social inclusion and a safe and healthy environment for all

5.3 Reducing the impact of Domestic Abuse has an impact of both the Health and Wellbeing and Community Safety agendas of the Council and partners.

6. COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND INFORMATION

6.1 A consultation exercise on the draft strategy was completed between the 19th August and the 13th September 2019, and a summary of the responses can be found in Appendix 2.

6.2 24 people responded to the consultation and as well as supporting the proposed priorities they provided clear and helpful suggestions for how these priorities could be delivered effectively.

6.3 As a result of the consultation the draft strategy has been amended as follows:

- As part of the delivery of priority 1, support available for men who experience Domestic Abuse will be publicised.
- The support available for perpetrators who wish to change their offending behaviour has been made clearer within priority 2.
- Support for perpetrators of child to parent violence is included in priority 2.

7. EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

7.1 An Equality Impact Assessment has been completed (appendix 3) in respect to the draft strategy. It is considered that the priorities within the strategy could have **positive** differential impact on groups with the following protected characteristics:

- Racial
- Disability
- Gender
- Sexuality
- Religious belief

7.2 No Negative impact was recorded on any group.

8. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

8.1 Some elements of the strategy may be impacted by the draft Domestic Abuse Bill 2019 currently progressing through parliament.

8.2 The Healthy Relationship programme in schools will be impacted by the legislative changes within the Children and Social Work Act 2017, and the draft statutory guidance published in February 2019.

9. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

9.1 None - the consultation exercise and expected outcomes within the strategy will be delivered within existing resources.

10. BACKGROUND PAPERS

10.1 Domestic Abuse Strategy 2015-18

10.2 Draft Domestic Abuse Bill 2019

10.3 Children and Social Work Act 2017