

CHESHIRE EAST COUNCIL

Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Date of Meeting: 21 April 2016
Report of: Domestic Violence Task and Finish Group
Subject/Title: Domestic Violence Task and Finish Group Final Report
Portfolio Holder: Councillors P Bates and J Clowes

1.0 Report Summary

- 1.1 This report introduces the Domestic Violence Task and Finish Group's (the Task Group) Report on its findings, conclusions and recommendations following its review.

2.0 Recommendations

- 2.1 That the Committee receive the Task Group's Report (attached).
- 2.2 That the Committee approves the Task Group's recommendations, which are contained in the attached report
- 2.3 That the Committee submit the Task Group's Report to Cabinet for consideration.

3.0 Reasons for Recommendations

- 3.1 Domestic abuse is a serious cross cutting issue that harms children, adults, families and communities across Cheshire East. It affects all communities irrespective of demographics, environment or situation. It is often associated with mental ill health and substance abuse, all of which can have life long negative impacts on our population at great financial, economic and social cost.
- 3.2 It is likely that domestic abuse is as underreported in Cheshire East as in other parts of the country. The reasons for this range from fear, shame and barriers to accessing service through a feeling of responsibility to hold the relationship and/or family together.
- 3.4 The Council is committed to an ambitious partnership strategy to prevent harm and provide safety and recovery for those affected. This includes commissioning out provision for refuge, outreach, children's support and perpetrator work (as agreed at Cabinet in July 2015) and providing a dedicated high risk team in house - the Domestic Abuse Family Safety Unit. The high risk service provides direct support and intervention for victims and their children who have experienced Domestic abuse.
- 3.5 Our Partners have now given their definitive position, which is essentially an agreement to sustain current contributions. Whilst this is to be welcomed, it

does not meet the funding gap in providing the current service which is assessed to meet needs effectively and efficiently.

4.0 Wards Affected

4.1 All

5.0 Local Ward Members

5.1 All

6.0 Policy Implications

The policy implications are not known at this stage

7.0 Financial Implications

7.1 The financial implications are not known at this stage

8.0 Legal implications

8.1 The legal implications are not known at this stage.

9.0 Risk Management

Key risks are managed through the Cheshire East Domestic Abuse Partnership Board, which is accountable to the Safer Cheshire East Partnership.

10.0 Background

10.1 The Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee agreed to set up the task and finish group at its meeting on 16 June 2015. The purpose was to understand how domestic violence is dealt with, investigate the under reporting of domestic violence and understand the reasons not to have a single specialist court in Cheshire East. To do this the task group agreed the following terms of reference for the review:

- To gain an understanding of why it was decided not to have a single specialist domestic violence court in Cheshire and how the court process will be improved without this in place.
- To gain an understanding of the sexual violence/abuse police incident reporting process.
- To investigate why domestic abuse reports from Cheshire East residents to the Police are the lowest in Cheshire in a context of extremely low levels of police reporting in Cheshire compared to similar forces nationally
- To review progress on sustaining funding for high risk domestic violence services (Council based)
- To review victims' journey through the system.

10.2 The attached report documents the Task Group's findings, conclusions and recommendations to Cabinet.

11.0 Access to Information

The background papers relating to this report can be inspected by contacting the report writer:

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