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| Meeting: | Decision Session - Executive Member for Health, Wellbeing and Adult Social Care |
| Meeting date: | 21 January 2024 |
| Report of: | Peter Roderick, Director of Public Health |
| Portfolio of: | Cllr Jo Coles, Executive Member for Health, Wellbeing and Adult Social Care |

Decision Report: North Yorkshire and City of York Domestic Abuse Strategy 2024-2028

Subject of Report

1. This report presents to the Executive Member the North Yorkshire and City of York Domestic Abuse Strategy 2024-2028, along with the accompanying Equality Impact Assessment, for adoption and consideration of implications for CYC.

Benefits and Challenges

2. The adoption of the strategy and of its key priorities and commitments by the City of York Council means that full support to victims and survivors of domestic abuse along with work to reduce risk from perpetrators takes place as a whole system approach in partnership with North Yorkshire, working across the geographical footprint in line with the Office of Fire, Police and Crime Commissioner and that of North Yorkshire Police.
3. Tackling domestic abuse is a key partnership commitment within York's Community Safety Strategy, and a national priority. Domestic abuse blights lives, causes huge distress and upheaval for individuals, and has a negative effect on communities, families and the health of children and adults. Whilst capacity and finances are constrained across public services, presenting a challenge to this

type of work, the strategy which is presented here offers a joint and coordinated approach to this issue, likely to be the most effective and – in the end – preventive model to reduce further demand on services and produce the best outcomes. It pulls on the strengths of cross-working with North Yorkshire, whilst retaining bespoke actions relevant to our local York context, and it builds on years of consultation and co-production.

Policy Basis for Decision

4. The strategy and Equality Impact Assessment highlights the disproportionate effect of domestic abuse on those who are adversely affected by health inequalities. The commitment of the strategy is to reduce those inequalities by targeted work and support.
5. It has been written to align with national legislation on Domestic Abuse, in particular the Domestic Abuse Act 2021 which covers additional duties on local authorities and other bodies to work together to commission services and tackle the root causes of Domestic Abuse.
6. The Strategy is one of the key pillars of the new York Community Safety Strategy, and aligns with the Council Plan 2023-2027 which commits to ‘take a council-wide approach to tackle domestic abuse and support victims and survivors’.

Financial Strategy Implications

7. Commissioned services and partnership working around Domestic Abuse in York draws from a number of funding sources, including the council, Office for Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner, and through the Local Authority Domestic Abuse Duty grant. The strategy itself has no new financial implications and acts as a framework against which current resources can be allocated.

Recommendation and Reasons

8. The Executive Member is asked to:

Approve and adopt the North Yorkshire and York Domestic Abuse Strategy 2024-2028.

Reason: to commit City of York Council to support the key priorities and commitments.

Background

9. The Domestic Abuse Act 2021 established in law the office of the Domestic Abuse Commissioner (DAC), to provide public leadership on domestic abuse issues, to play a key role in overseeing and monitoring the provision of domestic abuse services in England and Wales, and to promote best practice, including in multi-agency working.
10. Multi-agency working should be embedded into approaches to responding to domestic abuse and should offer a range of interventions and support, from early intervention to support for high-risk cases through formalised safeguarding arrangements.
11. Domestic abuse is everybody's business and as such the strategy sets out our vision of how we will work collaboratively to create lasting change across all our communities with the voice of the victim at the heart of our response; and where perpetrators of abuse are held accountable for their behaviour.
12. The Act conferred the responsibility of every local authority to establish a Domestic Abuse Partnership Board. The York Board has provided the vehicle for consultation for the strategy and will oversee the actions from the strategy and provide governance along with the Safer York Partnership.
13. The adoption of the strategy enables the City of York Council to fulfil its commitment to multi-agency working using a collaborative framework across York and North Yorkshire for the best outcomes for those at risk of domestic abuse.
14. The Strategy is attached as an annexe to this report, and in summary covers the following key priority areas, making a series of commitments against them:
 - Prevention and Early Identification
 - Authentic & Inclusive Support for All
 - Drive Change Together
 - Accountability

Consultation Analysis

15. Consultation has taken place on the strategy through members of the Domestic Abuse Partnership Board in both York and North Yorkshire.

Options Analysis and Evidential Basis

16. Option 1
For the City of York Council to adopt the strategy and support the priorities and commitments so that those at risk of domestic abuse are supported and harm from perpetrators is mitigated.
17. Option 2
The strategy is not adopted by City of York Council therefore risking working in isolation from our multi-agency partners and stakeholders across the wider system and geographical footprint, increasing the risk of duplication of work and reduced benefits to those at risk of harm.

Organisational Impact and Implications

18. **Financial** - Commissioned services and partnership working around Domestic Abuse in York draws from a number of funding sources, including the council, Office for Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner, and through the Local Authority Domestic Abuse Duty grant. The strategy itself has no new financial implications and acts as a framework against which current resources can be allocated.
19. **Human Resources (HR)** - If the strategy is adopted, the Council will ensure that the workforce are also aware of the priorities and commitments, and these will be reflected in relevant guidance documents as appropriate.
20. **Health and Wellbeing** – CYC has adopted a public health approach to tackling domestic abuse, and the aims and objectives of this strategy if achieved will reduce health inequalities and contribute to creating more positive conditions for health in our city.
21. **Legal** - Section 57(1) of the Domestic Abuse Act 2021 requires that the Council must assess, or make arrangements for the assessment of, the need for accommodation-based support in its area, prepare

and publish a strategy for the provision of such support in its area, and monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of the strategy, and also (further to section 57(3) of the 2021 Act) must, in carrying out its functions, give effect to that strategy.

Section 57(5) of the 2021 Act also requires that must keep the strategy under review, must keep under review any effect of the strategy on the provision of other local authority support in its area, may alter or replace the strategy, and must publish any altered or replacement strategy.

In addition to the above, the Serious Violence Duty set out within Chapter 1 of Part 2 of the Police, Crime, Sentencing and Courts Act 2022 requires that the Council exercises its functions and work together with its local partners and plan to prevent and reduce serious violence, including identifying the kinds of serious violence that occur in the area, the causes of that violence (so far as it is possible to do so), and to prepare and implement a strategy for preventing, and reducing serious violence in the area.

Further legal advice relating to the terms and conditions of any joint working arrangements, governance, data sharing arrangements, delivery plans/commissioning arrangements between the Council and its partners who are working on the delivery of this Strategy should be sought from the Council's Legal Services team prior to implementation.

22. **Procurement** - Whilst there are no direct procurement implications relating to the Domestic Abuse Strategy 2024 -2028 report itself, should any priorities or appropriate services or works be required, Procurement must be involved. These must be procured via a compliant, open, transparent, and fair process in accordance with the council's Contract Procedure Rules and where applicable, the Public Contract Regulations 2015. Further advice regarding the procurement process and development of procurement strategies must be sought from the Commercial Procurement team.
23. **Environment and Climate action** - There are no environmental implications for this.
24. **Affordability** - The EIA at Annex B indicates that there is a lack of data locally on socio-economic characteristics, aside from employment status and household structure, as recorded by current

service providers. National studies indicate that socio-economic factors, such as income and expenditure, can influence eligibility for social housing, benefits, and secure accommodation. Individuals facing these challenges may encounter delays in claiming benefits, leading to a reluctance to escape domestic abuse.

It is worth noting that domestic abuse is underreported among affluent individuals, but this doesn't negate its occurrence behind closed doors. To ensure fair access to services, the strategy will implement diverse outreach strategies designed to reach individuals irrespective of their background and circumstances, therefore will have a positive impact overall.

25. **Equalities and Human Rights** - The Council recognises, and needs to take into account its Public Sector Equality Duty under Section 149 of the Equality Act 2010 (to have due regard to the need to eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other prohibited conduct; advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it and foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it in the exercise of a public authority's functions). A full Equalities Impact Assessment is included at Annex B. This indicates the positive impacts the strategy is expected to have. It also notes that a new key indicator will be created to measure outcomes in relation to all protected characteristics for those accessing safe accommodation services, and for this to be extended to wider domestic abuse services.
26. **Data Protection and Privacy** - Please see Annex C
27. **Communications** - While there are no immediate impacts of the report in terms of Communications activity, campaigns or resources, the service will - as part of its work around safeguarding - continue to work to raise awareness of the support available and the associated harms.
28. **Economy** - There are no economy implications relating to the recommendations of this report.

Risks and Mitigations

29. The absence of a Domestic Abuse strategy poses several risks. These include a potential increase in domestic abuse incidents due

to lack of targeted efforts to prevent and address domestic abuse, lack of support for victims, lack of coordination amongst partners and agencies, insufficient awareness and training amongst professionals and an increase in social and economic costs associated with domestic abuse.

Wards Impacted

30. All Wards in York.

Contact details

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Annexes

- Annex A: NY & CYC Domestic Abuse Strategy 2024
- Annex B: Equalities Impact Assessment (EIA)
- Annex C: Statement from Information Governance