

Annex A

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**Consultancy advice to City of York Council,
Safer York Partnership, other statutory partnerships**

**Readiness, governance, delivery models, joint or single Authority working
and requirements on Local Authorities and Partners**

by the Domestic Abuse Act 2021

ISSUED DRAFT FOR COMMENT AND FINALISATION:

Tuesday 6th July 2021

Maggie Atkinson Consultancy Ltd



Maggie Atkinson Consulting Ltd



**City of York
Health and Wellbeing Board**





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1. **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

- 1.1 This report concludes an independent external appraisal of progress towards the City of York fulfilling, and its readiness for effectively undertaking, the top tier Local Authority responsibilities and requirements in the Domestic Abuse (DA) Act 2021 which gained Royal Assent on April 29th, 2021.
- 1.2 The Act establishes a statutory framework for the delivery of support to victims of domestic abuse and their children – who are also deemed victims whether they have been personally harmed, or have witnessed another being so - including ensuring they can live in, and be provided with, safe accommodation. The local arrangements must ensure, and be able to prove, clarity in the work's appropriate governance and accountability. There will be a duty on each tier one Local Authority in England (County, Metropolitan, London Borough and Unitary Authorities) to create and populate a coordinating, multi-agency Domestic Abuse Local Partnership Board (DALPB) which all concerned at both local and national levels will consult as it performs certain specified functions. These are, in the first instance, to:
- Assess the need for accommodation-based domestic abuse support for all victims in their area, including those who require cross border support - very relevant to York given the city borders a number of other LAs.
 - Develop, agree and publish a strategy for the provision of such support to cover their locality, having regard to the needs assessment referenced above
 - Give effect to the strategy (through both commissioning and de-or-recommissioning decisions)
 - Monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of the strategy
 - Report back to central government¹.
 - Require local authorities to have regard to the Act, and any attached statutory guidance, in exercising their functions
 - Require tier two councils (so in York's case district and borough councils in North Yorkshire County Council jurisdiction, for so long as there is no Local Government Reorganisation that could result in the County Council becoming the Housing Authority) to co-operate with the lead authority, so far as is reasonable practicable.
- This list is not the limit of the DA/DV responsibility, given the need to do more than fulfil the Accommodation duty in the city's response to this difficult and complex social and familial issue.
- 1.3 In light of work already done on this complex and challenging issue ahead of Royal Assent, and given the duties and powers now assigned to top tier Local Authorities and their partners as part of the Act's provisions, this report advises on how York could usefully ensure the fulfilment of the new duties and powers, securing effective governance arrangements, financing and resourcing of a City of York Domestic Abuse Local Partnership Board (DALPB) whilst maintaining elements of commissioning and public facing DA work, all of which has until now been shared with North Yorkshire County Council and its partners.

¹ As things stand only a short time after the Act gaining royal assent, it is not clear whether this work will be inspected. However, given many statutory partner bodies in this work including children's services, health bodies, probation, youth offending and police services are subject to national inspection and regulation regimes, and the national narrative is that adults' social care may be in future, it is likely that services' responses to DA/DV will be included in a number of inspection bodies' framework developments in future years.



- 1.4 This report advises on how a new DALPB for York should relate to, and seek the willing and productive involvement of, relevant services within the City Council, and in York's many commissioners, providers, recipients and beneficiaries of DA services. It also comments on how these services are steered, governed, funded, determined, commissioned, provided and evaluated. It advises on what the shape of both governance and delivery should be in future. The report's contents include advising on where, among the City's several statutory and strategic multi-agency partnerships this new joint Board should sit; and what its relationships should be with the other Partnership bodies whose business touches on the issue of DA and its impact on the lives of those it affects. The recommendation is that DALPB should be hosted by the Safer York Partnership, whose citywide community safety duties include a elements of safeguarding, as well as fulfilling its core remit of steering the city's responses to crime and anti-social behaviour.
- 1.5 The report also advises on the nature, and where necessary the limits, of detailed day to day, rather than appropriately strategic and policy-shaping, involvement in work on DA by City Councillors, and members of any other agency's governing bodies.
- 1.6 This work has been completed with the willing cooperation of the City Council's relevant officers across a number of Directorates, representatives of partner bodies on the Safer York Partnership, the City of York Safeguarding Children Partnership (CYSCP), York Safeguarding Adults Board, York Health and Wellbeing Board, the Office of the Fire, Police and Crime Commissioner for North Yorkshire, and a number of voluntary and community sector bodies. Also involved in reflections and interviews, were North Yorkshire County Council's DA/DV coordinator, and a senior member of staff at the Office of the Fire, Police and Crime Commissioner whose role covers the OFPCC's considerable coordination and commissioning of DA/DV services, solutions and professional development activities.
- 1.7 Having agreed to take this approach so that views of all participants could be expressed frankly by all concerned, there is no detailed list of contributors in this report that would enable identification of individuals by name. This is intentional, given that participants were able to be very direct in what they had to say that would help to frame a positive way forward for York in this difficult and sensitive area of work by a wide range of professionals. The consensus view expressed in this report, coming as it did from every direction and all of York's contributing organisations, should mean that the lack of a list of named contributors will not be an obstacle to progress.



2 CONTEXT: WHAT THE CLIENT ASKED ME TO DO

- 2.1 I was asked to undertake a thorough and formal appraisal, in partnership with relevant representatives of partner bodies on the Safer York Partnership and a wide range of other bodies, of York's progress towards and readiness for the Local Authority hosted responsibilities entailed in fulfilling the requirements of the Domestic Abuse Act 2021. This was contracted as a piece of consultancy work with me as the sole consultant, working through my one-person company Maggie Atkinson Consulting Ltd. The City of York, through hosting a Domestic Abuse Local Partnership Board (DALPB) specific to the city rather than as now shared with North Yorkshire County Council, seeks to ensure the successful development, settling in, efficiency and effectiveness of York's chosen model which will satisfy the requirements on all top tier Local Authorities and partnerships set out in the Domestic Abuse Act 2021.
- 2.2 I was commissioned to provide advice, and an independent, external view, on how well the 2021 Act's forthcoming requirements are currently fulfilled, given at present the City and its neighbour North Yorkshire County Council undertake the work concerned jointly, and York wishes to form a locally contextualised Board that serves the City whilst continuing to do at least some of the work concerned in partnership. The aim of the work concerned is to enable York's many partnership agencies, the city's citizens and in particular victims of those at risk of Domestic Abuse and Violence, the Ministry for Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) and other external observers or stakeholders to be confident in York's collective work in this vital and highly sensitive field. Where issues must be addressed to enable these assurances, I was asked, through this report, to give clear advice, including where choices must be made from several possible options.
- 2.3 My consultancy-based support has been provided over 10 days of work. It has included contact with key individuals, and a co-constructive approach to the city's issues on DA/DV; desk-based analysis and preparation; and the drafting and final submission of a report for future use in ensuring the success of a DA/DV Partnership Board for York. Through a mixture of reading, research, one-to-one or small group interviews with a wide range and variety of people working in statutory and voluntary or community services where residents and families might be affected by DA/DV, I was asked to give considered and again formal advice on ensuring and securing future governance arrangements for a City of York Domestic Abuse Local Partnership Board, expected as part of the legislation.
- 2.4 I was also asked for my objective advice on how this Board should
- (a) Relate to the City's other required partnership Boards and similar bodies
 - (b) Relate to and continue to work in partnership on some DV/DA themes and programmes with the neighbouring top tier Local Authority, North Yorkshire County Council.
- 2.5 I was approached to undertake this work and to advise the City's agencies on the basis of personal and professional experience in education, wider children and young people's services leadership, management, evaluation and monitoring, and the wider public sector. This span of experience and expertise is important given DV/DA issues affect people of all ages, and can be found not only in adult relationships, but in far younger ones - including featuring in peer-on-peer intimidation and online abuse within, and on the boundaries of, those relationships.



2.6 Children in families where adults are affected by DV/DA have also been a key theme and focus of this work, not least because the new legislation is clear that if a child or young person has been a witness of DA/DV, this makes them a victim of that DA/DV, rather than only a bystander or witness to it in their family or friendship environment. This means that there is a great deal of DA/DV that weaves through the practice, and into the work, of the many services that sit on and account to the City of York Safeguarding Children Partnership (CYSCP), whose Independent Scrutineer I have been since September 2020.

3. HOW THIS WORK WAS UNDERTAKEN

3.1 This section of the report outlines how the consultancy was framed and undertaken. As is my working practice as a Consultant, the work consist of gathering evidence and triangulating it across all of the following elements, within a time frame that matches the City's needs and requirements given there are deadlines involved.

3.2 It covers:

- The background work done on a desk-based segment of the assignment: reflecting York's current stage of development in matters relating to DA/DV, plus a good deal of comparative work with other areas of similar size and nature to the city. This stage entailed studying York's and other areas' needs assessments, matched to the new Act and to statements and expectations from the MCHLG driving this work alongside local needs and context. This involved reading and reflecting on, and being ready to triangulate York's work in the context of, all of the following:
 - The Domestic Abuse Act 2021, and available schedules and government briefings on its contents, the work needed to meet the powers and duties entailed. The .gov.uk website materials are a rich and plentiful source of useful relevant and context setting, as well as practice-reflecting and direction setting information.
 - The materials available on the current joint ways of working, from policy making and decisions, through strategic to operational levels, between relevant parties in North Yorkshire County Council, City of York Council, the OFPCC for North Yorkshire, and a wide range of partner agencies from statutory to voluntary and community bodies within and beyond City of York Council, health, policing, educational and other organisations.
 - A selection of DA/DV strategies and materials from a range of other localities across England, all of them faced with the same development and delivery opportunities and challenges as York's.
- The field work stage: a series of interviews with senior representatives of services connected to this agenda, within and beyond the City Council, as recommended and organised by the Head of Community Safety and other senior officials in partner bodies. These interviews have been noted in detail whilst they were underway. The evidence they have contributed feeds into this report, but no names or service



assignments are given in the text so that no individual can be identified. This stage included reflections on, triangulation and analysis of, the evidence given to me from participants. Due to Covid 19 restrictions this segment of the assignment was conducted as an online exercise via Microsoft Teams

- The writing stage, production, agreement and final sign-off of this report, again a desk-based segment of the assignment, writing to a strict deadline given the need to advance on a City of York agreed DA/DV strategy, the creation of a DALPB, the governance entailed and lines of reporting to be put in place. This segment closes the assignment, at the point of hand-over of this report to the Council, its partners, and the new City of York Domestic Abuse Local Partnership Board that will be configured, publish its strategy and plan, and begin to operate in practice, both across the city and with partners beyond it, later in 2021.
- The total time taken for this consultancy assignment has been:
 - one pro-bono day agreeing the scope and capturing it in a document that became the foundations for a co-signed Letter of Engagement serving as a formal contract.
 - 9 costed and charged days of work on the stages outlined above
 - A draft report for final sign-off was then created and submitted, and after due consideration by relevant staff was cleared for finalisation and closure, the work concerned being completed in a 10th and final costed and charged day.



4. WHAT PARTICIPANTS SAID AND WHAT CAN BE CONCLUDED

INTRODUCTORY REMARKS

I undertook ten, 45-to-60-minute interviews with representatives from a range of services both within and beyond the City Council. They included senior staff from the Police Service, health providers, housing and community safety teams, and those working with and seeking to ensure the safety of victims and witnesses of DA/DV including children and young people as well as adults in both public sector bodies and the community and voluntary sector. Had the government's timetable for implementation of the requirements of the Domestic Abuse Act 2021 been more generous following Royal Assent on April 29th, 2021, which comes with an implementation requirement of August 2021, I would have interviewed more representatives. However, it is my opinion that it is doubtful others would have said different things, or given different feedback from what those interviewed had to say. I state this because the consensus was both strong and striking. It is summarised in this section of the report.

- 4.1 All concerned were clear that whilst York now needs to form its own city-specific DALPB that sets a strategy and a direction for work on DA/DV including but not exclusively limited to fulfilling the Accommodation duty, the practicalities of commissioning and delivery of services for victims and perpetrators when York shares a police service and other bodies with North Yorkshire County Council means shared ways of achieving commissioning and delivery, and standard ways of working that do not change at boundary points, will remain important.
- 4.2 All agreed that the key "host" Partnership for a DALPB for York should be Safer York, the Community Safety Partnership. Its duties should already include work on community safety and cohesion, anti-social behaviour, threats to citizens' safety and peace of mind, safety on the streets and in communities, and violence including that which happens as a result of youth crime, what happens to trafficked or enslaved people brought into York, the profile of DA/DV in communities such as Universities and armed forces bases, the behaviours apparent in the night time economy, and abuse and violence in the city's sex industry. These are all difficult and delicate matters to deal with, but contributors were clear they are happening in York just as they do elsewhere, contributing to problems around DA and DV in relationships, families and communities.
- 4.3 There was strong consensus and clear recognition that the current tendency to see coordinating responses to and representing the city on DA/DV as the responsibility of the Head of Community Safety will not be sustainable once York creates its own DALPB, which all concerned were keen to see happen. Under current arrangements a good deal of coordination is undertaken through North Yorkshire County Council, and this will now rest on York shoulders. The City Council and its partners will need to factor in the funding of a team of people, drawn from across Departments and Directorates within and beyond the City Council, who can steer the formation of and service York's DALPB whilst working as closely as possible with North Yorkshire's DALPB on the practicalities mentioned in 4.1 above. The City has been granted £50,000 of government funding labelled a Capacity Fund, and a further £334,000 for 2021-2022 implementation and coordination purposes. This resource will need to fund the developments outlined in both creating York's DALBP, and beginning implementation, including the negotiation and securing of continued joint working with North Yorkshire where this is appropriate, efficient and likely to be effective.



- 4.4 There was universal agreement that although unpicking the current shared strategic arrangements with North Yorkshire will require sustained and mutually respectful effort, and bring a need for the commitment from citywide partners of time, effort, finances and human resources, the time is ripe for York to create a city specific DALPB. As all contributors were also clear, it will need to take a realistic, robust, evidence-led approach to identifying and dealing with York's DA/DV issues across all services at both leadership and frontline practice levels in agencies citywide. This must include ensuring the resources used by the OFPCC to commission some vital work on DA/DV for all communities is directed at both the County and the City, to meet evidenced need as proven by needs analysis in the two LAs operating their own strategic DALPBs, and in the work that continues in partnership across the two Authorities where that continuation is the best way of achieving the outcomes sought.
- 4.5 Every contributor was keen that any development ensures the workforce across all agencies receives the highest possible quality, properly funded and supported training, on a continuous not a one-off basis and in mixed-agency and service settings as well as single agencies, so that cross fertilisation and partnership ways of thinking and working are reinforced. I interviewed representatives from commissioning bodies and providers in the health economy, those working in education, housing, policing, adults and children's social care, services advocating for and supporting the voices of individuals, families and communities including in housing and community safety, and representatives from the voluntary sector. All were clear that in some lives, across all age, sexual orientations and identities, professions, intellectual and physical ability or disability communities, socio-economic and ethnic groups, DA/DV features whether it is physical, mental, emotional, or a mixture. It is clear that high percentages of children in Child in Need, Child Protection and in-care populations have experienced DA/DV. Health providers reported surprising numbers, particularly of older women, considering it a normal part of life to be physically or emotionally hurt by long term partners. Both local and national media and educators are currently acknowledging, and concerned about, a tendency for too many adolescent relationships to entail verbal, psychological and online abuse, or a mixture of these that also turns towards physical harm. Housing providers and commissioners were equally clear the safe accommodation duty in the new Act will require partnership-based, committed work to get the offer right. It was clear throughout this work that professionals see DA/DV as a pressing issue, to be addressed citywide. Tackling it by ensuring the entire workforce involved in any role with children, families and communities, has the appropriate levels of professional awareness and the tools to deal with the issue, will be vital.
- 4.6 Feedback was also clear that communication across the many partnerships and steering or reference groups, and the due separation of functions required between elected politicians including the Police and Fire Commissioner and those who are doing the work entailed must be ensured by all concerned. Contributors were clear that they are and will always be accountable to Elected Members, the PFCC, and community representatives for the work they undertake. The "clear blue water" that needs to lie between those who make policy, set direction and keep a close eye on vital strategic policy matters, and those appointed and paid to do the work, creates a safeguard for both groups that cannot be ignored and must be upheld. DA/DV, like many other issues, is both deeply emotive, and can be politically charged in ways that can create stumbling blocks in the delivery of what is required. That both elected representatives and paid officers in the agencies concerned are deeply committed is not at issue here. The definition of roles and the due separation of functions is vital, especially given DA/DV is now in a statutory space and may well be inspected in the future. This means that such definition and separation are all the more vital. It follows that mutual trust, as the foundation of the relationships concerned, must be the watchword at all times.



5. FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS: THE CHOICES TO BE MADE

5.1 What has already happened in York on readiness for the duties on localities contained in the Domestic Abuse Act 2020 must be captured here, as this work has been thorough and comprehensive, and is now part of the setting of direction for the future. The details of this very firm and appropriate foundation follow below, and inform both my findings and recommendations. A Local Needs Assessment has been completed, covering issues across all DA/DV themes and associated needs. Though there is a heavy emphasis in the legislation on LAs ensuring the provision of accommodation for any and all victims who need it if feeling a violent or controlling relationship, this assessment has not focused only on that duty, but on the bigger picture on DA/DV. This needs assessment had been completed in preparation for a continuation, wherever possible, of joint commissioning of DA/DV services, notwithstanding York's desire to set up its own strategic leadership and direction setting DALPB that is city-wide and city specific.

RECOMMENDATION 1: This should be used as the foundation for the work to be done to form, and then successfully to run, a York specific, strategic DALPB.

5.2 Strategic governance for domestic abuse is currently shared between the city's Community Safety Partnership (Safer York Partnership) and North Yorkshire's Community Safety Partnership. DA/DV is a central strategic and operational priority for both CSPs. There is also a DA/DV Joint Coordinating Group (DAJCG) as part of this arrangement, currently co-chaired by NYCC and CYC through their Community Safety Leads. The DAJCG and joint strategic partnership has oversight and management of the joint NYCC/CYC Domestic Abuse Strategy, already published and covering the period 2018-22. The time is therefore ripe for consideration of what needs to happen now that there is new legislation giving the duty for leadership of local work on DA/DV to top tier LAs, of which CYC is one.

5.3 York now has a choice to make regarding how it wishes to see the future of its work to be governed and run. This creates three potential ways forward.

(a) The retention of the current strategic Partnership with North Yorkshire, which draws from York where Officers have the capacity to contribute, though as all participants were clear is more heavily resourced, and tends to be more focused on the issues brought to the table, by the larger and more substantially resourced team of people available to the County Council and its services. Neither the County Council nor City of York Council are among the better-resourced local authorities in England, but contributors to this consultancy have been clear throughout that North Yorkshire staff tend to have more dedicated time to commit entirely to DA/DV issues than is possible in a small unitary city where all staff, including those in leadership and senior management roles, tend to have to carry a multitude of strategic and operational duties and responsibilities. In the circumstances covered by this consultancy, the reality is that forming its own strategic DALPB will cost York both monetary and HR resources that will have to be found. What it currently contributes to the joint arrangements will not be sufficient, not least because some of the weight involved is currently carried by staff in the County Council and OPFCC.



(b) At the other extreme: York dissolves all links with the County Council and its partners, including currently shared ways of working within the Police and other cross-county/city services, and insists on everything, including the delivery of services on the ground working with both perpetrators and victims or survivors, is made entirely York-specific regardless of what partner bodies or agencies wish to do. This would be a feasible idea, given York is a Unitary City Council and has its own distinct identity and sense of self. My caution should this choice be made is three-fold.

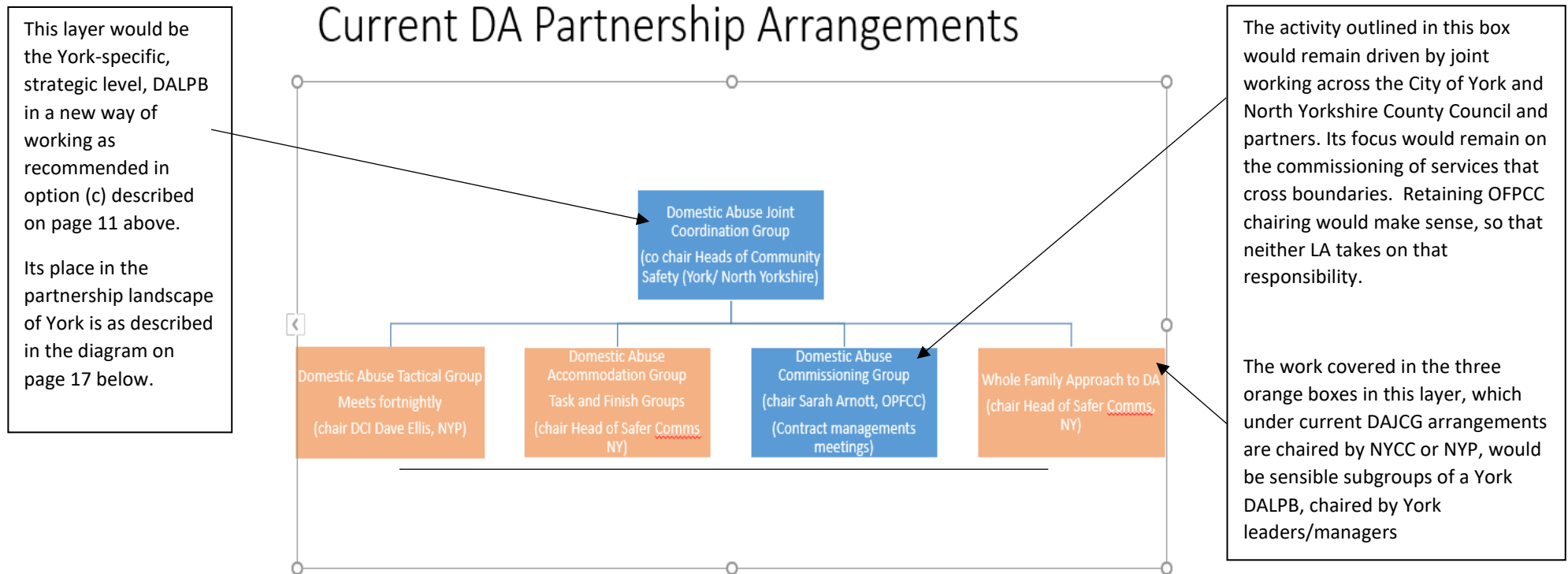
- First, senior representatives of partner bodies contributing to this consultancy asked directly and pointedly for continued commonality with regard to the standards set, the approaches expected of teams and services working across the boundaries between North Yorkshire and York, and the “asks” of providers.
- Second, both victims and perpetrators, as well as staff in many cross-boundary services, do not stop at those boundaries. The fluidity of local authority boundaries and the ease of moving into and out of York mean that attempting to create both strategic and operational ways forward that are entirely York-specific are unlikely to be feasible in the long term.
- Third, the needs of the victims and survivors in DA/DV situations must come first, and they are already vulnerable, meaning that for example, as many contributors said during the fieldwork for this consultancy, the need for good cross-boundary working relationships is key to keeping them safe, because sanctuary and security might well, indeed already do, lie in being able to place them in another LA’s safe accommodation.

(c) The potentially harder but pragmatic choice: consensus among contributors settled on this option, hence this bold font. This option for the future would entail York forming its own strategic partnership as shown in the diagram on page 12 below, which is taken directly from the joint North Yorkshire/City of York DA/DV strategy 2019-2022. Taking up this option would entail dismantling the arrangements shown in the topmost blue level and the orange boxes in the diagram on page 12. That topmost level, and the work shown in the three orange boxes, would become the province of York as its own DALPB is formed. The work shown in the blue box on the second layer below would continue to be shared across York and North Yorkshire. Ensuring the success of this option will take time, effort and significant additional resource. That the government has made resources available to enable localities to begin to work on implementation of their new duties under the 2021 DA Act.

RECOMMENDATION 2: The third of the options discussed above carries most weight with all parties and should be pursued. Achieving it should not be underestimated as a task and will require significant investment in partnership development with all partners including current providers of DA/DV services, and all statutory partner agencies. It will require time from a wide range of leaders and staff in all agencies concerned, and the efficient and transparent use of the allocated resources coming from central government funding. The latter should be used to give both assurance that the LA’s new duties under the 2021 Act can be taken up,



and that the “breathing space” created by the presence of a dedicated financial resource for 2021-2022 enables the City to decide how future years’ work on DA/DV will then be resourced, given those duties will continue.



5.3 It was recognised by all concerned that the current strategic needs assessment needs a significant refresh. North Yorkshire Police (NYP) produces a DA/DV problem profile, and there is a recognised need to ensure all key documents are deliberately interlinked across agencies both within York, and given NYP serves both county and city, with NYDALPB once it is established as a separate entity for the county.

5.4 There is also clear recognition that all new documentation and planning material needs to be owned and directed by York’s newly established DALPB, rather than simply being regularly presented and “taken as read” by partner bodies.



- 5.5 Officers are clear that this work needs to be completed on a 3-year cycle, and refreshed on an annual basis, with the LA to lead on and host this work. All concerned are aware that this is currently undertaken by OPFCC, and that the Office and the Commissioner will remain key partners in this work, and is already a commissioner of some services and programmes.
- 5.6 It is clear that the current DA/DV lead in Community Safety employed by CYC is aware of what the new legislation will require, and has briefed both senior staff across partnerships and city organisations as to what will be required. It is equally clear that the current tendency to “leave it to her” across agencies in York will not be sufficient to ensure the success of a York-specific DALPB. There will need to be a team of people, both within the group directly servicing the Safer York Partnership’s work, and across other partnerships and multiple agencies’ teams, who will work on this agenda across the city.

RECOMMENDATION 3: The infrastructural, governance and other “business and back-room” matters discussed in 5.3 to 5.6 above should be early and vital work for the new DALPB to undertake, in its very earliest days of working. There will inevitably need to be a structured and supported transitional phase that very securely “lands” the new City of York (Council-led and coordinated) DALPB and does not endanger victims or jeopardise continuity.

5.7 The analysis undertaken to date confirms all of the following are key considerations as York seeks to find direction and fulfil its responsibilities under the 2021 Act:

- (a) That as per the requirements of the DA Act 2021, City of York Council will now need to lead conversations with local experts, across children’s and adults’ services, the police, physical and mental health commissioners and providers, housing and other bodies, and the city’s voluntary sector bodies working with both victims and perpetrators to consider how new statutory duties will be delivered locally, and the need to do this immediately to meet MHCLG requirements is equally clear.
- (b) That the York-specific arrangements, required under the new Act, must ensure genuine and productive engagement with relevant key partners, to enable early identification of membership of the City of York Domestic Abuse Local Partnership Board (CYDALPB,) which York and all other Tier 1 authorities are expected to convene.
- (b) That these discussions must facilitate both expertise and information sharing in relation to the new duties under the 2021 Act, so as to help identify and address potential changes in implementation early and proactively.
- (d) That the review of and changes to current arrangements all of which are shared with North Yorkshire, the development of York’s new strategic DA/DV partnership, its membership, and relations between it and already-established York Boards and Partnerships, must include decisions about where DA/DV should remain part of those established Partnerships’ business.



(e) That all partner bodies and agencies, from housing bodies to the voluntary and community sector, across the Council and all other statutory partners and relevant agencies, must be included “at the table” of a new, York-specific, DALPB, albeit with continued links with North Yorkshire’s equivalent for the commissioning of services to work with both victims and perpetrators.

(f) That the current Domestic Abuse Joint Coordinating Group, co-chaired by North Yorkshire’s and York’s lead Officers for this work, is all too easily taken over by considerations regarding the larger of the two top-tier Council areas, North Yorkshire, despite the efforts of those who attend to continue to keep York’s different needs in mind. The conclusion that a York-specific DALPB is now needed is therefore inescapable, but so is the fact that all concerned will need to “step up, turn up, lead and deliver, without the presence of a bigger partner in North Yorkshire to help carry the strategic weight,” as more than one contributor said very clearly.

(g) That the local needs assessment required by the 2021 Act will not be a one-off undertaking but will need to be refreshed every 3 years, and that in “refresh” exercises need to ensure close linkages with other Boards’ and Partnerships’ strategic and operational plans, and those of individual agencies that attend and contribute to both those Boards and Partnerships, and the DALPB. The current refresh exercises are undertaken by the OFPCC, and York’s DALPB should expect to continue to call on this from that Office, which it shares with North Yorkshire.

(h) That York is already well on the way to fulfilling the requirements of the 2021 Act in terms of the need to ensure the provision of safe and suitable accommodation for victims and families, including when a victim is male. The current provider landscape is well established, IDAS and Foundation being both present and active in both the city and the neighbouring county, though both recognise the need to go on seeking ways to increase capacity, develop a Safe Haven scheme, and work with both DALPBs to achieve maximum efficiency and effectiveness. Contract management, both as a single DALPB for York and in partnership with North Yorkshire, will need to be considered as York develops its own strategic approach.

(i) That the new Act’s requirements on DALPBs to ensure provision will meet the needs of marginalised or particularly vulnerable groups will be uppermost in the creation of a DA/DV Strategy for the city that meets York’s needs. Such groups include, but are unlikely to be limited to, Black and other Minority Communities’ citizens; LGBTQI+ victims and perpetrators, disabled including learning disabled victims, teenagers affected by DA/DV in their relationships especially where they are under-16, and children living in households affected by DA/DV, who are considered victims under the requirements of the new Act.

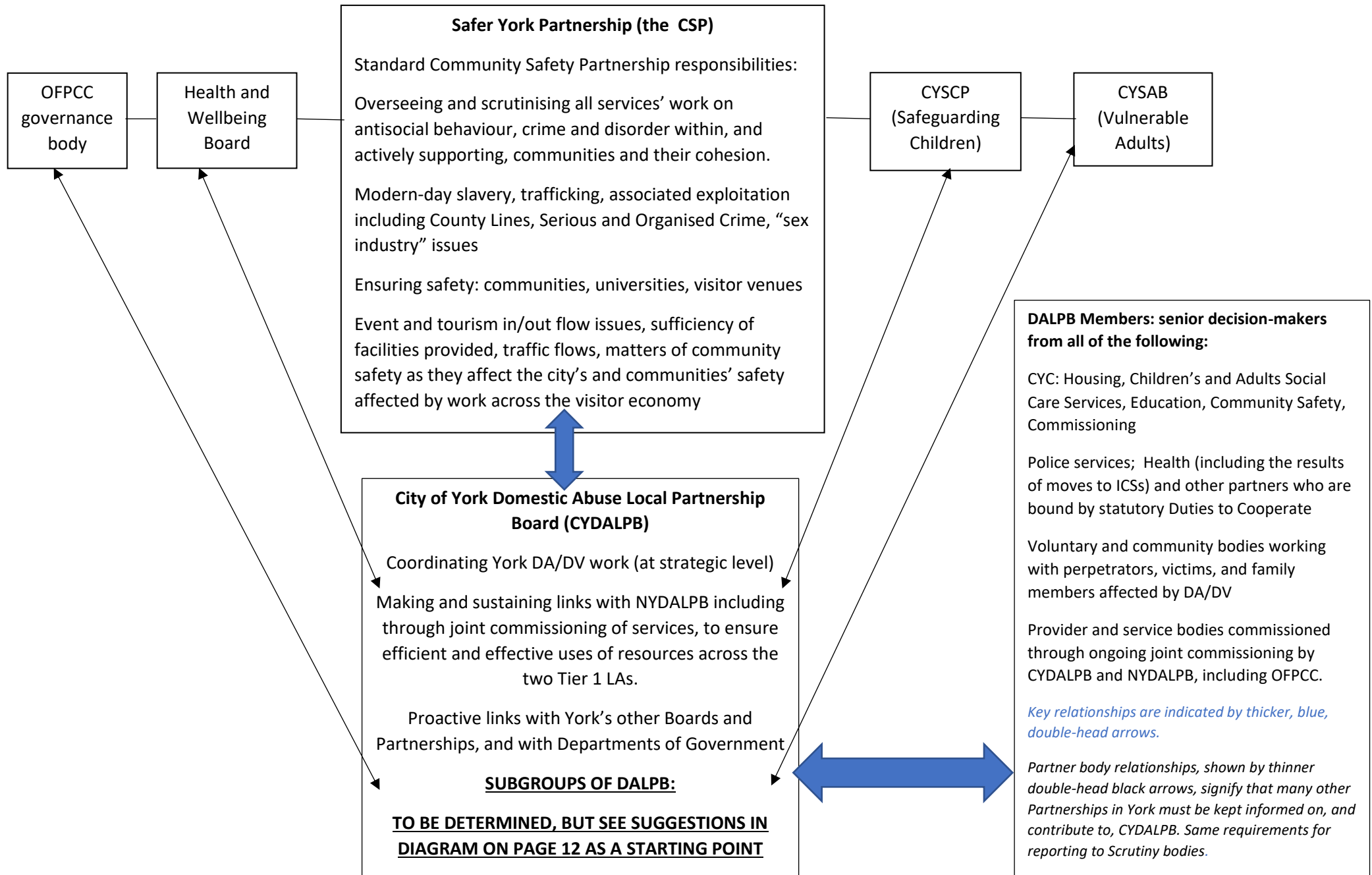
(j) That the York DALPB will need actively to pursue and ensure the strengths and productiveness of relationships with – for example – housing bodies not only in York but in neighbouring LAs, given both victims and perpetrators are among the groups in society who move across boundaries as part of their responses to their situations.

5.8 A good deal of work has been done or is already underway across a range of services both within and beyond the City Council, on DA and DV issues, on which the new arrangements should build and there is no need to “go back to square one”. For example, North Yorkshire Police is already undertaking high quality, well received training, for front line officers and civilian staff alike, through the provider Safer Lives.



This is already having a positive effect on practice, Force-wide, as the police's data on that practice is beginning to show. Children's Social Care Services is also undertaking work on the subject, and the Education team within Children's Services within the same Directorate is also keenly aware that the newly statutory Personal Social Health and Citizenship Education curriculum is a prime and ready focus for good curricular work with children and young people on matters pertaining to respectful and mutually fulfilling relationships. It has become very clear during this consultancy arrangement that all of these need to be collected and reported on in one place rather than as now being somewhat service specific; and that the DALPB should be that place, alongside ensuring "For Information" reporting to inform the work of York's other Partnerships and Boards.

RECOMMENDATION 4: The structure diagram on the next page illustrates my evidence based, strongly partnership-supported advice on what a York-specific DALPB should look like, what organisations should expect to be asked to attend and at what levels of representation, and how it should relate to other Boards Partnerships and services. As the text makes clear, the DALPB will then need to decide on what subgroups it will require in order to ensure duties under the 2021 Act are fulfilled.





ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS AND THANKS

From start to finish – from early conversations and the commissioning of the work to this final publication point – I have been met with unfailing courtesy, interest and enthusiasm for the subject, and for getting things right in the troubled work surrounding all issues of domestic abuse and violence. The determination and expressions of commitment came from all agencies and their representatives, and bodes well for refreshed and truly partnership-based action going forward from this point.

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I wish the Council and its many partners good luck in ensuring the new duties on LAs are fully met, which will be the work of many rather than the previous rather small group of key staff, and will need to be owned and seen through by all the partnerships and bodies whose logos appear on the cover of this report.

Professor Maggie Atkinson

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