

Report to: Lead Member for Adult Social Care and Health

Date of meeting: 12 January 2022

By: Director of Adult Social Care

Title: Pan-Sussex Domestic Abuse Accommodation and Support Strategy

Purpose: To seek approval of the final draft of the pan-Sussex Domestic Abuse Accommodation and Support Strategy and the proposed spend priorities.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Lead Member is recommended to:

- 1) approve the final draft of the pan-Sussex Domestic Abuse Accommodation and Support Strategy.
 - 2) approve proposed spend priorities identified in response to the Needs Assessment, Strategy and consultation.
 - 3) delegate authority to the Director of Adult Social Care to make any minor modifications to the Strategy considered necessary after the meeting and to take any action necessary to implement the Strategy.
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1 Background

1.1 The Domestic Abuse Act 2021 (“the Act”) requires local authorities to undertake or arrange for the completion of a needs assessment of the accommodation-based support needs of victims / survivors of domestic abuse in its area, and publish a strategy setting out how they will protect and assist survivors of domestic abuse in safe accommodation.

1.2 The three local authorities in Sussex each received £50,000 Capacity Building Funding from the Ministry of Housing Communities and Local Government (“MHCLG”), now, the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (“DLUHC” which was paid to the Sussex Police and Crime Commissioners (“SPCC”) office to undertake this work and produce a pan Sussex strategy (“the Strategy”).

1.3 Over 70 stakeholders, professionals, service providers and survivors took part in engagement meetings to inform the needs assessment for accommodation based support.

1.4 In addition, each District and Borough Council received funding (just over £30,000 each) to assist with the needs assessment and implementation of the Strategy.

1.5 DLUHC requires local authorities to publish the final draft of the Strategy (set out at Appendix 1) by 5 January 2022. In East Sussex, this will include reference to the final Strategy pending inclusion of the Lead Members’ foreword, and sign-off by the Lead Member for Adult Social Care and Health on 12 January 2022.

1.6 The Act requires local authorities to deliver on the commitments made in the Strategy and report progress to the Secretary of State each year.

1.7 The pan-Sussex Domestic Abuse Partnership Board will oversee the delivery of the annual Action Plans that sit under both the Pan-Sussex Domestic Abuse Accommodation and Support Strategy, and the broader-focused pan-Sussex Strategic Framework for [the prevention of] Domestic and Sexual Violence and Abuse and VAWG (Violence Against Women and Girls).

1.8 The Strategy will be reviewed and refreshed every three years in response to the changing needs of victims and survivors of domestic violence and abuse.

2 Supporting information

2.1 The public consultation ran for eight weeks, opening on 25 October 2021 and closing on 19 December.

2.2 The consultation was shared with people and organisations who took part in the engagement work to develop the strategy; promoted through established Council channels including the consultation website; social media accounts; engagement groups; People Bank volunteers; various newsletters and staff updates; and local partners were asked to share it with their networks.

2.3 44 people completed the survey, 42 of whom live or work in East Sussex, and the topic was also discussed at an East Sussex Seniors Association meeting. Appendix 2 provides further detail regarding the consultation responses received.

2.4 The draft Strategy was discussed at the December Safer Communities Partnership Board (SCPB), where it was well-received and there was broad endorsement of the strategic priorities identified (minutes of the SCPB are set out at Appendix 5).

2.5 In addition, the draft Strategy was discussed at a briefing presentation to the People Scrutiny Committee December 2021, where it was also well-received.

2.6 The East Sussex Youth Cabinet have identified Domestic Violence and Abuse as a key priority in 2021.

2.7 The Strategy is accompanied by a comprehensive Equality Impact Assessment (set out at Appendix 3) which will inform the East Sussex Action Plan that sits under the Strategy.

3 Conclusion and reason for recommendations

3.1 In response to the findings of the needs assessment, six strategic priorities were identified:

- **Consistent and Collaborative:** Promoting multi-agency and partnership commissioning and working to ensure a consistent offer across Sussex
- **Diverse and Appropriate:** Providing a wide range of appropriate safe accommodation and support options
- **Accessible and Inclusive:** Ensuring services are accessible to all victims/survivors and meet the specific needs of those with the full range of protected characteristics
- **Responsive:** Establishing specialist provision to support victims/survivors with Multiple Complex Needs
- **Victim-centred:** Empowering victims/survivors through expanding choices and enabling more victims/survivors to remain in their own homes
- **Trauma-informed:** Embedding trauma-informed practice in services and processes through training and specialist knowledge

3.2 Public respondents broadly endorsed the strategic priorities and the recommendations that received the highest number of votes for prioritisation were:

- More accommodation for women with children.
- Offering a broader menu of accommodation options.
- Dedicated support for children and young people.
- Developing a mechanism to ensure safe accommodation providers meet a minimum standard of care and support.

3.3 The People Scrutiny Committee (“the Committee”) also endorsed the strategic priorities and highlighted two recommendations for priority commissioning: the provision of Sanctuary Schemes across the county to enable victims/ survivors to remain in their own homes, and specialist provision for children and young people who have experienced either familial or direct domestic abuse. The Committee also endorsed the recommendation that Housing Teams should be regularly represented at Multi Agency Risk Assessment Conferences (“MARAC”)

New Burdens Award

3.4 DLUHC have not yet confirmed whether the 2021/22 award of £1,069,272 will be repeated in 2022/23, although verbal indications are positive. Pending this confirmation, commitments against the initial award will be procured for a two-year period. Appendix 4 outlines both the proposed spend priorities that have been identified in response to the needs assessment, Strategy and consultation, and commitments that can be met within current resources.

3.5 The Lead Member is recommended to:

- 1) approve the final draft of the pan-Sussex Domestic Abuse Accommodation and Support Strategy.
- 2) approve proposed spend priorities identified in response to the Needs Assessment, Strategy and consultation.
- 3) delegate authority to the Director of Adult Social Care to make any minor modifications to the Strategy considered necessary after the meeting and to take any action necessary to implement the Strategy.

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1 – Pan-Sussex Domestic Abuse Accommodation and Support Strategy

Appendix 2 – Domestic abuse consultation results report

Appendix 3 – EqIA Domestic Abuse Strategy

Appendix 4 – Proposed Spend Priorities against the New Burdens Award

Appendix 5 – Minutes of the SCPB 01/12/21