

BRIEFING PAPER FOR IMPROVING PLACES SELECT COMMISSION

1.	Date of meeting:	19th July 2017
2.	Title:	Domestic Abuse Update
3.	Directorate:	Regeneration and Environment

1. Background

- 1.1 Domestic abuse continues to be a priority for the Safer Rotherham Partnership (SRP) and as such partners continue to work collectively to address these issues and improve services.
- 1.2 During 2016 there were 6,503 incidents of domestic abuse reported to South Yorkshire Police, 2,079 of which were domestic abuse related criminal offences. This represents a 28% increase in domestic abuse reports which is a trend that is reflected nationally, with the office for national statistics recently stating that domestic abuse accounts for one in ten calls to Police nationally.
- 1.3 Elected members have taken a keen interest in this area, as has this committee, and in 2013 this committee undertook a scrutiny review in to domestic abuse and held a subsequent meeting in December 2016. Both the initial and subsequent reviews produced a number of recommendations and this report will provide and update focussed upon the recommendations made in 2016.

2. Previous Scrutiny Review

- 2.1 During the second meeting held in 2016, along with the production of this report, members resolved the following;
 - (2) That the recommendations agreed by the Safer Rotherham Partnership Board on 5th December, 2016, be supported i.e.:-
 - The commissioning of a full review and refresh of the Safer Rotherham Partnership Domestic and Sexual Abuse Strategy 2013/17;
 - That an action plan is developed to underpin the partnership delivery of the refreshed Strategy which includes input from partners working in the field of domestic and sexual abuse;
 - Reconvene the SRP multi-agency Domestic and Sexual Abuse Priority Group chaired by Assistant Director (Council) or equivalent level senior Police Officer or senior officer from one of the partnerships responsible authorities;

- Commission an independent peer review of the Partnership's domestic and sexual abuse offer to include governance arrangements, identification of gaps in service, pathways, funding arrangements and support networks;
 - Approve funding of up to £10,000 from the Community Safety Fund 2016/17 to facilitate the above.
- (3) That, in light of the discussions, that the recommendations from the 2013 Scrutiny Review be reconsidered.
 - (4) That there be a cost benefit analysis of the Perpetrator Programme and that this be used to inform the future commissioning of Services.
 - (5) That the Rotherham Safeguarding Adults and Safeguarding Children's Boards be involved in the development of the Strategy and Pathways.
 - (6) That domestic abuse be included in the future refresh of the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment.
 - (7) That the Chair of the Safer Rotherham Partnership submit a further report in 6 months outlining progress made in respect of tackling domestic and sexual abuse in Rotherham.

3. Progress Against Safer Rotherham Partnership (SRP) Actions

- 3.1 Unfortunately despite not yet having a completed strategy in place, work has been ongoing with partners and a significant level of information and feedback has been provided and this is informing the drafting process. There is a current deadline which coincides with the SRP Board meeting on 7th August 2017. A verbal update will be provided during the committee as progress is accelerating.
- 3.2 Despite the lack of a strategy partners have committed to various actions through the domestic abuse priority theme group, which reports to the SRP board, and an action plan has been formed. It is anticipated that this will receive significant revision in order to coincide with the refreshed strategy, its vision, aims and objectives. The current action plan is attached as appendix A, for information.
- 3.3 The Domestic Abuse Priority theme group has reconvened as is chaired by the Assistant Director for Community Safety and Street Scene. This meeting is well attended and partners are working hard in their respective areas. Further work needs to be done, through the strategy and subsequent action plan, in order to deliver a focussed approach to collectively improving services.
- 3.4 In respect of a peer review, some early discussions have taken place with a partner authority as to what this could look like though again further work is required. Consideration may need to be given as to the timing of this. Presently we are well informed by statistical data and various inspections in respect of our weaknesses and gaps and this will mean we have a well-informed strategy. A

peer review may be more appropriate following a short period of delivery and renewed focus, brought about by the development of the strategy. Further discussion is required both in respect of the scope and timing of the review.

- 3.4 The recommendation made in respect of funding was not utilised. A further request will be made following discussion as highlighted above.

4. Progress Against Other Recommendations

- 4.1 In principal, Rotherham has committed to work with partners across South Yorkshire to jointly procure a service that delivers a perpetrator programme, which seeks to address the early presentation of domestic abuse for the Borough has not yet been identified and the cost benefit not yet fully analysed and understood. The current position and next steps will be identified in a report for the attention of the SRP board. This report will be offered for Scrutiny prior to its submission to the SRP board.
- 4.2 Partners have been involved extensively in the development of the strategy to date and this has produced a range of opportunities. Partners involved in both Children's and Adults safeguarding boards have been consulted as a part of the development to date and will be consulted on the final version as a part of the SRP approval process. All partners will help to form the action plan.
- 4.3 Domestic abuse is now considered as a part of the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment, as recommended by this committee. The JSNA was subject to a review during 2015/16.

5. Focus of the Partnership

- 5.1 A significant amount of work has been undertaken to understand how the 'system' operates and identify any strengths and weaknesses. Not only has this been delivered through statutory functions such as domestic homicide reviews but also by way of commissioned audits and additional reviews. This work has been analysed by partners, alongside the data, and has suggested some clear themes, which have informed the development of the strategy and the current action plan. The main four themes are discussed in the following paragraphs.
- 5.2 Work with perpetrators has been identified as an area where our collective response could be improved, both in respect of early intervention and our collective use of tools and powers. This is an area that is identified in the current action plan and will also receive focus through the actions derived as a part of the revised strategy. A bid for approval in respect of a perpetrator programme is being progressed through the SRP ahead of its board meeting on the 7th August 2017.
- 5.3 Whilst in a number of areas the collective 'system' for tackling domestic abuse has clear strengths, there are also a number of areas where further work could be done. Information sharing for victims not deemed high risk can still present gaps and commissioning is still carried out separately. More work is also needed to strengthen the Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conference (MARAC).
- 5.4 Domestic abuse continues to present in a variety of ways and it must therefore continue to be a priority of partners to ensure that all agencies and staff within

know how to respond. Work continues to develop the Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) as a single front door for victims of domestic abuse. Further training is required to ensure everyone understands domestic abuse, knows how to spot the signs and what to do next.

- 5.5 The need to engage victims both in terms of their own journey through services, alongside more generally being able to inform how services work, is embraced by partners. Again it is recognised that we could do more to learn from both victims and our own processes, statutory or otherwise. The actions of the partners, captured in the strategy, will continue to respond to learning wherever available. We will adopt any learning and take responsibility for delivering this as a partnership.

6. Key Issues

- 6.1 It is clear that, whilst partners continue to work hard to tackle domestic abuse, the partnership has lacked some clear focus that enables it to tackle issues that exist across agencies, or at a tactical level. Unfortunately this lack of clear focus means that the partnership has not addressed all of the recommendation made by this committee in 2013.
- 6.2 Critical to our work in this area is the development of the Domestic Abuse Strategy, which will guide our work and provide the focus required in order to collectively achieve improvements to service and therefore reduction in harm to victims. This strategy is in the latter stages of development and it is anticipated that by the date of this committee, a more specific verbal update can be provided as to its progress. Whilst the strategy is only a document, it will serve to engage the partners and harness delivery. It also highlights clearly where the gaps are and what action is needed to address them and will therefore allow partners to be more effective in continuing to improve delivery.

7. Progress made by Partners

- 7.1 Whilst it is noted that progress against the recommendations made in 2016 has been slow in places, it is worthy to note the following success, in respect of the original recommendations of the committee during 2013;
- IDVA service now permanent
 - DA is now a part of the strategic needs assessment
 - There have been a number of Audits, Deep-dive and general inspections, the learning from which will inform the strategy
 - The SRP has been through a period of change and has now received a favourable peer review as a result of this change
 - Specification for perpetrator programme agreed across the county
 - Work is progressing on both joint commissioning and a single front door access to services
- 7.2 Further detail is provided against the individual recommendations made in 2013 in appendix B however; those items covered within the body of this report in detail (such as the perpetrator programme) do not appear in the attachment.

8. Next Steps

- 8.1 As referenced above, the strategy will be complete by August 2017. This will then require the development of an action plan, clearly linked to the strategy, which will commit the partners to the actions developed as a result of this and other processes which support this work.
- 8.2 The strategy sets out to provide a platform to deliver the improvements highlighted by the various reports, data and assurance processes. Delivery will be through the collective efforts of partners and driven in partnership. A framework to monitor performance against the strategy and associated actions will be established to drive the improvements needed.

9. Names of accountable officers:

Sam Barstow, Head of Service, Community Safety, Resilience and Emergency Planning

Karen Hanson, Assistant Director, Community Safety and Street Scene