

AGENDA MANAGEMENT SHEET

Name of Committee

Community Safety

Date of Committee

28th February 2006

Report Title

Domestic Violence – A Strategy for Warwickshire

Summary

The Domestic Violence Strategic Board, a partnership group supported by a number of agencies, has developed a 3 year strategy for Warwickshire to tackle Domestic Abuse, supported by a 12 month action plan which includes specific outcomes. This has already been endorsed by the five Crime & Disorder Reduction Partnerships in Warwickshire, as well as all the agencies involved in developing the strategy. We are now looking to elected Members to endorse this strategy so that it can be published as a public document to demonstrate the work that is being undertaken in Warwickshire.

For further information please contact:

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Domestic Violence
Manager
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Would the recommended decision be contrary to the Budget and Policy Framework?

No.

Background papers

Executive Summary of Strategy attached

Full copy of Strategy available from Sonia Mayo

CONSULTATION ALREADY UNDERTAKEN:-

Details to be specified

Other Committees

.....

Local Member(s)

Other Elected Members

..Cllr John Haynes.....

Cabinet Member

..Cllr Richard Hobbs.....

Chief Executive

.....

- Legal .Jane Pollard.....
- Finance
- Other Chief Officers .William Brown & David Carter.....
- District Councils 5 District & Borough Councils, through their CDRP's have endorsed this strategy
- Health Authority
- Police Warwickshire Police were instrumental in developing this strategy, and have endorsed it
- Other Bodies/Individuals Other agencies have also approved this document.

FINAL DECISION

SUGGESTED NEXT STEPS:

Details to be specified

- Further consideration by this Committee
- To Council
- To Cabinet To cabinet for approval.....
- To an O & S Committee
- To an Area Committee
- Further Consultation

Agenda No 3

Community Safety O&S Committee - 28th February 2006.

Domestic Violence - A Strategy for Warwickshire

Joint Report of the Strategic Director of Performance and Development and the Strategic Director of Community Protection

Recommendation

That the Community Safety Overview and Scrutiny Committee asks Cabinet to endorse the Domestic Violence Strategy and Action Plan, on behalf of the County Council.

1.0 Background

- 1.1 Domestic Abuse is a serious issue. Nationally, Domestic Abuse affects one in four women, and one in six men. It represents 25% of all violent crime figures. In Warwickshire we have a strong partnership approach to dealing with domestic abuse in all its forms – physical, psychological, sexual and financial. Central government, through Best Value Performance indicators, the National Community Safety Plan, CDRP targets and specifically in the Crime & Disorder Act 2004, requires domestic abuse to be targeted by local authorities working in partnership with key organisations.
- 1.2 Domestic Abuse is defined as any abuse between current or former partners in an intimate relationship, wherever and whenever it occurs. The abuse may be physical, sexual, emotional or financial.
- 1.3 In Warwickshire in 2004/5 there were a total of 3690 police incidents recorded. At an average cost to agencies of £19,000 per incident the cost in Warwickshire last year was approximately £70.1million.
- 1.4 The Local Government Association document “Local Government’s role in tackling domestic violence” concludes that Local authorities have a corporate responsibility to deal with domestic violence by:
 - Agreeing a corporate strategy to tackle domestic violence and meet the needs of the community (including setting budgets)
 - Developing domestic violence employment policies for their staff
 - Training relevant staff, both front-line and decision makers
 - Providing publicity to raise awareness and increase access to local services.

In addition Home Office guidance on multi-agency working recommends that every authority publish a clear policy on domestic violence, which is understood and complied with by its entire staff.

2.0 Current Working in Warwickshire

- 2.1 In Warwickshire we already work in very effective partnerships to reduce the incidence of domestic abuse. There are close links between Warwickshire County Council, the District & Borough Councils, Warwickshire Police, the voluntary sector and so on.
- 2.2 We also have a Domestic Violence Strategic Board, chaired Social Services, with membership including Warwickshire County Council, Warwickshire Probation, Crown Prosecution Service, District and Borough Councils, Primary Care Trusts, Supporting People and voluntary sector organisations such as WDVSS and Safeline.

3.0 Warwickshire's Domestic Violence Strategy

- 3.1 In order to address the issues of domestic abuse, the Strategic Board has developed this 3 year multi-agency strategy to deliver and develop services through these partnerships, to ultimately reduce the incidence of Domestic Abuse in Warwickshire.
- 3.2 This strategy's key aims are to:
- Prevent and reduce the incidents of domestic violence across Warwickshire, to reduce repeat victimisation and to protect victims and their children from violence
 - Provide a sympathetic and appropriate supportive response to victims and their children from all agencies and consult with service users on the quality and appropriateness of services provided
 - Work towards tackling repeat incidents by effectively working with perpetrators of domestic violence

These will be delivered through a 12-month action plan, with specific targets and outcomes, grouped into objectives around prevention, protection and justice, and support.

4.0 Domestic Abuse Multi-Agency Team (DAMAT)

- 4.1 One of the key delivery models for this strategy is the Domestic Abuse Multi-Agency Team (DAMAT). This is a co-located multi-agency team comprising Warwickshire County Council, Warwickshire Police and Warwickshire Domestic Violence Support Service (our voluntary sector partner). The team's primary function is to offer, through the providing of a drop-in service, support to victims of domestic abuse, work with the perpetrators, and support to the children who have witnessed the abuse.
- 4.2 In the last three years the team has assisted 1396 new clients who were suffering abuse, helping them to move on and rebuild their lives in safety, as well as dealing with the perpetrators and helping the children who may have been affected. In addition we work in partnership with many other agencies to try to develop preventative measures to break the cycle of this abuse. This model is seen as a pioneering example of best practice, and we have many visits from other authorities who are looking to set up a similar model based on ours.
- 4.3 The team is funded from a variety of sources, including £100,000 per annum from the County Council to cover some of the running costs of the team, and two Social Workers; Warwickshire Police provide five staff to the team, and WDVSS also provide their staff, and part of the running costs of the team. Additional funds are

granted from the District / Borough Councils in Warwickshire, two CDRP's, Supporting People, and other grants as appropriate.

5.0 Recommendation

- 5.1 This strategy has been endorsed by the five CDRP's in Warwickshire, and all agencies involved in those groups have been very keen to ensure that the serious issue of domestic abuse is addressed in Warwickshire. It is requested that the Community Safety O&S Committee recommends to Cabinet that it is also endorsed on behalf of the County Council.

DAVID CARTER
Strategic Director of
Performance and
Development
WILLIAM BROWN
Strategic Director of
Community Protection

Shire Hall
Warwick

January 2006

Domestic Violence Strategy for Warwickshire Executive Summary

Aims

The aims of the strategy are to:

- Prevent and reduce the incidents of domestic violence across Warwickshire, to reduce repeat victimisation and to protect victims and their children from violence
- Provide a sympathetic and appropriate supportive response to victims and their children from all agencies and consult with service users on the quality and appropriateness of services provided
- Work towards tackling repeat incidents by effectively working with perpetrators of domestic violence

These will be delivered through a series of strategic and operational objectives, supported by a 12-month action plan. These objectives are grouped into prevention, protection and justice, and support.

Strategic Objectives

- Increased awareness in all the communities in the County
- Agencies know the extent and impact of the problem and have aligned policies and procedures to respond appropriately
- Appropriate, accessible, timely and co-ordinated multi-agency responses and support for all victims and children who need it
- Protection and appropriate use of criminal and civil remedies
- Accommodation that is appropriate and timely
- Resettlement for victims and their children
- Appropriate treatment of perpetrators

Operational Objectives

The operational objectives of this strategy have been grouped into three categories, Prevention, Protection & Justice, and Support, and support the strategic objectives in Warwickshire. These elements are reflected in the supporting action plan.

Prevention

- To have a strategic overview of Domestic Violence in the county
- To ensure best practice is investigated from local, national and international sources and considered for implementation locally in order to continuously develop services
- To increase awareness of Domestic Violence

- To encourage reporting of incidents of domestic violence, especially from the hard-to-reach groups such as black and ethnic minority communities, gay and lesbian communities and disabled people
- To promote multi-agency and single agency training
- Encourage partner agencies to adopt their own domestic violence policy
- To ensure challenging targets are set and targets achieved

Protection & Justice

- To work to reduce repeat victimisation, offending and re-offending
- To encourage the criminal justice agencies to increase the number of incidents of prosecution of perpetrators where appropriate

Support

- To support joint partnership and multi-agency work and share information
- To provide assistance to victims and their children and refer or provide effective services as necessary and provide a plan for the safety of victims and their children
- To ensure the accurate monitoring of data, using such data to continuously improve services to victims
- To engage with service users to obtain feedback regarding the services provided

The Strategy will be overseen by the Domestic Violence Strategic Board, with ownership of the specific actions agreed by the appropriate agencies.