

# Cabinet

14 November 2024

## Warwickshire Safe Accommodation Strategy 2025-2028

### Recommendations

That Cabinet

1. approves the Warwickshire Safe Accommodation Strategy 2025-2028, and
2. authorises the Executive Director for Social Care and Health to finalise the delivery plan 2025-2028 in consultation with the Portfolio Holders for Adult Social Care and Health and Fire & Rescue and Community Safety and partners.

### 1. Executive Summary

- 1.1 In April 2021, the Domestic Abuse Act received Royal Assent with the local authority duties coming into effect later that year. This included the introduction of the Safe Accommodation Duty (part 4 of the Domestic Abuse Act), and the requirement for all Tier One local authorities to develop and publish a Safe Accommodation Strategy informed by a mandatory Safe Accommodation Needs Assessment. Warwickshire County Council published their Safe Accommodation Strategy in October 2021, the strategy covers the period 2021-2024.
- 1.2 A local 'Call for Evidence' was conducted in April 2024 across the county to directly contribute to the development of the new Warwickshire Safe Accommodation Strategy 2025-2028. Over 60 local victim-survivors and professionals responded to this. In addition to this, an updated Safe Accommodation Needs Assessment has been undertaken.
- 1.3 The Warwickshire Safe Accommodation Strategy 2025 – 2028 has been endorsed by the:
  - Safer Warwickshire Partnership Board (SWPB)
  - Violence Against Women and Girls Board (VAWG)
  - The Safe Accommodation and VAWG Strategic Delivery Group (formally known as the Safe Accommodation Working Group (SAWG))
- 1.4 The Warwickshire Safe Accommodation and VAWG Strategic Delivery Group, which consists of both statutory and non-statutory agencies agreed that the

new Strategy would be a refresh of the existing Safe Accommodation Strategy, continuing with the five key objectives:

1. Early intervention and prevention: that victim-survivors (adults and children) are supported at an early stage and provided with options to remain safe at home to prevent homelessness. This includes holding perpetrators to account for their behaviour.
  2. Accessible services: that victim-survivors and professionals know how to access safe accommodation options, both within and outside of Warwickshire.
  3. Appropriate safe accommodation: that accommodation options and appropriate support is in place for all victim-survivors who need it.
  4. Multiagency delivery: that the needs of victim-survivors will be met by effective, collaborative multi-agency support.
  5. Support to return home or move on: that victim-survivors are supported to return home safely and/or move into alternative permanent accommodation.
- 1.5 The implementation of the Strategy will be led by the Safe Accommodation and VAWG Strategic Delivery Group whose membership includes statutory and non-statutory agencies and overseen by the Warwickshire Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG) Board, which acts as the Domestic Abuse Local Partnership Board. The strategy will be reviewed annually within the context of the Safe Accommodation Needs Assessment.

## **2. Financial Implications**

- 2.1 This strategy will be delivered within funding provided in the Domestic Abuse budget and earmarked reserve.
- 2.2 In turn this is funded by grant to Warwickshire County Council to fund the Safe Accommodation Duty. Should the grant not continue for the full period of the strategy implementation, an immediate review of funding and expenditure will be required to ensure expenditure is within the funding envelope available.
- 2.3 While grant funding is not confirmed beyond 2024/25 recent engagement by the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) to gain perspectives on rolling the funding into the Local Government Finance Settlement from 2025/26, signals funding will continue post 2024/25.
- 2.4 Partner agencies will be responsible for delivering and financing their relevant actions from the strategy within their own resources.
- 2.5 Financial commitments are made with allowances to step down provision should future changes in funding necessitate.

### **3. Environmental Implications**

None

### **4. Supporting Information**

- 4.1 Several documents, policies and strategies have contributed to developing the Warwickshire Safe Accommodation Strategy 2025 – 2028. These include:
- Violence Against Women and Girls Strategy 2023 – 2026
  - Serious Violence Prevention Strategy 2024 - 2030
  - Preventing Homelessness Strategy 2020 - 2025
  - Director of Public Health Annual Report 2023
  - Police and Crime Plan
  - Local Community Safer Partnership Plans
  - County Community Safety Agreement
  - Safe Accommodation Needs Assessment 2024
- 4.2 To support with the implementation of the Safe Accommodation Strategy 2025 – 2028, the Safe Accommodation and VAWG Strategic Delivery Group will:
- Develop a set of measures to monitor the impact of the strategy.
  - Review and update the delivery plan on a quarterly basis to monitor the performance of the strategy.
  - Undertake regular consultation to ensure that the delivery plan reflects on-going views and concerns from victim-survivors and professionals.
- 4.3 An Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) has been completed on the Strategy which has raised no concerns. The Strategy focusses on all victim-survivors of domestic abuse and how we can ensure the provision is accessible and equitable to all.

### **5. Timescales associated with the decision and next steps**

- 5.1 If approved by Cabinet, the Warwickshire Safe Accommodation Strategy 2025-2028 will be published by 31<sup>st</sup> December 2024. Implementation and delivery will immediately follow.

### **Appendices**

Appendix 1 – Warwickshire Safe Accommodation Strategy 2025-2028.

Appendix 2 – Warwickshire Safe Accommodation Strategy Delivery Plan 2025-2028.

Appendix 3 – Safe Accommodation Strategy 2025 – 2028 EIA

### **Background Papers**

None

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The report was circulated to the following members prior to publication:

Local Member(s): N/A – This is a countywide report

Other members: Councillors Jeff Clarke, Jonathan Chilvers, Sarah Feeney, and Jenny Fradgley