



# Doncaster Council

## EXECUTIVE FUNCTIONS DECISION RECORD

The following decision was taken on Wednesday, 20th October, 2021 by Cabinet.

Date notified to all Members: Thursday, 21st October, 2021

End of the call-in period is 5.00 p.m. on 1st November, 2021. This decision will not be implemented until after this date and time.

Present:

Chair - Mayor Ros Jones (Mayor of Doncaster with responsibility for Budget and Policy)

Vice-Chair - Councillor Glyn Jones (Deputy Mayor, Portfolio Holder for Housing and Business)

### Cabinet Member for:

Councillor Lani-Mae Ball	Portfolio Holder for Education, Skills and Young People
Councillor Nigel Ball	Portfolio Holder for Public Health, Leisure, Culture and Planning
Councillor Joe Blackham	Portfolio Holder for Highways, Infrastructure and Enforcement
Councillor Rachael Blake	Portfolio Holder for Children's Social Care, Communities and Equalities
Councillor Phil Cole	Portfolio Holder for Finance and Trading Services
Councillor Mark Houlbrook	Portfolio Holder for Sustainability and Waste

Apologies:-

Apologies were received from Councillor Jane Nightingale and Councillor Andrea Robinson

## PUBLIC MEETING – SCHEDULE OF DECISIONS

### Public Questions and Statements

Councillor Nick Allen submitted the following question to Mayor Jones:-

“I have read the reports regarding domestic abuse in Doncaster. I am sure you agree, the situation is horrific and demonstrates how prevalent this issue is across our town. However, I noted some discrepancies regarding LGBT victims and the data sets which have been used. There are still barriers which prevent LGBT victims from reporting crime, particularly work-place or domestic violence. What more could be done to ensure LGBT

victims of domestic abuse can come forward, not just those in relationships but also young people, many of whom may still live at home.'

Ros Jones, Mayor of Doncaster referred the question to Councillor Rachael Blake, Portfolio Holder for Children's Social Care, Communities and Equalities who gave the following response, which in the absence of Councillor Nick Allen would be forwarded to him following the meeting:-

"In relation to our high risk referrals to the Multi Agency Risk Assessment Conference (MARAC) we are slightly above the national average for LGBT+ referrals. The national figure is 1.4% of high risk referrals to MARAC being from LGBT+ victims. Our referral rate for LGBT+ victims was 1.8% in quarter 2. However we are below the suggested average set by SafeLives who monitor the performance nationally. They suggest that given the size of our population the percentage of LGBT+ referrals to the MARAC should be between 2.5% and 5.8%.

The number of people in same sex relationships referred or self-referring to the Doncaster domestic abuse hub was one person in quarter 1 and six individuals in quarter 2. We have not had anyone contact the Hub recorded as being trans, but we continue to work through the data from quarter 1 and 2 to ensure there are no gaps and our data is accurate and correct.

In 2018/2019 Doncaster Council was part of a South Yorkshire wide application to Government for additional funding to run a LGBT+ and domestic abuse project – looking at the barriers to reporting, additional risks for LGBT+ people and developing resources.

As part of that project Doncaster Council produced a new LGBT+ poster, this has been circulated to partner agencies for display across the borough. South Yorkshire Police used our poster for a South Yorkshire wide Domestic Abuse campaign in December 2019. There is LGBT+ information in the Doncaster domestic abuse protocol and all of our leaflets and posters have the rainbow flag and the trans flag on them. The language we use is inclusive.

LGBT+ domestic abuse training is part of our ongoing training programme:

We were also successful in securing funding for a project to raise awareness of domestic abuse with minority groups and the support available in Doncaster. We worked alongside Phoenix WoMen's Aid to deliver that project with links made with various organisations and involving the domestic abuse partnership in events such as those run by Doncaster Pride.

The funding for those projects has now ended and we still haven't seen the increase in referrals and self-referrals from LGBT+ that we had hoped for.

We recognise the need to do more. Over the past month contact has been made with the Chair and Deputy Chair of Doncaster Pride, to understand if there is more we can do to raise awareness. They have updated their website with the information we have provided and are committed to promoting this page and raising awareness of domestic abuse. The domestic abuse website has also been updated with a page dedicated to LGBT+ victims.

We are also trying to get the message out through workplaces. We have introduced the domestic abuse Charter in the strategy which will encourage organisations and groups to implement policies and procedures to raise awareness with employees and ensure that they have systems and procedures to support them if they disclose abuse to a colleague or manager.

Doncaster Council welcome engagement from any organisations and/or individuals that can help identify barriers to reporting and accessing support and who can help spread the word about domestic abuse and encourage more people to come forward.

If Nick were here, I would also ask him what more we could do and who can we contact to come forward and support us on this issue.”

Decision Record Forms from the meeting held on 22nd September 2021 for noting (previously circulated).

The decision records from the Cabinet Meeting held on 22nd September, 2021 (previously circulated) were noted.

## **DECISION 6.**

### **1. AGENDA ITEM NUMBER AND TITLE**

6. Domestic Abuse Strategy 2021-2024.

### **2. DECISION TAKEN**

Cabinet note and approve the content of the new Domestic Abuse Strategy 2021-2024 (in Appendix A).

### **3. REASON FOR DECISION**

Following the introduction of the Domestic Abuse Act in April 2021, it was noted that local authorities were now required by law to produce a Domestic Abuse Strategy.

Doncaster’s Strategy set out a coordinated community approach and family response to domestic abuse, ensuring that the responsibility was placed on everyone to address the issues and make a difference to those affected.

There were four main priorities within the strategy:

- Prevent and work to end domestic violence;
- Support and keep victims, survivors and families safe;
- Hold abusers to account; and
- Leadership, governance and quality assurance.

The Strategy was accompanied by a performance management framework to bridge the gap between strategy and action and would be managed by the Doncaster Domestic Abuse Partnership.

The Strategy had been developed following extensive consultation with many organisations, including Doncaster Safeguarding Boards, the Safeguarding Partnership, Elected Members, and also, and most importantly, survivors of domestic abuse.

The delivery of the strategy would help to reduce incidents of domestic abuse and help support victims to deal with the traumas they may have experienced. Members welcomed the report and felt that it was positive to see how well the consultation process had captured the voices of domestic abuse survivors. Their experiences were embedded into the strategy and would be used positively and robustly moving forwards.

Further to a query regarding the use of Smart Water, Cabinet was informed that this forensic marking system was used as a deterrent to protect victims and their property and identify and deter perpetrators.

Councillor Blake was asked how elected Members could take responsibility to help ensure the strategy was delivered. Cabinet was informed that supporting the Domestic Abuse Strategy was everyone's responsibility and attending training was fundamental in raising Members' awareness. Understanding how and where to refer people and reassuring victims of the help and support available were important in delivering outcomes. Members could also raise awareness of these issues in their wards and through their community networks.

**4. ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED AND REJECTED**

As it was a Statutory requirement there was no alternative option other than to produce a domestic abuse strategy.

**5. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND DISPENSATIONS**

There were no declarations.

**6. IF EXEMPT, REASON FOR EXEMPTION**

Not Exempt

**7. DIRECTOR RESPONSIBLE FOR IMPLEMENTATION**

Phil Holmes, Director of Adults, Health and Well-Being

Signed.....Chair/Decision Maker