

Report to Stronger Communities Select Committee

Date of meeting: 2 March 2023



Portfolio: Communities and Partnerships Cllr. Holly Whitbread

Subject: Domestic Abuse and Domestic Abuse Workplace Policies

Officer contact for further information: Caroline Wiggins

Democratic Services Officer: R Perrin

Recommendations/Decisions Required:

To note and agree The Domestic Abuse and Domestic Abuse Workplace Policies

Report:

1. The Domestic Abuse Housing Alliance (DAHA) was launched in 2014 and is managed by Standing Together. EFDC aspire to achieve a DAHA Accreditation to support our residents and staff in providing a positive, safe environment and encouraging them to have the confidence to approach us as a council at a time of need.
2. These two policies set out our commitment as a local authority to take efficient and effective action to deal with all reports of incidents and it explains how we will provide support tailored to the needs of the individual working in partnership with specialist services to provide a coordinated response. They indicate the position and values of the Council and set out how we intend to comply with standards and best practice.
3. The latest Crime Survey for England and Wales (CSEW) completed in October 2021 estimated 2.4 million adults aged 16 years and over experienced domestic abuse in the year ending March 2022 (1.7 million women and 699,000 men).¹ In Epping Forest there were 1939 recorded incidents of domestic abuse (1st October 2021 – 30th September 2022) an increase of 9% (170) on the previous year.

Reason for decision:

These two policies are essential in giving guidance as to both staff and residents as to how we will endeavour to support those experiencing domestic abuse and evidence our commitment to end violence against women and girls in line with the government's Violence against Women and Girls Strategy. The policies are also integral in our bid for DAHA accreditation. They sit across the whole organisation, with specific procedures outlining how each team will implement these policies in practice.

¹ ONS

Options considered and rejected:

Not to agree the adoption the policies preventing a robust, consistent and transparent approach to tackling domestic abuse and supporting any members of staff who may be experiencing domestic abuse.

Consultation undertaken:

Epping Forest Community Safety Partnership (CSP)
EFDC Tenants & Leaseholder Panel
Standing Together (DAHA)
EFDC Corporate Safeguarding Group

Resource implications:

Policies and associated action will embed across the organisation into existing resource. Most frontline teams already operate a trauma informed practice on the basis of 'making every contact count' and specific funding for DA has been secured from Essex County Council to the sum of £23,330. In addition to that, there is £11,866 Homelessness Prevention Grant Funding and £35,439 New Burdens Funding from the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC).

Funding for the DAHA accreditation (£3125) is budgeted for from the New DA Burdens Funding.

Legal and Governance Implications:

- Anti-social Behaviour Act 2003
- Anti-social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014
- Care Act 2014
- Crime and Security Act 2010
- Data Protection Act 2018
- Domestic Abuse Act 2021
- Domestic Abuse Crime and Victims Act 2004
- Equality Act 2010
- Housing Act 1996 as amended
- Local Government Act 1972
- Policing and Crime Act 2009
- Protection from Harassment Act 1997
- Serious Crime Act 2015
- Serious Violence Duty 2022

Safer, Cleaner, Greener Implications: These Policies fall within the priorities of Police & Crime Plan 2021-2024, Essex Police Crime Prevention Strategy and Southend Essex & Thurrock Domestic Abuse Board Domestic Abuse Strategy 2020-2025.

Background Papers:

Impact Assessments:

Risk Management: Procedures and practice are reviewed by our Safeguarding Service and information is disseminated across services via our Corporate Safeguarding Group.

Equality: