

20<sup>th</sup> February 2013**REPORT OF THE PORTFOLIO HOLDER FOR COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT****DOMESTIC ABUSE POLICY****EXEMPT INFORMATION**

None

**PURPOSE**

To seek Members' approval to adopt the proposed Domestic Abuse policy as attached at Appendix 'A'.

**RECOMMENDATIONS**

1. That Members approve the Domestic Abuse Policy.

**EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

Domestic abuse is a crime and the vulnerability of its victims can never be understated. Individuals live in fear for their lives. Every aspect of a victim's life is impacted by the abuse they experience. Victims are taunted, threatened, manipulated and violated and they experience permanent physical and emotional scars. Victims are made to fear for the lives of children, family members and those they care for. The effects of domestic abuse extend not only to the victim and their family, but their community also and the damage it does impacts deeply on our economy.

*It is estimated that domestic abuse costs the UK £23 billion every year. In the UK, one in four women and one in six men will be the victims of domestic abuse in their life time. In addition two women are murdered every week by a partner or ex partner and similarly, two men are murdered every 3 weeks. (Source Woman's Aid)*

The Council recognises that its employees will be amongst those affected by domestic violence for example as a survivor of domestic violence, an individual who is currently living with domestic violence, someone who has been impacted by domestic violence or as an individual who perpetrates domestic violence. The Council is committed to ensuring a safe workplace and to safeguarding the health and well-being of employees. As such, the Council is committed to developing a workplace culture in which there is zero tolerance for violence and abuse and which recognises that the responsibility for domestic violence and abuse lies with the perpetrator.

This policy outlines the role of the Council in supporting employees who have experienced or are experiencing domestic violence and abuse and where there are concerns that an employee may be the perpetrator of domestic violence and abuse.

This policy relates not only to internal issues but also to occasions when members of the public report domestic abuse to the Council. These victims will be treated in a similar way to other vulnerable victims. A training programme is being developed in light of the new CRM system for staff who may receive complaints from vulnerable people which will include

domestic abuse victims.

Specialist advice on domestic abuse to support this policy is available through a Community Safety Officer with a specific responsibility for domestic abuse and other partnership officers in the Community Safety Hub. The Community Safety team have built links and relationships with providers of domestic abuse services and are well placed to signpost into these services.

### **RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS**

A training programme for customer services staff and other appropriate staff. This will be delivered through existing staff resources.

Staff awareness and sign up to the policy will be achieved through rolling it out via the net consent system.

### **LEGAL/RISK IMPLICATIONS BACKGROUND**

Section 17 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 places a “duty” on the Council to exercise its various functions with due regard to the likely effect of the exercise of those functions on the need to do all that it reasonably can to prevent crime and disorder in its area.

### **SUSTAINABILITY IMPLICATIONS**

The policy will be subject to annual review.

### **BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

Included in executive summary

### **REPORT AUTHOR**

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### **LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS**

None

### **APPENDICES**

Appendix A Domestic Abuse Policy