

Report of the Head of Scrutiny and Member Development

Report to Scrutiny Board (Safer and Stronger Communities)

Date: 9th September 2013

Subject: Scrutiny inquiry into tackling domestic violence and abuse - draft terms of reference

Are specific electoral Wards affected? If relevant, name(s) of Ward(s):	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Are there implications for equality and diversity and cohesion and integration?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Is the decision eligible for Call-In?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Does the report contain confidential or exempt information? If relevant, Access to Information Procedure Rule number: Appendix number:	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No

Summary of main issues

1. In June 2013, the Safer and Stronger Communities Scrutiny Board agreed to undertake an inquiry into tackling domestic violence and abuse.
2. Acknowledging the complexity and cross-cutting nature of this area of work, the Safer and Stronger Communities Scrutiny Board agreed to lead on this inquiry, with representation from the Children and Families Scrutiny Board and the Health and Wellbeing and Adult Social Care Scrutiny Board.
3. A working group meeting was held on 20th August 2013 to discuss the potential scope for this inquiry. Terms of reference for this inquiry are now being drafted and will be circulated separately. During today's meeting, Board Members will be asked to formally consider and agree these terms of reference.
4. The Scrutiny Board Procedure Rules require that, before embarking on an inquiry/review, the Board seeks and considers the views of the relevant Director and Executive Member. These views will need to be taken into account when agreeing the terms of reference for this inquiry.

Recommendations

5. Members are asked to consider and agree terms of reference for its forthcoming Scrutiny inquiry into tackling domestic violence and abuse.

1 Purpose of this report

- 1.1 This report presents draft terms of reference in relation to the Scrutiny Board's forthcoming inquiry into tackling domestic violence and abuse.

2 Background information

- 2.1 Domestic violence and abuse directly impacts on a person's sense of safety: it affects the well-being and quality of life of individuals, families and communities and as a result has significant social and economic costs. It is an issue for every community and can affect individuals from any background or socio-economic demographic.
- 2.2 Within Leeds, there were 13,348 incidents of domestic violence and abuse recorded by the police during 2012/13, of which 4,816 were repeats. However, it is widely acknowledged that a true measure of these crimes is not available as victims often suffer in silence and the abuse goes un-reported.
- 2.3 Reducing the prevalence and impact of domestic violence and abuse is now a key priority nationally, regionally and locally. The West Yorkshire Police and Crime Commissioner set out his commitment to tackle domestic violence and abuse within the West Yorkshire Police and Crime Plan 2013-2018 and this is also reflected within the new Safer Leeds Strategy and Best Council Plan.

3 Main issues

- 3.1 Safer Leeds is in the process of developing a new Domestic Abuse Delivery Plan and establishing appropriate governance and accountability arrangements to deliver the priority actions in the plan. Such actions will reflect the four work streams agreed by the Safer Leeds Executive:
- Victims & Service Users – Customer Satisfaction & Service Improvement
 - Perpetrators – Deterrents & Sanctions
 - Public Awareness – Understanding & Signposting
 - Information Sharing & Knowledge Management
- 3.2 Significant work will be undertaken this year by Safer Leeds and its Domestic Abuse Strategic Group to map and review existing support provision across the city to identify gaps and explore opportunities to improve service delivery. The Scrutiny Board is therefore keen to avoid duplication and add value to this work.
- 3.3 A working group meeting was held on 20th August 2013 to discuss the potential scope for this inquiry. Terms of reference for this inquiry are now being drafted and will be circulated separately. During today's meeting, Board Members will be asked to formally consider and agree these terms of reference.

4 Corporate Considerations

4.1 Consultation and Engagement

- 4.1.1 The Scrutiny Board Procedure Rules require that, before embarking on an inquiry/review, the Board seeks and considers the views of the relevant Director and Executive Member. These views will need to be taken into account in finalising the terms of reference for this review.

4.1.2 Any comments received on the draft terms of reference will be reported to the Board at the meeting.

4.2 Equality and Diversity / Cohesion and Integration

4.2.1 Equality and diversity will be a consideration throughout the Scrutiny Board's inquiry and due regard will be given to equality through the use of evidence, written and verbal, outcomes from consultation and engagement activities.

4.3 Council Policies and City Priorities

4.3.1 The West Yorkshire Police and Crime Commissioner set out his commitment to tackle domestic violence and abuse within the West Yorkshire Police and Crime Plan 2013-2018 and this is also reflected within the new Safer Leeds Strategy and Best Council Plan.

4.4 Resources and Value for Money

4.4.1 The Scrutiny Board acknowledges that responding to domestic violence and abuse needs to be tackled on many levels through partnership work, effective commissioning and unrelenting commitment to delivering excellent standards of service to victims and effective responses to perpetrators.

4.5 Legal Implications, Access to Information and Call In

4.5.1 This report does not contain any exempt or confidential information.

4.6 Risk Management

4.6.1 This section is not relevant to this report.

5 Conclusions

5.1 In June 2013, the Safer and Stronger Communities Scrutiny Board agreed to lead on undertaking an inquiry into tackling domestic violence and abuse. Following a working group meeting on 20th August 2013 to discuss the potential scope for this inquiry, terms of reference are now being drafted and will be circulated separately. During today's meeting, Board Members will be asked to formally consider and agree these terms of reference.

6 Recommendations

6.1 Members are asked to consider and agree terms of reference for its forthcoming Scrutiny inquiry into tackling domestic violence and abuse.

7 Background documents¹

7.1 None.

¹ The background documents listed in this section are available to download from the Council's website, unless they contain confidential or exempt information. The list of background documents does not include published works.