

**Report of: Director of Communities and Environment**

**Report to: Inner South Community Committee – Hunslet and Riverside, Beeston and Holbeck and Middleton Park wards**

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**Date: 9<sup>th</sup> December 2020.        To note**

## **Domestic Violence and Abuse in Inner South Leeds**

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### **Purpose of report**

1. To provide the Inner South Community Committee with a verbal update and presentation on domestic violence and abuse (DVA) in the Inner South Community Committee Area.

### **Main issues**

2. The COVID-19 pandemic has raised many concerns about the safety and wellbeing of families and individuals living with domestic violence and abuse. The presentation provides an update on reports to key services and the challenges faced during this time.
3. The Domestic Abuse Bill currently progressing through the House of Lords will create new opportunities to refresh our governance in Leeds relating to domestic violence and abuse. It places statutory duties on the local authority, so this presentation outlines the changes and how we are responding to those changes and challenges in Leeds.
4. The presentation provides a snapshot of current activity in inner south to address domestic violence and abuse.
5. Elected members are a key point of contact for local communities and we are aware that many victims of DVA will talk to local members. This is a local trusted relationship and to support members we have arranged briefings on the current situation in relation to COVID-19 and new developments in the city. The team have also produced a set of resources that have been circulated via email to members including a contact card,

posters in community languages and leaflets for volunteers about how to approach/support a potential victim of DVA. These resources have also been made available in community settings including the Community Hubs at Dewsbury Road and St George's Centre.

## **Corporate considerations**

### **Consultation and engagement**

6. As part of the development to the citywide strategy, Safer Leeds and partners will hold local community conversations with the Community Committee and work with the Communities Team to get the views of a range of local stakeholders through the local partnership networks. The work is likely to take place between Jan-June in 2021 when we have the full guidance from the Government in preparation for the Act starting in April 2021. Members are asked to consider how they will be able to support this consultation process as part of their ongoing work with Communities.

### **Equality and diversity / cohesion and integration**

7. Domestic violence and abuse is an issue that impacts people in all socio-economic groups and communities. However, it is known from research that women are more likely to be victims and that for all people, the process of seeking help can be made more challenging for groups that already experience disadvantage. The needs assessment will ensure that the needs of those groups are identified and the development of the DVA strategy will seek to mitigate the challenges faced by groups who experience poverty and inequality where domestic violence and abuse is a factor in their lives.

### **Council policies and city priorities**

8. This paper addresses many areas of the Best Council Plan 2020-2025, with a specific focus on the ambitions around safe, strong communities, health and wellbeing and child friendly city.

### **Resources and value for money**

9. The government has established a £6 million capacity building fund to help local authorities prepare for implementation of the duty. Local authorities are not expected to deliver the duty before it comes into force. The fund aims to ensure that, assuming the Bill passes through Parliament as anticipated, all local authorities are at an appropriate stage and ready to implement the duty in April 2021. Further detail has yet to be released about the provision of this funding. At this stage, there are no resource implications for the Council relating to this report.

### **Legal implications, access to information and call in**

10. There are no legal implications or access to information issues. This report is not subject to call in.

## **Risk management**

11. There are no risk management issues associated with this report.

## **Conclusion**

12. Domestic violence and abuse is a recognised priority for Leeds City Council and its partners. There are existing structures, services and relationships (that have been briefly described in the presentation) that demonstrate a robust response to the current situation. The introduction of the Domestic Abuse Bill provides the city with an opportunity to refresh and strengthen its response. Further, there is an opportunity for the Inner South Community Committee to review and identify how it can be involved in these developments going forward.

## **Recommendations**

13. The Inner South Community Committee are asked to note the contents of this report and the presentation to be delivered at the meeting.

14. Members of the Community Committee are asked to consider their role in addressing domestic violence and abuse.

## **Background information**

15. The government have produced a series of factsheets relating to the Domestic Abuse Bill which can be found here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/domestic-abuse-bill-2020-factsheets>