

Meeting:	Cabinet	Date 8 November 2023
Subject:	Domestic Abuse and Places of Safety	
Report Of:	Cabinet Member for Planning and Housing Strategy	
Wards Affected:	All	
Key Decision:	Yes	Budget/Policy Framework: No
Contact Officer:	Ruth Saunders, Corporate Director	
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Appendices:	1. Gloucestershire's Domestic Abuse Strategy 2021-2024	
	2. Gloucestershire Domestic Abuse Needs Assessment	

FOR GENERAL RELEASE

NOTE: Notice has been served in accordance with Part 3, Section 10 (General Exception) of the Local Authorities (Executive Arrangements) (Meetings and Access To Information) (England) Regulations 2012 as the normal timescales for a key decision are impracticable.

1.0 Purpose of Report

1.1 To approve and accept funding from other members of the Strategic Housing Partnership (the Partnership) to deliver Domestic Abuse Housing for Gloucestershire as lead authority for the Strategic Housing Partnership to ensure that the council can receive partner funds to cover costs of the work.

2.0 Recommendations

2.1 Cabinet is asked to **RESOLVE** that:

- (1) delegated authority be given to the Corporate Director following consultation with the Head of Finance and Resources and Director, One Legal to accept funding from other members of the Strategic Housing Partnership to deliver Domestic Abuse Housing;
- (2) delegated authority be provided to the Corporate Director in consultation with the Head of Finance and Resources and the Director of One Legal to accept tenders following procurement exercises carried out on behalf of the Strategic Housing Partnership; and
- (3) the Council continues to employ a lead Member of staff on behalf of the Strategic Housing Partnership with a shared funding arrangement.

3.0 Background and Key Issues

- 3.1 The Domestic Abuse Act 2021 established a statutory duty for tier 2 (District) local authorities to co-operate with tier 1 (County) local authorities on tackling domestic abuse. Following the implementation of the Domestic Abuse Act 2021, the Partnership comprised of Gloucestershire County Councils and the six district and borough councils in Gloucestershire have been working to deliver actions against Gloucestershire's Domestic Abuse Strategy 2021-2024 (appendix 1) which was developed following a Gloucestershire Domestic Abuse Needs Assessment (appendix 2).
- 3.2 The Partnership leads on many of the Housing elements of the strategic action plan, and does so via a shared resource, who is directly employed by the Council. These housing elements include:
- Places of Safety contract
 - Extension of Places of Safety- additional units contract
 - Training pathway for the housing sector to upskill professionals in identifying and responding to domestic abuse. Training to be provided for district housing teams, registered providers, supported accommodation, private rented sector officers, ASB teams, specialist training for staff working in DA specialist roles, training on housing pathways and legislation for agencies supporting survivors of domestic abuse.
 - Developing district housing data collection about domestic abuse and coordinating the districts' submission to the annual refresh of the domestic abuse needs assessment.
 - Embedding co-production within commissioning activities relating to domestic abuse housing pathways
 - Cross-border collaboration, to support survivors needing to cross district/county/regional borders; including the development of a South-West Managed Reciprocal Scheme for survivors in social housing tenancies.
 - Implementation of best practices, including trauma-informed and gender-informed approaches; support for registered providers; Domestic Abuse Housing Alliance (DAHA) accreditation; Whole Housing Approach
 - Options to support survivors with no recourse to public funds to access support in safe accommodation.
 - Establishment of a housing champions network
 - Development of specialist DA and Housing roles to provide a trauma-informed response and advocacy within the system for survivors.
- 3.3 In addition to the actions that link to the Domestic Abuse strategy delivery plan, the Council's Housing Partnership Team hold relevant actions that come from Domestic Homicide Reviews, ie. Raising awareness of housing pathways for professionals; increasing awareness of coercive control and economic abuse in the private rented sector.
- 3.4 In order to deliver on these activities the Council will receive funding from the other Partnership partners to cover the shared costs, to the value of £1,020,851. This sum covers the costs of the following contracts:

- Places of Safety (Existing Contract) £61,237
- Places of Safety (Contract from 1st November) £659,614 (across 3 year contract)
- Grant for Training, Domestic Abuse (DA) Housing Champions and DA Housing Advocate role/s £300,000 (across 3 years)

3.5 Following the Domestic Abuse Act 2021 the County Council has set up a governance structure, as required by the Act, including a Local Partnership Board Strategic and Operational Group. The Council's Corporate Director sits on the Strategic Board as the Council's representative, and the Domestic Abuse Programme Manager sits on the Strategic and Operational Group of the Local Partnership Board. It is intended that the Domestic Abuse Housing Alliance (DAHA) Coordinator will sit on Operational Group once this role is recruited into the Council's Housing Partnership Team.

4.0 Social Value Considerations

4.1 The delivery of activity, outlined in the action plan, will improve outcomes for domestic violence survivors.

4.2 Any procurement will likely meet the criteria for the social value policy and so social value considerations will be part of the decision making when appointing a contractor.

5.0 Environmental Implications

5.1 As part of any procurement meeting the criteria of the policy, social value measures with a positive impact on the environment can be selected.

6.0 Alternative Options Considered

6.1 The Council could have stepped back and let one of the other Districts lead on this work, however, the needs assessment outlined the highest need is in our District, so the Council agreed to be the lead.

7.0 Reasons for Recommendations

7.1 The needs assessment outlined the greatest need in the county in respect of Domestic Abuse being in Gloucester. As a result, the Council has taken the lead to ensure the Housing work is delivered for all partners, as well as ourselves.

7.2 Given the shared funding arrangements it is important that the Council is able to receive funds from other partners to cover the obligations made on behalf of the Partnership.

8.0 Future Work and Conclusions

8.1 Developing commissioning plans for safe accommodation options which address gaps in the system, including piloting the Respite Rooms model for women facing severe and multiple disadvantage.

8.2 Proposals in progress for the recruitment of x2 (0.5) DAHA Project Leads to be employed or co-located in the Council's undertaking DAHA accreditation.

- 8.3 Managed Reciprocal Coordinator role may be hosted by the Housing Partnership Team once scheme is ready to be implemented. This role will be funded by the reciprocal scheme members.
- 8.4 To implement the Whole Housing Approach in Gloucestershire will lead to the identification of new commissioning opportunities, (eg. Private rented schemes, housing first schemes, perpetrator housing pathways).

9.0 Financial Implications

- 9.1 The projects within the scope of this Report are designed to be shared proportionately across the partnership, with Gloucester City Council using our Domestic Abuse funding to cover our contribution.
- 9.2 All costs incurred in respect of this activity in any one period will be collated, agreed with and recharged to the partners. There is no direct impact on the finances of Gloucester City Council other than the contribution required to the central project.

(Financial Services have been consulted in the preparation of this report.)

10.0 Legal Implications

- 10.1 The acceptance of funding from the other partners in the Partnership does not raise any specific legal issues. All contracts that the Council awards on behalf of the Partnership must be in accordance with the Council's Contract Procedure Rules and the Public Contract Regulations 2015.
- 10.2 One Legal will be able to advise and assist officers in relation to any agreement that needs to be completed to release the funding and any contractual obligations created.

(The Monitoring Officer has been consulted in the preparation of this report.)

11.0 Risk & Opportunity Management Implications

- 11.1 Procurement exercises will be carried out in line with the constitution and our procurement policy.
- 11.2 The financial risk associated with the domestic abuse work is covered in a Strategic Housing Partnership Agreement signed all the partners.
- 11.3 Department of Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC) funding for support in safe accommodation is awarded annually. Contracts will be subject to a break clause after every 12 months, pending confirmation of continued funding from the DLUHC.

12.0 People Impact Assessment (PIA) and Safeguarding:

- 12.1 The PIA Screening Stage was completed and did not identify any potential or actual negative impact; therefore, a full PIA was not required.

12.2 The PIA Screenings are completed for all decisions taken which covers the specific piece of work in more detail.

13.0 Community Safety Implications

13.1 None

14.0 Staffing & Trade Union Implications

14.1 None

Background Documents:

Appendix 1- Gloucestershire's Domestic Abuse Strategy 2021-2024- [gcc-domestic-abuse-strategy.pdf \(gloucestershire.gov.uk\)](https://www.gloucestershire.gov.uk/gcc-domestic-abuse-strategy.pdf)

Appendix 2- Gloucestershire Domestic Abuse Needs Assessment 2021- [Gloucestershire-Domestic-Abuse-Needs-Assessment-2021-FINAL.pdf \(glostakeastand.com\)](https://www.glostakeastand.com/Gloucestershire-Domestic-Abuse-Needs-Assessment-2021-FINAL.pdf)