

REPORT TO:	HOUSING AND COMMUNITY SERVICES COMMITTEE	AGENDA ITEM: 9
DATE OF MEETING:	18th NOVEMBER 2021	CATEGORY: (RECOMMENDED)
REPORT FROM:	STRATEGIC DIRECTOR - SERVICE DELIVERY	OPEN
MEMBERS' CONTACT POINT:	PAUL WHITTINGHAM Paul.Whittingham@Southderbyshire.gov.uk	DOC:
SUBJECT:	HOUSING DOMESTIC ABUSE POLICY	
WARD(S) AFFECTED:	ALL	TERMS OF REFERENCE: HCSO1

1.0 Recommendations

1.1 That the Committee approve the Housing Domestic Abuse Policy following the outcome of public consultation on the draft.

2.0 Purpose of the Report

2.1 This report informs the Committee of the outcome of public consultation on the Draft Housing Domestic Abuse Policy which was agreed by the Housing and Community Services Committee on 3 June 2021. A copy of the Policy is attached at Appendix A.

2.2 The comprehensive results of the consultation are attached at Appendix B.

3.0 Executive Summary

3.1 This report and Policy continue to meet the commitment made by the Council to the Make a Stand initiative at its meeting on 20 September 2018.

3.2 The Council's Draft Policy for supporting the victims of domestic abuse that approach the Housing Service for assistance was agreed by the Housing and Community Services Committee for consultation on 3 June 2021.

3.3 Consultation was carried out by publicising the draft policy on the Councils website and requesting that respondents complete a questionnaire. A total of forty-one completed questionnaires were received. Thirty-five of these (85.37%) agreed with the overall aims of the Policy.

3.4 There are a number of suggested improvements to services provided by the Council and other agencies within the consultation namely around the other support provided to victims of abuse that are being rehoused or wish to stay in their own homes and sanctions against the perpetrators of Domestic Abuse.

4.0 Detail

As summary of respondents to the consultation is provided in the table below.

Which of the following best describes you?

Answer Choices			Response Percent	Response Total
1	Council tenant		65.85%	27
2	Housing association tenant		4.88%	2
3	Private tenant		0.00%	0
4	Owner occupier		7.32%	3
5	Landlord		4.88%	2
6	Statutory organisation		9.76%	4
7	Other		7.32%	3
			skipped	0

4.1 The majority of respondents found the document easily understandable and also agreed with the overall aims of the Policy, along with specific elements regarding the provision of tenancies for victims of abuse and the use of tenancy sanctions against perpetrators.

4.2 Respondents were asked to provide additional comments or suggestions with regard to the Policy. A number of very positive responses were received which complimented the level of service provision in South Derbyshire from both the Council and its partners, for example: _

“I was in a refuge in South Derbyshire and I was given a very nice home when I left and I stayed here The council were fantastic and I had a lot of support from the council when I moved in they were fantastic.”

“The work undertaken by SDDC Housing in relation to DV is of a high standard this is evident in their joined approach with other agencies”

4.4 Comments were also received with regard to possible improvements to the delivery of services by social landlords such as the Council and also other agencies.

“I’ve suffered domestic abuse as a tenant of yourselves and found the process to remove my ex husband went on too long, he had to remain in the property with us until he was rehoused and I’d paid off the arrears on our tenancy but I found everyone at the council extremely helpful and informative”

The Council will use the new policy and also the existing tenancy agreement in order to make the process of assigning tenancies more straightforward in these cases. Unfortunately, neither the Council nor other landlords may have the ability to force perpetrators to leave property even when they no longer have any legal interest in the tenancy. The Council is engaged in discussions with Derbyshire County Council and the other District Councils in Derbyshire with regard to the possible creation of an “advocacy” service that enables victims to more easily access the legal support required to remove perpetrators from the family home and also protect their property and financial interests.

5.0 Financial Implications

5.1 There are no direct financial implications contained within this report.

6.0 Corporate Implications

Employment Implications

6.1 There are no direct employment implications contained within this report.

Legal Implications

6.2 There are no direct legal implications for the Council contained in this report.

Corporate Plan Implications

6.3 This report and the attached Policy directly support the actions within the Council's Corporate Plan to:
Help tackle anti-social behaviour and crime through strong and proportionate action.
Support and safeguard the most vulnerable With partners, encourage independent living and keep residents healthy and happy in their homes.
Promote health and wellbeing across the District.

Risk Impact

6.4 The content of this report assists in mitigating the corporate risk:
Statute and Regulation – the failure to meet requirements, by implementing a Policy to assist in achieving compliance with new legislation and expected Housing regulation.

7.0 Community Impact

Consultation

7.1 The Policy has been subject to public consultation

Equality and Diversity Impact

7.2 An Equality Impact assessment of this Policy has been completed and is attached at Appendix C.

Social Value Impact

7.3 This report and the Policy directly contribute to the aims of the Sustainable Community Strategy by helping to protect families, young children and vulnerable people

Environmental Sustainability

7.4 There is no direct Environmental Sustainability impact contained within this report.

8.0 Conclusions

8.1 Whilst the response to the consultation was relatively low, the overwhelming majority of respondents agree with the general approach in the Policy and also with specific aspects of the Policy relevant to the management of Council tenancies.

9.0 Background Papers

Report to Housing and Community Services Committee 3 June 2021 regarding the Draft Housing Domestic Abuse Report