

10 July 2012**Agenda Item: 6****REPORT OF SERVICE DIRECTOR,
POLICY, PLANNING AND CORPORATE SERVICES****DOMESTIC HOMICIDE REVIEWS****Purpose of the Report**

- 1 To inform the Committee of progress with Domestic Homicide Reviews (DHRs) undertaken since March 2011 and the recent Safer Nottinghamshire Board (SNB) Review of DHRs.
- 2 To recommend £10,000 from the Community Safety Budget 2012-12 to support Domestic Homicide Reviews required during the financial year 2012-13.

Information and Advice

- 3 Domestic Homicide Reviews (DHRs), are a new process required by law since April 2011. Five DHRs have been started in Nottinghamshire since March 2011, involving a range of SNB partner agencies.
- 4 Representatives from these agencies were invited to meetings in May 2012 to discuss and review the DHR process as it has been implemented locally. This report summarises the key findings and recommendations arising from these meetings.
- 5 The review meetings produced agreement that there are recognisable benefits emerging from the DHRs which are likely to have a positive impact on victims in the future. These include:
 - The development of a new Integrated Offender Management co-located process for violence offenders managed jointly by Probation and Police
 - Two separate pilot projects to explore ways to link General Practitioners with the Multi Agency Risk Assessment Conferences (MARACs are multi agency meetings where partner representatives address the safety of the most high risk victims of domestic violence known to the police and other services)

- Nottinghamshire Police have been reviewing and improving their response to DV and risk management since receiving an Independent Police Complaints Commission report last year about a City DV murder case and this improvement has continued with the DHR process
- Nottinghamshire Healthcare Trust (Community and Mental Health) is already implementing a more consistent approach to record keeping and training on DV since the DHR process began. They reported a much greater recognition of the impact of DV on children and vulnerable adults.

6 The meetings reflected on the ways that the DHR process in Nottinghamshire has worked well:

- There has been positive engagement with the DHR process from partner agencies
- There has been an open, questioning approach from agencies and they have all demonstrated a willingness to learn
- It has been useful to include people with safeguarding case review experience – this has supported the process
- Consistency across the county has been achieved by having a single independent chair with considerable experience of review processes.

7 Partners expressed concerns about:

- the current process, to support the Chair of the Community Safety Partnerships (CSPs), to decide whether a DHR is required or whether it is more appropriate for a Serious Case Review to be conducted through the Children or Adults Safeguarding Board. With the benefit of experience gained from the review process, partners now consider that one of the DHRs did not in fact warrant a review and another would, in future, be referred to the Safeguarding Children Board.
- the use of CSP staff to write the overview reports and administer the DHR process as it is very time consuming, complex and requires new skills and experience. It was noted that both the Children and Adults Safeguarding Board employ independent authors
- the lack of finance for DHRs
- ensuring robust processes are in place to monitor the delivery of DHR action plans
- the divergence of procedures between City and County

- the Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) needs appropriate linkages with Local Authorities and specialist domestic violence agencies
- the limitations of Home Office guidance and templates, the lack of response from the Home Office to queries, and delays in the Home Office DHR Quality Assurance processes

8 Recommendations agreed by Safer Nottinghamshire Board on June 15th 2012 are as follows:

- i) That Independent Chairs and Independent Authors be appointed for each DHR to mirror best practice in relation to Serious Case Reviews and that all Responsible Authorities of the Community Safety Partnerships agree to share the cost of funding an Independent Chair and Author as each DHR arises.
- ii) That local DHR guidance is written for Nottinghamshire (and ideally should include Nottingham City) based on Home Office recommendations and practice developed to date to include:
 - a common process that supports the CSP Chair to make the decision whether or not to conduct a DHR which includes senior colleagues from Safeguarding and Community Safety. This process will recognise that in some cases a safeguarding review will be more appropriate, and in a few cases, where there has been no prior involvement with the victim or perpetrator, no review will be conducted
 - a common process for establishing the DHR Panel involving countywide partners as well the local CSP Chair
 - a single appropriate Individual Management Review template based on learning from previous DHRs and the safeguarding boards
 - revised DHR Panel terms of reference (the existing model may have over-complicated the process in some cases)
 - the standard use of Independent Chairs and Independent Report Authors and an agreed method for recruitment, payment etc. It may be helpful to establish an approved list of suitable individuals
 - clear guidance for decision as to publication or anonymity where family members need protection

- a media strategy to prepare for the impact of publication
- iii) That the Domestic Violence Performance and Strategy Group should establish a 'task and finish' group (with key representatives from local CSPs and countywide agencies), to develop robust monitoring arrangement for DHR action plans to ensure that effective learning is taking place and is sustained into the future and to make recommendations to the next SNB
- iv) That partners leading the establishment of MASH consider how firm links are made with District Councils and third sector specialist domestic violence services (District Councils have information about housing, rent arrears, ASB. Women's Aid has intelligence on victims and perpetrators that have not been subject to criminal proceedings)
- v) That the Nottingham Crime and Drugs Partnership be invited to work with SNB partners to develop locally tailored joint procedures for DHRs in the City and County based on the national guidance and learning to date
- vi) That SNB agrees to write to the Home Office indicating that:
- Nottinghamshire DHRs will only be conducted in future where there is likely to be significant learning for the partnership and resulting benefit to victims as the lack of any central funding for DHRs is causing considerable pressures on local CSPs at a time when funding is reducing
 - the Home Office Guidance should be revised. Although it was initially helpful as a summary of what was required it is in practice 'not fit for purpose' and is in some respects contradictory when used to manage a DHR
 - the Home Office should support CSPs where a local decision is made not to publish a DHR where it is considered that the welfare of a child or vulnerable adult will be affected by publication even in an anonymised format.

Reason/s for Recommendation/s

- 9 When a Domestic Homicide Review is established it is necessary to ensure the process begins promptly. A contingency fund of this size will enable the Community Safety Team to commit County Council funding,

which together with other partner contributions, will ensure that this occurs.

Statutory and Policy Implications

- 10 This report has been compiled after consideration of implications in respect of finance, equal opportunities, human resources, crime and disorder, human rights, the safeguarding of children, sustainability and the environment and those using the service and where such implications are material they are described above.

RECOMMENDATION/S

- 11 It is recommended that the Committee note this report and commit £10,000 from the Community Safety budget to provide contingency funding to support Domestic Homicide Reviews that may be required in 2012-13.

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For any enquiries about this report please contact:

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Constitutional Comments (SLB 20/06/2012)

Community Safety Committee is the appropriate body to consider the content of this report and has authority to consider the recommendation.

Financial Comments ([DD 8/05/12])

Adequate budget provision exists to fund the above initiative.

Background Papers Available for Inspection

Except for previously published documents, which will be available elsewhere, the documents listed here will be available for inspection in accordance with Section 100D of the Local Government Act 1972.

Report to Safer Nottinghamshire Board June 15th 2012 **“Recommendations for Domestic Homicide Reviews”**

Electoral Division(s) and Member(s) Affected

All Wards