

REPORT TO: **CABINET**

DATE: **13 MARCH 2014**

TITLE: **HUMAN RESOURCES POLICY ON DOMESTIC VIOLENCE AND ABUSE**

PORTFOLIO HOLDER: **COUNCILLOR MARK WILKINSON**

LEAD OFFICER: **BRIAN KEANE, INTERIM HEAD OF GOVERNANCE
(01279) 446037**

CONTRIBUTING OFFICERS: **CLARE SEYMOUR, HUMAN RESOURCES ADVISOR (01279) 446016**

LISA WHITING, HOUSING OPTIONS AND ADVICE MANAGER (01279) 446371

This is not a Key Decision
Call-in Procedures may apply
This decision will affect no Ward specifically

RECOMMENDED that Cabinet agrees the Human Resources Policy on Domestic Violence and Abuse, attached as Appendix 1 to this report.

REASON FOR DECISION

- A** To ensure the Council has a clear policy and procedures that set out how it will support staff who are victims of domestic abuse, forced marriage and honourbased violence.

ISSUES/PROPOSALS

1. The Council has a range of policies in place which are designed to promote the welfare and safety of its staff. Over recent years there has been heightened awareness of the impact that domestic abuse can have on victims, and the emergence of forced marriage and honourbased violence as issues. This has led to work to develop a policy and procedures designed to ensure that the Council demonstrates best practice, both in raising awareness of these issues and in providing support to staff who may be victims.
2. The Essex Safeguarding Board encourages public bodies, including Councils, to undertake audits of their safeguarding practices in relation to both children

and vulnerable adults. One of the areas of good practice that public bodies are assessed on is the existence of policy, protocols and guidance on domestic abuse, forced marriage and honourbased violence.

3. The draft Policy, attached as Appendix 1 to this report, clearly outlines how the Council will support its staff and also provides guidance for managers on how to refer staff to expert means of support if they are victims of domestic abuse, forced marriage or honourbased violence.
4. If the policy is adopted, training will be provided to managers to ensure that they have the skills and confidence to implement it appropriately.

IMPLICATIONS

Regeneration (includes Sustainability)

None.

Author: **Graeme Bloomer, Head of Regeneration**

Finance (includes ICT)

None specific.

Author: **Simon Freeman, Head of Finance**

Housing

The Policy will assist Managers to support employees that may be victims of domestic abuse, forced marriage and honourbased violence. The Housing Service provides support to victims and perpetrators in Harlow. This policy will only enhance the services and support available to assist those employed by the Council by offering clear guidance and signposting

Author: **Andrew Murray, Head of Housing**

Community Wellbeing (includes Equalities and Social Inclusion)

The Policy will provide a framework for supporting staff who are victims of domestic abuse, forced marriage and honourbased violence. The provision of appropriate support will help to promote equality of opportunity.

Author: **Lynn Seward, Head of Community Wellbeing**

Governance (includes HR)

By adopting the Domestic Violence and Abuse Policy the Council will have adopted best practice to recognise and safeguard its employees under the relevant legislation and common law, which will assist with fulfilling its duty of care making the Council less open to challenge.

Author: **Brian Keane, Interim Head of Governance**

APPENDICES

Appendix 1 - Domestic Violence and Abuse Policy; incorporating:
Appendix C - Guidance for Managers.

Appendices A and B of Domestic Violence and Abuse Policy have not been reproduced in this Cabinet report, due to the sensitive nature of the information they hold. Copies are held by the Council's Human Resources Team.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

None.