

MANCHESTER CITY COUNCIL

REPORT FOR INFORMATION

COMMITTEE: Social Strategy Overview and Scrutiny

DATE: 8th March 2006

SUBJECT: Domestic Violence Update

REPORT OF: Director Of Children's Services

PURPOSE OF REPORT

To inform members about the progress to date on the Domestic Violence Enforcement Campaign and related Domestic Violence activity.

RECOMMENDATIONS

That Members note the report.

FINANCIAL CONSEQUENCES FOR THE REVENUE BUDGET

None at present

FINANCIAL CONSEQUENCES FOR THE CAPITAL BUDGET

None at present

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BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

Presentation to SSOSC 14 December 2005

WARDS AFFECTED

All

IMPLICATIONS FOR KEY COUNCIL POLICIES

Anti Poverty	Equal Opportunities	Environment	Employment
Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes

1. Introduction

A presentation on Domestic Violence Activity in the light of the Domestic Violence Enforcement Campaign was provided to the Social Strategy Overview and Scrutiny meeting in December 2005. As previously acknowledged, the enforcement campaign is an element of a much wider multi-agency approach to domestic violence.

This report therefore provides Members with an update on Domestic Violence activity across the City.

2. Domestic Violence Enforcement campaign (DVEC)

2.1 The Domestic Violence Enforcement Campaign (DVEC) commenced on the 6th February 2006 and will end on 31st March 2006. This campaign is being led by the Policing Standards Unit of the Home Office, and forms part of the Tackling Violent Crime Programme that Manchester is currently engaged with.

2.2 The emphasis of the campaign is enforcement, with particular prominence being placed on repeat offenders. During the campaign, a (staffed) dedicated domestic violence vehicle will be available between 12noon until 3am four days each week to respond to domestic violence incidents. Domestic violence champions are also available to respond to domestic violence incidents 24 hours every day. All dedicated officers are utilising a new investigation booklet and carry digital cameras at all times.

2.3 £105,000 was made available from the Home Office Policing Standards Unit (PSU) for the campaign (£35,000 for each of the three Policing Divisions), administered through Greater Manchester Police (GMP). The PSU have directed how this funding should be spent:

- Dedicated domestic violence officers;
- Dedicated response vehicles; and
- Training: £6,3000 of the funding has been used to train staff. To date, a training day has been held for police officers, domestic violence officers, Crown Prosecution Service and advocacy workers.

2.4 GMP conducted a 'clean sweep operation' during the first seven days of the campaign. The purpose of this was to follow up previous complaints where the offender had not been traced. Four police officers and a dedicated interview team were involved in each police division.

Current information indicates:

- 90% of reported victims are female
- 40% of calls are repeats – city wide
- Harpurhey, Moston, Wythenshawe and Gorton have been identified as hotspot areas
- According to Police data, Manchester receives an average of 1000 reported incidents per month.
- Alcohol and mental health are issues for victims and offenders.

A further detailed report on activity will be available at the end of the campaign.

3. Domestic Violence Strategy and Management

A consultation event is being organised to take place on 26th April 2006 to gain feedback on the Domestic Violence strategy. The strategy will address local priorities within the national framework for domestic violence including child protection and services for children as well as Forced Marriage and links with drugs, alcohol and homelessness issues and service provision.

To support the development and implementation of the strategy a range of changes have been introduced. The first has involved the establishment of a Domestic Violence Management Group. This group involves key partners and will coordinate and manage domestic violence strategy across the city. In addition to the new group, a Domestic Violence Co-ordinator will be appointed to drive the new strategy, take forward the application for Specialist Domestic Violence Court status and establish a Performance Management Framework for the multi-agency work relating to domestic violence.

It is envisaged that a publicity campaign will take place to coincide with the launch of the strategy. In the past, Manchester City Council has coordinated a 'Zero Tolerance' campaign, raising awareness around domestic violence and highlighting that Manchester will not tolerate domestic violence. This campaign was approximately 10 years ago and focused on male violence against women. It is anticipated that a future campaign would focus on two key areas:

- i) Changing people's mindset regarding domestic violence – encouraging reporting and encouraging earlier reporting
- ii) Raising awareness of services available to support victims of domestic violence

4. Home Office Visit

Representatives from the Police Standards Unit, LGA, Department of Health and the Home Office Crime Reduction Team visited Manchester CDRP on 6th December 2005 to discuss progress on domestic violence work since their initial visit in July.

Manchester Crime and Disorder Partnership received positive and directive feedback from the Home Office. The range of issues facing the city in relation to domestic violence was acknowledged and a series of actions were agreed at the visit, including some guidance on the development of the strategy for the city and the development of a performance management framework. A further Home Office visit is anticipated in May/June 2006.

5. Specialist Domestic Violence Court Programme (SDVC)

The Specialist Domestic Violence Court encompasses not only a physical courthouse, but also the criminal justice and community wide response to domestic violence. A dedicated SDVC will improve victim support and case management; develop expertise and consistency; and increase the number of offenders brought to justice, a key objective in the Government's National Delivery Plan. Manchester is in the process of developing SDVC status.

6. Conclusion

Whilst it is clear there is a great deal of activity already underway across the city to address domestic violence issues, it is expected that the forthcoming Domestic Violence Strategy will provide the strategic overview and coordination required to ensure the city has a cohesive and coordinated multi agency response.