

This report is public	
Domestic Abuse Policy	
Committee	Executive
Date of Committee	2 September 2025
Portfolio Holder presenting the report	Portfolio Holder for Housing, Councillor Nick Cotter
Date Portfolio Holder agreed report	24 July 2025
Report of	Assistant Director Wellbeing and Housing, Nicola Riley

Purpose of report

To seek approval for a new Domestic Abuse Policy.

1. Recommendations

The meeting resolves:

- 1.1 To approve the new Domestic Abuse Policy.

2. Executive Summary

- 2.1 The Council has duties and responsibilities across housing and other service areas to provide advice, assistance and support for victim/survivors of domestic abuse. The Domestic Abuse Policy outlines the services, our approach and how and when partners and other commissioned services are engaged.

Implications & Impact Assessments

Implications	Commentary
Finance	There are no financial implications arising from this report. The provision of services identified in the policy are within existing budget whilst the DA Co-ordinator role is funded through grant. Kelly Wheeler, Finance Business Partner, 24 July 2025
Legal	The report notes that the Council has a number of legal obligations in relation to supporting residents who are victims of domestic abuse in conjunction with Oxfordshire County Council. Having a robust policy to set out how we will achieve this is good practice and will help to ensure that the Council meets its legal obligations to support victims of domestic abuse in the area. Denzil – John Turbervill, Head of Legal Services, 30 July 2025

Risk Management	There are no risk implications associated with this report. Celia Prado-Teeling, Performance Team Leader, 30 July 2025			
Impact Assessments	Positive	Neutral	Negative	Commentary
Equality Impact	x			The outcome of the report will contribute to the provision of services that consider the needs of vulnerable people, as outlined within associated Legislation. Celia Prado-Teeling, Performance Team Leader, 30 July 2025
A Are there any aspects of the proposed decision, including how it is delivered or accessed, that could impact on inequality?		x		
B Will the proposed decision have an impact upon the lives of people with protected characteristics, including employees and service users?		x		Not from the policy directly
Climate & Environmental Impact		x		Not applicable
ICT & Digital Impact		x		Not applicable
Data Impact		x		Not applicable
Procurement & subsidy		x		Not applicable
Council Priorities	Quality Housing and Place Making			
Human Resources	Not applicable			
Property	Not applicable			
Consultation & Engagement	None			

Supporting Information

3. Background

- 3.1 The Council has duties to provide advice and assistance with housing to victim/survivors of domestic abuse. These are outlined in the Domestic Abuse Act 2021 and within other housing legislation and associated guidance. The Council also has duties to report and record safeguarding concerns associated with vulnerable adults and children, as victim/survivors and children within the household could be at risk.
- 3.2 The Council will have more direct responsibilities to lead and coordinate support and responses to domestic abuse when its statutory housing duties are triggered. However, the policy aims to outline and raise awareness of the support available for victim/survivors of domestic abuse. Even when this support may be provided by a partner agency.
- 3.3 Overall, domestic abuse and associated commissioning strategy and oversight is provided by Oxfordshire County Council. Cherwell has high rates of domestic abuse when compared to other areas within Oxfordshire. Therefore, there are a higher proportion of people in need of or receiving support than in other areas.
- 3.4 Cherwell has used grant funding available to provide a Domestic Abuse Coordinator within the housing team, with an aim of improving awareness, services and partnership activities. The Council is seeking an accreditation for its work in this area from the Domestic Abuse Housing Alliance (DAHA).

4. Details

- 4.1 The new Domestic Abuse Policy outlines the Council's role and responsibilities and how residents receive advice and support.
- 4.2 It provides an overview of what residents can expect from the Council when they approach the Council for support with domestic abuse and how the Council will ensure that their circumstances are handled confidentially, sensitively and non-judgmentally.
- 4.3 It provides an overview of the housing support that is provided by the Council, particularly through the housing options team, housing register and through the Sanctuary Scheme, which provides additional security measures to properties.
- 4.4 It outlines the multi-agency role and multi-agency arrangements that the Council is part of and that are in place within Oxfordshire to coordinate responses, provide support and monitor perpetrators.

5. Alternative Options and Reasons for Rejection

- 5.1 The following alternative options have been identified and rejected for the reasons as set out below.

Option 1: Not to bring forward a Domestic Abuse Policy. The Council has statutory duties in delivering housing services and participating in multi-agency arrangements regarding victim and perpetrator management, however, there are no statutory duties to have a domestic abuse policy. The Council is aiming to achieve an accreditation in recognition of its practice and focus on this area, and a policy is an important part of achieving this. This option is therefore rejected.

6. Conclusion and Reasons for Recommendations

- 6.1 It is important that the Council has up to date policies and procedures for key service areas and it is important that they are legislatively and operationally sound.

Decision Information

Key Decision	Yes, community threshold met
Subject to Call in	Yes
If not, why not subject to call in	N/A
Ward(s) Affected	All Wards

Document Information

Appendices	
Appendix 1	New Domestic Abuse Policy
Appendix 2	Equalities and Climate Impact Assessment
Background Papers	None
Reference Papers	None
Report Author	Richard Smith – Head of Housing
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Corporate Director Approval (unless Corporate Director or Statutory Officer report)	Ian Boll, Corporate Director – Communities, 28 July 2025