

Stinsford Parish Council

Record of decisions made under Delegated Powers Monday 13 December 2021

The following decisions were made by the Clerk, following consultation with the Parish Council.

1. Expenditure

The following items of expenditure was approved:

- Dorset Planning Consultant Ltd – Neighbourhood Plan consultancy support (November 2021) - £732.54

2. Consultations

- (i) Dorset Council #LetsTalkLibraries – That the Parish Council not submit a corporate response to the initial phase of this consultation.
- (ii) Dorset Domestic Abuse Strategy 2021- 2024 – That the attached corporate response developed by Mrs Pattison and submitted in order to meet the deadline of 12 December 2021 be approved.

3. Stinsford Neighbourhood Plan

The letter received from the Independent Examiner setting out his intention to visit the parish during the previous week was noted. A list of questions arising from his site visit was now expected and it was noted that there was likely to be a quick turnaround required in response to this.

It was noted that the annual subscription to Zoom for unlimited meetings had expired. It was decided to renew this for a further year at a cost of £143.88 to enable virtual meetings of the Parish Council and Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group to continue.

4. North of Dorchester (DOR13)

It was noted that the consultants commissioned to progress the masterplan, Hyas Associates Ltd, were expected to be engaging with community stakeholders early in 2022.

The outcome of the recent meeting of the sub-group was approved, as amended.

Kirsty Riglar

Clerk to Stinsford Parish Council

Consultation Response from Stinsford Parish Council: Dorset Domestic Abuse Strategy

1. Overview

The key overarching issues for any such strategy are resourcing and monitoring of what is happening on the ground. We feel that both of these issues need to be addressed with much greater clarity in the strategy. There is very little hard data provided to evidence the strategy. It would benefit from a more Dorset specific approach rather than presenting a position that could be applied to almost anywhere in the country.

2. Specific Issues

This section provides specific issues following the paragraph numbers in the strategy and sub titles in the appendix:

1-3 These opening paragraphs need to include an explanation of what is Dorset specific and different from elsewhere.

4.2.1 This could give more emphasis and bring up front education and awareness raising. It could look at the potential for working in schools and colleges and possible training and awareness raising for male allies. In addition to this the paragraph deals with perpetrators. This issue is a very minor strand, especially taken that so few perpetrators receive any form of sanction through the judicial system or through social services by for example threatening to take children out of a family home or insisting that on attendance of a perpetrators programme.

4.2.2 This is a potentially useful paragraph but needs expanding to explain more of what is embraced by a 'whole system' approach.

4.2.3 While the Dorset Police's zero-tolerance approach is to be supported it must be stressed that only a very small number of perpetrators are ever convicted.

4.3 Sexual violence can require a specific consideration that may influence the response. As an example neighbouring Devon has a Sexual and Domestic Violence Strategy. This allows for a specific focus on responding to sexual violence while acknowledging that there are areas where there is an interface between the two areas and, indeed, where they cross cut each other. It is possible that the strategy refers to this when it mentions a 'whole system' approach but there is nothing in the strategy that refers directly to sexual violence or it links to Domestic violence.

3. Appendix

Governance – This is not unlike what appears in most strategies subject to it been supported by effective monitoring at the point of delivery. This should provide victims with a voice to express their own experience of the offering. This is recognised in the following paragraph.

Voice of the person – The commitment to understanding ‘intersecting forms of oppression and discrimination’ is supported.

NRCN – No data is provided to explain how many victims were from rural areas of Dorset. There is a need to understand ‘rural isolation’ and connectivity as specific that can have different implications from those in Dorset’s towns. This also needs to intersect with the impact of domestic abuse on other protected characteristic groups some of whose issues can be even further compounded by rural isolation.

Current offer to victims - This could draw on the experience of victims on the ground. Do they get a speedy and helpful response? It does read as though emergency refuge or other accommodation is available but nationally this is not the case because there is not enough provision. It would be helpful to provide evidence of existing provision. Target hardening is useful but how is it working for victims.

Diversity - A clear case for the support of some protected characteristic groups is identified through the EqIA. The Strategy states that ‘the numbers setting out referrals from those with protective characteristics for accommodation-based support are low and for that reason unable to be included in this strategy’. It would be useful if data were to be sourced to establish why referrals are low. Are referrals reflective of the percentage of people with a specific characteristic in the target group and is this higher or lower than in the primary group utilising services? Is this because there are protected characteristic specific blockages in seeking support? Is it predicted that the numbers of any specific protected characteristic group are likely to grow over the period of the plan? Could Dorset build on examples set by comparator authorities? Could more be done to promote the offering to specific protected characteristic groups? Ultimately what matters is how it is working on the ground. This part of the strategy requires a lot more evidence. To state that there is low take up is not enough. Accommodation based support is also only part of the available offer.

Support for children – The first line of this section is non-gendered. The strategy suggests, growing up as a victim of domestic abuse means that a child is more likely to become a victim or a perpetrator in later life. Taken that the majority of victims are women the strategy would suggest that the majority of children will ‘grow up as victims’ and will become victims or perpetrators in adulthood. In this sense it is reasonable to believe that many female children will become victims and male children perpetrators. If so then the strategy cannot give a non-gendered approach to children. Children should be identified as victims and therefore they deserve a professional response as victims. If the solution is in education and awareness there is a need to be aware of the different needs of male and female children as well as children presenting other gendered and intersex identities. There is no acknowledgement in the strategy that for some boys being victims as children means they will do their absolute best to never be a perpetrator especially because many will have tried to protect their mother from an abusive father or male figure. In summary the strategy works with a notion that behaviours pass on to children and that they will grow up to be victims or perpetrators and that that majority of women are victims and men are perpetrators. If so this would suggest a need for a gendered approach to supporting children to avoid a continuation of such behaviour. We also however suggest that this model makes undue assumptions about the implications for boys.

Locational hot spots – We are told that West and North Dorset are hot spots. Is there any difference between urban and rural areas in these two districts? What are the views of the providers and stakeholders? This is useful as are the 'Suggested solutions' however this is resource dependent.

Funding - The strategy provides a notion of what funding is available from the Integrated Domestic Abuse Service and is suggestive more funding may be available from the Ministry of Communities, Housing and Local Government. The strategy does not suggest what resources will be needed and if the existing funds are adequate for delivery. Are there any contingency funds available for potential over spend and how can long term stability be built into the offering? Is it fair to leave an issue that could potentially put life and limb at risk as 'dependent on future government spending reviews'?

4. Conclusion

The strategy is useful but it does need to provide greater assurance in respect of funding and monitoring outcomes on the ground. The strategy would benefit from providing an understanding of the specific allocation of funding into the components of the service offering. It should clearly identify any gaps in the offering and suggest ways that these can be addressed. We trust that the above response is helpful in providing a positive contribution to this most important of strategies.