

Report of the Portfolio Holder for Community Safety**Sanctuary Scheme Policy****1. Purpose of Report**

To seek approval for amendments to the Council's Sanctuary Scheme Policy to protect access to the service for all applicants.

2. Recommendation

Cabinet is asked to RESOLVE that the Sanctuary Scheme Policy be approved.

3. Detail

The Sanctuary Scheme Policy sets out the approach that the Borough Council takes when a referral for assistance from the Sanctuary Scheme is received. This has been updated following the significant increase in referrals over the last two years which due to the very high cost of some referrals may result in the scheme being withdrawn before the end of the financial year.

A wholesale countywide review of the operation of Sanctuary Schemes by the Domestic Abuse Accommodation Subgroup (to align schemes countywide and prevent a postcode lottery) has also been carried out and the proposed changes to policy would better align with other county schemes.

The Policy and the Sanctuary Scheme are designed to support survivors of domestic abuse to remain in their own homes if they do not wish to move through 'target hardening' of the property. Target hardening provides a time-limited safe space for victims to await the arrival of the Police if an incident should occur.

The Policy provides a framework for how requests will be processed and the steps that the Council should take when processing a request. The Sanctuary Scheme applies to owner occupiers, Council tenants and tenanted properties, rented properties in the private sector and those that belong to registered providers.

For the purpose of the policy, any works carried out under the Sanctuary Scheme must be;

- An addition or enhancement to what was in place at the property before the referral was made
- Carried out using the Sanctuary procedure and following a referral for assistance from the scheme
- Assessed by a trained officer as being suitable and appropriate

SANCTUARY SPEND	
Year	Total
2022 - 2023	£14,071
2023 - 2024	£32,462
2024 - 2025	£55,672

The funding available for Sanctuary in 2025/26 is £74,279. The spend from April to July 2025 is £32,372 with seven further applications awaiting quotes

A copy of the Policy Change Table can be found at **Appendix 1.**

A copy of the Sanctuary Scheme Policy can be found at **Appendix 2.**

Domestic Abuse and Sanctuary Data can be found at **Appendix 3.**

A copy of the Sanctuary Referral Form can be found at **Appendix 4.**

A copy of the Sanctuary Scheme Eligibility can be found at **Appendix 5.**

A copy of the Sanctuary Property Assessment Form can be found at **Appendix 6.**

A copy of the Policy Equalities Impact Assessment can be found at **Appendix 7.**

4. Key Decision

Is this report a key decision as defined under Regulation 8 of the Local Authorities (Executive Arrangements) (Meetings and Access to Information) (England) Regulations 2012?

This report is a key decision as defined under Regulation 8 of the Local Authorities (Executive Arrangements) (Meetings and Access to Information) (England) Regulations 2012 as it affects all wards in the Council's area.

5. Updates from Scrutiny

This applies where a policy has been through pre-scrutiny or Policy Overview Working Group.

6. Financial Implications

The comments from the Assistant Director Finance Services were as follows:

There are no additional financial implications for the Council with costs being contained within existing budgets. Any significant budget implications in the future, over and above virement limits, would require approval by Cabinet.

7. Legal Implications

The comments from the Head of Legal Services were as follows:

There are no direct legal implications arising from this report.

8. Human Resources Implications

The comments from the Human Resources Manager were as follows:

Not applicable.

9. Union Comments

The Union comments were as follows:

Not applicable.

10. Climate Change Implications

The climate change implications are contained within the report.

11. Data Protection Compliance Implications

This report does not contain any OFFICIAL(SENSITIVE) information and there are no Data Protection issues in relation to this report.

12. Equality Impact Assessment

As this is a change to policy / a new policy an equality impact assessment is included in the appendix to this report.

13. Background Papers

None