

Cabinet Member for Community Support, Fire and Rescue – response to the motion on Male Violence

1. The Chairman of the County Council referred the notice of motion on Male Violence (see Appendix), submitted by Cllr Kirsty Lord to the County Council on 22 October 2021, to the Cabinet Member for Community Support, Fire and Rescue for consideration.
2. The motion calls on the Cabinet Member to; understand the extent and nature of male violence in West Sussex; to assess the effectiveness of the programmes currently in place; to identify gaps in provision with reference to national and international best practice and report back to the Council within six months with details of a comprehensive and ambitious plan to ultimately end male violence in West Sussex.
3. The Cabinet Member met Cllr Lord on 30 November 2021 to discuss the motion. It was acknowledged that since the submission of the motion an announcement has been made on the Council and its partner's receipt of £1m Safer Street Funding which will place an emphasis on the safety of women and girls. The Domestic Abuse Bill 2021 has also placed a duty on the local authority (with grant funding of £1.4m) to provide support to victims of domestic abuse and their children in refuges and other safe accommodation.
4. It was also confirmed that the County Council is a member of the West Sussex Violence Reduction Partnership which has been adopting a public health approach to identify and target areas at greatest risk of serious violence. This was described as a joined up approach used to identify any gaps in support.
5. The Cabinet Member agreed that Community Safety was a priority for the County Council but considered that the focus of the motion was too broad and that greater focus was required, in order for the most constructive debate to take place at County Council.
6. The Cabinet Member advised Cllr Lord that he agreed that this is a serious, complex issue that holds cross-party importance and would welcome a focused discussion on the role of the County Council in tackling violence at a future full Council meeting.
7. As a result of the discussion and the information received on community safety operations, Cllr Lord advised that she would withdraw the motion with a view to resubmission of a new motion, on the same theme, taking into account the points raised at the meeting.
8. For these reasons, the Cabinet Member was unable to support the motion as submitted and looks forward to considering any revised motion at a future County Council meeting.

Councillor Duncan Crow

Cabinet Member for Community Support, Fire and Rescue

Contact Officer: Erica Keegan, Democratic Services Officer, Tel; 033 022 26050, erica.keegan@westsussex.gov.uk

Appendix

Notice of Motion from Cllr Kirsty Lord on Male Violence (submitted to 22 October 2021 County Council meeting)

Recent news reports have highlighted the impact of male violence in the UK, including in West Sussex. This Council believes that:

- (a) Victims of male violence are never to blame.
- (b) Significantly reducing male violence will make women and men safer and lessen the suspicion that groups of young men and single men in particular face.
- (c) Alongside enhancing services for victims, agencies should focus their efforts on preventing male violence rather than asking innocent people to modify their behaviour.
- (d) The causes of male violence are complex and often start in early life.
- (e) Solutions cannot be created by agencies and voluntary organisations working in isolation.

This Council therefore calls on the Cabinet Member for Community Support, Fire and Rescue to convene a cross-agency group (including but not limited to the police, health services, county, district and borough councils, and voluntary organisations) with the remit to:

- (1) Understand the extent and nature of male violence in West Sussex;
- (2) Assess the effectiveness of the programmes currently in place;
- (3) Identify gaps in provision with reference to national and international best practice; and
- (4) Report back to this Council within six months with details of a comprehensive and ambitious plan to ultimately end male violence in West Sussex, including details of the resources and timelines required.