



Cyngor Castell-nedd Port Talbot  
Neath Port Talbot Council

**Appendix 1 - Not for publication pursuant to Regulation 5(2) & (5) of Statutory Instrument 2001 No. 2290 and Paragraph(s) 15 of Part 4 of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972. Pursuant also to Paragraph 21 of the Schedule, and in all the circumstances of the case, the public interest in maintaining the exemption is considered to outweigh the public interest in disclosing the information.**

## **NEATH PORT TALBOT COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL**

### **NEATH PORT TALBOT SOCIAL SERVICES, HOUSING AND COMMUNITY SAFETY CABINET BOARD**

**2<sup>nd</sup> February 2024**

**Report of the Interim Head of Housing and Communities– Mrs  
Chelé Zandra Howard**

#### **Matter for Decision**

**Wards Affected:** All wards.

**Report Title:** Permission to Consult on the review of Commissioned Violence Against Women, Domestic Abuse & Sexual Violence Emergency Accommodation Services.

#### **Purpose of the Report:**

To seek Members' approval to conduct a consultation exercise with a view to decommissioning one traditional communal refuge building and commissioning dispersed refuge units in its place, which will allow Officers to address the identified gaps in service provision.

## **Executive Summary:**

Following the review of Violence Against Women, Domestic Abuse & Sexual Violence (VAWDASV) emergency accommodation services purchased by Neath Port Talbot County Borough Council (the Council), a business case has been developed (Appendix 1) setting out a proposal for the remodelling of existing services.

Officers preferred option (option 2) outlined within this business case is to reduce the number communal refuge based emergency accommodation from 3 sites to 2 sites to develop dispersed emergency accommodation in its place.

The remodelling of VAWDASV emergency accommodation provision will work towards meeting the gaps identified in the emergency accommodation provision.

Whilst all stakeholders have been involved in this review, Officers are mindful that this proposal represents a significant change from the current provision and therefore wishes to undertake a 90 day public consultation in order to inform any decision making on future service provision.

## **Background:**

As part of the implementation of the Councils response to the implementation of the Violence Against Women, Domestic Abuse & Sexual Violence (VAWDASV) Act (Wales) 2015, Officers were asked to undertake a review of commissioned services by the VAWDASV Leadership Group.

The Neath Port Talbot Strategy for VAWDASV; ***'Healthy Relationships for Stronger Communities'*** identifies the need to the 'refocus funding and remodel services so that victims and perpetrators can access help at the earliest possible time to prevent cases reaching crisis point' and it also recognises that there is the need to commission services differently.

The Council currently commissions VAWDASV Emergency Accommodation, Supported Accommodation and Floating support funded by our Housing Support Grant (HSG).

Officers have split the review into 3 phases:

- Phase 1 – Review of Emergency Accommodation
- Phase 2 – Review of Supported Accommodation
- Phase 3 – Review of Floating Support

This report and attached business cases (Appendix 1) highlights the findings and proposals for Phase 1 of the VAWDASV review.

The Council currently commissions 3 VAWDASV communal refuges offering emergency accommodation in Neath Port Talbot.

Officers have worked with Providers, members of the VAWDASV Leadership Group, survivors, regional partners, and other local authorities to carry out the review. This review also involved Officers considering alternative models of support and accommodation across Wales to develop a comparison.

Throughout the review, Officers have attended the VAWDASV Leadership Group meetings and updated stakeholders on review progress and proposals.

The review has identified gaps in the emergency accommodation service provision for people with a number of protected characteristics, complex support needs and behaviours, larger families and families with older male children.

Following the review and gap analysis, Officers are proposing that the Council decommission one communal refuge and realign this funding to commission a number of dispersed refuge units in its place, which will allow the Council to address the gap in the service provision.

To ensure that any decisions made by the Council to redevelop the VAWDASV services is properly informed by all relevant stakeholders, including survivors and VAWDASV professionals, Officers are requesting permission to undertake a 90 day consultation.

### **Financial Impacts:**

The total Housing Support Grant (HSG) spent on VAWDASV services in Neath Port Talbot is £865,896 with £419,472 being spent on Accommodation based services, £331,423 on floating support and outreach services, and a further £115,000 on the internal Independent Domestic Violence Advisors (IDVA) Service and one Antisocial behaviour case worker role.

Officers anticipate that there will be no additional funding made available from the Housing Support Grant, however as part of a HSG service wide review, Officers will look to realign funding to meet any budget deficits, that have been identified as a risk of retendering the services.

### **Integrated Impact Assessment:**

A first stage impact assessment has been undertaken to assist the Council in discharging its legislative duties (under the Equality Act 2010, the Welsh Language Standards (No.1) Regulations 2015, the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 and the

Environment (Wales) Act 2016. The first stage impact assessment has indicated that a more in-depth assessment was required.

An overview of the Integrated Impact Assessment has been included below in summary form only and it is essential that Members read the Integrated Impact Assessment, which is attached to the report at Appendix 2, for the purposes of the meeting.

It is concluded that overall, the proposals will contribute towards positive outcomes for a range of protected characteristics as clients typically have services which are age, gender, marriage/civil partnership and/or disability related.

The purpose of the proposal is to help protect Neath Port Talbot's most vulnerable citizens. The intention is to broaden access to VAWDASV Services for all those with an eligible assessed need. It will also ensure long term sustainability of services in line with the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015.

### **Valleys Communities Impacts:**

There is currently no communal refuge provision situated in the Valley areas of NPT, however all people can access the service. The provision of dispersed units does present an opportunity to locate emergency accommodation in the Valley areas.

### **Workforce Impacts:**

There will be no Council workforce impacts.

### **Legal Impacts:**

There are no legal impacts associated with the contents of this report.

## **Risk Management Impacts:**

Failure to carry out a stakeholder consultation would carry a risk of the Council making a decision without input from stakeholders and without fully understanding the implications of the proposed change.

## **Recommendations**

It is recommended that the Council:

- Approve a 90 day stakeholder consultation to seek feedback on the current provision and proposal to remodel VAWDASV accommodation based services.
- Officers present a report on the consultation findings and recommendations for re-commissioning of VAWDASV accommodation-based services following the consultation period.

## **Reasons for Proposed Decision:**

To ensure that any changes to current provision is informed by a wide range of stakeholders including people that may have experience of using VAWDASV services.

## **Implementation of Decision:**

The decision is proposed for implementation after the three day call in period.

## **Appendices:**

Appendix 1 – Business Case (RESTRICTED)

Appendix 2 – Integrated Impact Assessment

### **List of Background Papers:**

- NPT VAWDASV Strategy 2023-2026.
- Statutory guidance for the Commissioning of VAWDASV Services in Wales.
- Violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual Violence Strategy 2022-2026.

### **Officer Contact:**

For further information on this report item, please contact:

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