

**EXECUTIVE
COMMITTEE**

4th August 2020

SUICIDE PREVENTION TASK GROUP – FINAL REPORT

Relevant Portfolio Holder	Councillor Nyear Nazir
Portfolio Holder Consulted	Yes
Relevant Head of Service	Topic spans multiple service areas – relevant senior officers have been consulted.
Ward(s) Affected	No specific ward relevance.
Non-Key Decision	

1. SUMMARY OF PROPOSALS

This report provides an overview of the findings of the Suicide Prevention Task Group. More detailed information about the evidence basis for the group's recommendations can be found in the group's final report attached at Appendix 1.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

The Committee is asked to RESOLVE that

1. That the Redditch Borough Council Equalities Strategy should reflect the Council's commitment to suicide prevention and supporting good mental health, and that in producing the updated version of the Equalities Strategy for 2020 to 2024 objectives and actions should be included to cover the following:-
 - a) That officers continue to publicise messages around positive mental health to staff and promote opportunities to participate in training and events.
 - b) That officers develop the signposting information available on the intranet to support staff in being able to signpost either service users or colleagues to the relevant support services.
 - c) That officers mark suicide prevention awareness day in September 2020 including using this as an opportunity to promote the work of local groups that support suicide prevention.
 - d) Recognising that not all staff may undertake the Mental Health First Aid training, that officers arrange for some alternative web based training resources to be provided for staff, to be aimed at those working in front line posts.

2.
 - a) That officers from the Communications Team work with the Partnership Manager to identify local voluntary sector organisation which offer support around mental health and wellbeing and/ or promote suicide prevention.

- b) That the organisations identified be invited to participate in workshop training sessions to be provided by the Communications Team to help them to better publicise the support and services their organisations provide through use of social media and other publicity.**
- 3. That officers be tasked with publicising the outcome of the Task Group in the Wellbeing in Partnership Newsletter and by giving details of the findings to the Worcestershire Suicide Prevention Plan Partnership Group (sub-group of the Health and Well-being Board).**

3. KEY ISSUES

Background

- 3.1 The proposal for this Task Group was put forward by Councillor Debbie Chance who subsequently chaired the Task Group which the Overview and Scrutiny Committee agreed to establish at its meeting on 21st March 2019. There was a brief delay following the elections in 2019 and the task group started meeting in June 2019. In addition to Councillor Chance, the members of the task group were Councillors Joe Baker, Ann Isherwood, Anthony Lovell, Nyear Nazir and Mark Shurmer.
- 3.2 During the evidence gathering phase, the group met with a number of witnesses involved in work around suicide prevention and providing mental health services. Witnesses were drawn from the voluntary sector, and also the Public Health Team for Worcestershire and the local Clinical Commissioning Group. Towards the end of the exercise, the group also heard from officers with regard to the council's Equalities Strategy and to assist them in framing the recommendations.
- 3.3 Death by suicide is a sensitive issue which can have long lasting consequences for bereaved family and friends. The task group established that there are numerous stake holders who can have a role to play in suicide prevention strategies. It should be noted that in terms of local government, responsibility for suicide prevention programmes sits with upper tier authorities rather than Borough or District Councils. In this regard the task group was assisted by colleagues from the public health team at Worcestershire County Council, and was able to look in some detail at the current county wide suicide prevention strategy.
- 3.4 In terms of recommendations, although the Council is not one of the stake holders delivering mental health services to the public, the task group noted in particular issues raised by witnesses around awareness raising and the importance of training. The recommendations have been drafted to reflect these themes and the full details are set out in the final draft report attached at Appendix 1.

- 3.5 There was a slight delay in the writing up the findings of the group due to the effects of lockdown being introduced at the end of March 2020. The group met virtually on 25th June to agree the final version of the report. The final draft report is due to be considered by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 30th July. In the intervening period there have been some changes to the membership of the group and Councillors Lovell and Nazir were appointed to the Executive on 30th June, and Cllr Debbie Chance has stood down as a member of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

Financial Implications

- 3.5 There are no financial implications for Recommendation 3. With regard to Recommendations 1 (a. to d.) and 2 (a. and b.), at the time of drafting the task group report it was anticipated that these were actions that could be absorbed into existing staff capacity/ work streams without the need for any extra resources, and on that basis there would be no financial implications. However, were this to prove not to be the case once work to implement the recommendations started, then officers would bring a further report to Members seeking approval for any extra additional funding that was required.

Legal Implications

- 3.6 The legal implications to the recommendations (where applicable) are detailed in the report.

Service / Operational Implications

- 3.7 The group's recommendations are designed to enhance support to staff and the public to have greater awareness of suicide prevention and to give some additional support to voluntary groups around communication issues.

Customer / Equalities and Diversity Implications

- 3.8 Recommendation 1 involves incorporating a number of elements into the Council's Equalities Strategy. Officers from that team have been involved in the work of the Task Group and have assisted in guiding the group and giving input as to the recommendations. This is a subject matter which can affect all groups within the community.

4. RISK MANAGEMENT

No specific risks have been identified.

5. APPENDICES

Appendix 1 – The Suicide Prevention Task Group's final report

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AUTHOR OF REPORT

Name: Sarah Sellers, Democratic Services Officer
Email: sarah.sellers@bromsgroveandredditch.gov.uk
Tel.: (01527) 64252 Ext 2884