



Subject:	Safe City Charter Status
Date:	19th February, 2021
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Restricted Reports	
Is this report restricted?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
If Yes, when will the report become unrestricted?	
After Committee Decision	<input type="checkbox"/>
After Council Decision	<input type="checkbox"/>
Sometime in the future	<input type="checkbox"/>
Never	<input type="checkbox"/>

Call-in	
Is the decision eligible for Call-in?	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>

1.0	Purpose of Report or Summary of main Issues
1.1	<p>At the meeting of the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee on 23rd August 2019, the following Motion on Domestic Violence was passed:</p> <p>“This Council is saddened at the levels of domestic violence in Belfast and recognises that this manifests in many different forms, including emotional and economic abuse.</p> <p>Belfast needs to become a city that has zero tolerance towards domestic violence or abuse – a “Safe City” which is proactive in supporting victims of domestic violence and challenging perpetrators. A Safe City recognises that domestic violence impacts upon many residents, regardless of age, religion, ethnic or cultural background.</p> ”

1.2	<p>The Council pledges to build on the work already achieved by engaging with relevant partners to support victims of domestic abuse and challenge perpetrators and to update the Belfast City Council Domestic Violence Strategy.”</p> <p>Onus is a social enterprise organisation offering best practice advice and specialist training on domestic violence and abuse and in January 2020 the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee agreed to work towards the Onus Safe City accreditation. This report outlines action that has been taken by the Council and its partners to support victims of domestic violence and achieve the Onus Safe City status.</p>
2.0	Recommendation
2.1	The Committee is asked to note that the Council was awarded Onus Safe City Charter status on 2nd February 2021.
3.0	Main Report
3.1	<p>Key Issues</p> <p>A Safe Borough / City, is defined by ONUS as a Borough / City that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • promotes zero tolerance to domestic violence or abuse; • recognises that domestic violence or abuse impacts upon many people living or working there, regardless of age, religion, disability, ethnic or cultural background and while the majority of victims are female, domestic violence or abuse can be experienced by men and by people in same sex relationships; and • aims to provide an inclusive means of providing information on the range of organisations available to help anyone affected by domestic violence or abuse.
3.2	<p>At its meeting on 23rd January 2020, the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee agreed to the Council progressing an action plan to attain the Safe Borough / City accreditation. The requirements for a Safe City / Borough accreditation are:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. the Council has attained Platinum Workplace Charter Status 2. the Council’s management and elected representatives have signed and will display the White Ribbon Charter: a personal pledge to never commit, condone or stay silent about domestic violence 3. the Council is demonstrating civic leadership through Safe Place Advocacy

4. the Council is committed to working in partnership to develop new means of extending Safe Place message
5. the Council is committed to working in partnership with Onus to develop new means of rolling out the various Pathways for Participation to create safer workplaces, churches and communities
6. consideration to be given to how awareness of services for anyone experiencing domestic abuse is prevalent in education, housing and health services

Update on activity to gain Safe City Charter Status.

Platinum Workplace Charter Status

3.3 Continuous review of the Council's Domestic Violence and Abuse in the Workplace policy, development of our Trusted Colleague support framework and the associated communication and training programme are key to Council's annual assessment to retain re-accreditation of the ONUS Workplace Charter (Safe Place) at Platinum level. Following our annual assessment in November 2020, we were successful in retaining our Platinum Workplace Charter Status for another year.

The White Ribbon Charter

3.4 The White Ribbon Charter is part of the largest male-led Global campaign to end men's violence against women, with a presence in over 60 countries. Within the requirements for Safe City accreditation, is an action that 'Council management and elected members have signed and will display the White Ribbon Charter: a personal pledge to never commit, condone or stay silent about domestic violence'. Annually the White Ribbon Campaign is marked with 16 Days of Action, which run between the International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women (25th November) until Human Rights Day (10th December). The Council has supported this campaign over a number of years with the display of a White Ribbon on the cobbled area in front of City Hall. The campaign was marked in 2020 in line with Covid restrictions by a socially distanced photograph of the Lord Mayor, the Chief Executive and the Head of HR signing the White Ribbon Charter and an associated internal and external communication campaign to mark the start of the 16 Days of Action.

Further requirements for a Safe Borough / City

3.5 Council officers, through engagement with ONUS and the Policing and Community Safety Partnership (PSCP), collaborated on the roll out of an extensive programme of Safe Churches training across the city supported and promoted through a range of partners including the Police Service of Northern Ireland (PSNI). Safe Churches is a bespoke pathway that enables churches to recognise and respond to anyone affected by domestic violence or abuse. Once accredited, the churches can offer information on the wide range of support services available to anyone affected by domestic violence or abuse and they possess a range of Safe Place resources to signpost individuals to the appropriate assistance.

3.6 In addition, the Council, through the PCSP, continues to support a range of work linked to the Belfast Area Domestic and Sexual Violence and Abuse Partnership (BADSVAP), including work to raise awareness of domestic violence and services available for those experiencing domestic violence; such as the series of 'Domestic Violence Raising Awareness Sessions', which took place throughout the latter part of 2020 and early 2021, in each quarter of the city.

3.7 Officers are pleased to advise Members that Belfast has been assessed by ONUS and has met the standard for the criteria at point 3.2 by ONUS. This is a credit to the strong and effective partnership working across all sectors in Belfast.

3.8 Council officers will continue to engage and work with a wide range of partners to build on all the activity cited above, as part of our ongoing commitment to Belfast being recognised as a Safe City and ensure that this accreditation is retained on an annual basis going forward. Plans to communicate and promote the Council's success in attaining this accreditation are currently being developed.

Financial and Resource Implications

3.9 There are no Financial or Resource implications to the recommendations outlined above.

Equality or Good Relations Implications/Rural Needs Assessment

3.10 The work to raise awareness of Domestic Violence and Abuse, and support available, has been progressed through the Women's Steering Group as part of the Council's Gender Action Plan. The revision and development of the Council's Domestic Violence and Abuse

	in the Workplace policy was undertaken with engagement and support from a number of Section 75 groups and supports the Council's wider equality agenda.
4.0	Documents Attached
	None