

Report for: Cabinet, 15.11.16

Item number:

Title: Violence Against Women and Girls Strategy 2016-2026

Report

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Ward(s) affected: All

Report for Key/

Non Key Decision: Key decision

1. Describe the issue under consideration

Cabinet is asked to approve the 10 year Violence Against Women and Girls Strategy (2016-2026).

The Strategy sets out in detail our strategic approach to not just improving the health, safety and wellbeing of women and girls in the borough but so that they can have fulfilling lives.

2. Cabinet Member Introduction

- 2.1 Addressing violence against women and girls (VAWG) is listed in the Corporate Plan as a crucial part of our local partnership approach to improving health, safety and wellbeing in the borough.
- 2.2 As Cabinet Member for Communities, I support the development of the 10 year VAWG Strategy (2016-2026) which will support our aim of reducing the disproportionate impact of abuse on women and girls. The VAWG Strategy is a partnership plan and is reflective of the concerns of local residents, professionals and statutory and voluntary agencies across the borough. I welcome the introduction of four clear priorities and the desire to secure a targeted community led response to issues surrounding VAWG in Haringey.
- 2.3 I look forward to working with the VAWG partnership to deliver on our ambitions such as securing White Ribbon accreditation in 2017 and driving forward our overall vision of making Haringey a safer place for women and girls to live and work.

3. Recommendations

- 3.1 Cabinet is asked to consider and take into account the feedback from the consultation and the equalities impact assessment;
- 3.2 Cabinet is then asked to approve the Violence Against Women and Girls Strategy (2016-2026) and to support the future development of action plans that underpin the the work of the Strategy.

4. Reasons for decision

- 4.1 The Strategy sets out our 10 year ambitions (2016-2026) for addressing and preventing violence against women and girls in Haringey.
- 4.2 The Strategy covers four key priorities: developing a coordinated community response; prevention; support for victim/survivors and holding perpetrators accountable.
- 4.3 The Strategy has been developed in partnership with a wide range of statutory, voluntary and community organisations from across Haringey. We have utilised existing evidence around 'what works' in addressing and preventing violence against women and girls. We will ensure that we co-produce all of our action plans with communities and survivors to ensure that we deliver meaningful change.
- 4.4 We have consulted widely with partners and local residents over a 10 week period to ensure that we have ensured that our approach will work with all stakeholders across the borough (see 6.3).
- 4.5 There is an international, national and regional basis for working towards preventing and addressing violence against women and girls as well as working towards the local priority of 'a clean and safe borough' (see 6.1-6.2).
- 4.6 Violence against women and girls is a serious issue for this borough. Haringey has one of the highest rates of reported domestic abuse across London. In the rolling year to June 2016, there were 5,840 domestic incidents with 2,919 domestic abuse offences reported to the police, representing an 18% increase on the previous year. Haringey also has the second joint highest incident rate per 1000 population (22 per 1000) with Tower Hamlets and Lewisham; Barking and Dagenham has the highest with 27 per 1000. In the same period, 592 sexual offences were recorded which represents a nearly 10% increase in sexual offences from the previous 12 month period.

- 4.7 Violence against women and girls is estimated to cost the borough £27.6 million a year, which does not include the human and emotional costs of £47.6 million. Physical and mental health care are estimated to cost £8.3 million; Social Services £1.4 million, refuges and housing at £0.9 million and lost economic output as £9.2 million. Improving our response to addressing violence against women and girls through a strategic approach will improve women and girls lives and also reduce costs to Haringey.

5. Alternative options considered

- 5.1 We have considered two alternative options – (1) do not have a violence against women and girls strategy and (2) have a strategy but with different strategic objectives. These are set out below.

5.2 Alternative Option 1: Do not have a strategy.

- 5.2.1 We have considered the alternative approach of not having a violence against women and girls strategy. However, we believe that there are significant financial and social benefits to enhancing our partnership approach to ending violence against women and girls including:

- Reduction in duplication across directorates
- Reduction in costs to statutory services
- Adherence to statutory safeguarding legislation
- Increased potential for women and girls in Haringey

- 5.2.2 Although many of these benefits are currently unquantifiable, violence against women and girls is a key issue for Haringey services and having a strategic approach to ending violence against women and girls will have a positive financial and social implications.

- 5.2.3 Not having a violence against women and girls strategy will mean fragmented services for victim/survivors; duplication of effort across statutory services and voluntary sector partners; inefficiencies in use of resources and a lack of adherence to national and regional approaches will could impact significantly on our ability to attract external funding.

- 5.2.4 In addition, having a coordinated partnership strategy allows Haringey to comply with safeguarding duties including those set out in the Pan-London Adult Safeguarding policies and procedures as well as the Care Act 2014. It also ensures that we comply with the Pan-London Child Protection procedures as well as the provisions on safeguarding contained within the Children Act 1989 and 2004.

5.3 Alternative Option 2: Have a strategy but with different strategic objectives

- 5.3.1 We have considered having a strategy with different strategic objectives but believe that this would not be in the best interests of Haringey residents and professionals. This strategy has been widely consulted on, both during the development of the strategy and an official 10 week consultation on the draft strategy. None of the data collected during these two processes highlighted that the priorities were not the appropriate priorities; there was broad support for the 4 key strategic

objectives. Our proposed approach of having a strategy with the 4 priorities outlined above also fits with national and regional priorities set out in the Government's Violence against Women and Girls Strategy 2016-2019 and also the Mayor of London's 2013-2017 Strategy.

6. Background information

6.1 Local Context

- 6.1.1 The cross-cutting nature of the violence against women and girls agenda means that responsibility for tackling these issues cuts across a wide range of different agencies. Coordinating service provision and ensuring clear governance and accountability for this agenda is therefore a key challenge.
- 6.1.2 Addressing violence against women and girls (VAWG) forms part of our local partnership approach to improving health, safety and wellbeing in the borough. Tackling VAWG is a priority within the 2015-2018 Corporate Plan's *Clean and Safe* objective. The Community Safety Partnership (CSP) is accountable for tackling violence against women and girls with strategic oversight by the Violence Against Women and Girls Strategic Group which reports to the CSP. The Health and Wellbeing Board (HWB), Local Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB) and Safeguarding Adults Board (SAB) contribute to this agenda and ensure appropriate partner engagement.
- 6.1.3 In 2014/2015, a Scrutiny Review of Violence Against Women and Girls was undertaken by the Environment and Community Safety Panel. The Overview and Scrutiny Panel made a number of recommendations about developing the strategic approach to addressing and preventing violence against women and girls which were taken into account in the draft strategy.

6.2 National and Regional Context

- 6.2.1 Violence against Women and Girls (VAWG) is both a form of discrimination and a violation of human rights. The national and regional strategies have adopted the United Nations Declaration on Elimination of Violence against Women, which defines violence against women as:

'Any act of gender based violence that results in or is likely to result in physical, sexual or psychological harm or suffering to women [or girls], including threats of such acts, coercion or arbitrary deprivation of liberty' (1993, Article 1)

We have also adopted this definition but have taken account of the wide range of additional International, European human rights Declarations , Conventions and Protocols as well as national and international legislation.

The UN definition incorporates a wide range of abusive behaviours including physical, sexual, financial, emotional and psychological abuse.

It is important that Violence against Women and Girls (VAWG) is not seen as a series of incidents or assaults which an individual experiences. Violence against women and girls describes violent and oppressive patterns of behaviour and practises, which achieve power and control over women and girls. It impacts on the physical safety, health and emotional well-being of individuals and impacts on families, carers, children and the community as a whole.

6.2.2 *National Violence against Women and Girls Strategy*

The current Government published its 4 year 'Ending Violence Against Women and Girls Strategy 2016-2020' on the 8th March 2016. It builds upon the previous 2010 strategy, which was an update of the previous government's National Violence against Women and Girls Strategy. The new strategy re-focuses the efforts on the original four key areas from the 2010 strategy: prevention, provision of services, partnership working and pursuing perpetrators but also sets new outcomes of reduction of prevalence, match by increased reporting, prosecutions and convictions. Their vision is also one of earlier intervention and prevention as well as support for victim/survivors. The government has also ring-fenced nearly £80 million of funding up to 2015 for specialist VAWG support services, rape crisis centres as well as announcing the implementation in 2017 of a dedicated Service Transformation Fund.

6.2.3 *Regional Strategic Context*

In November 2013, the Mayor of London published a refreshed version of his strategy to end violence against women and girls. The Mayoral Strategy continued the five key objectives from the previous strategy, 'The Way Forward':

1. London taking a global lead to end violence against women
2. Improving access to support
3. Addressing the health, social and economic consequences of violence
4. Protecting women at risk
5. Getting tough with perpetrators.

The consultation on the new Strategy will be launched in early 2017.

6.3 Draft Strategy and Consultation

6.3.1 Between August and October 2016, a comprehensive consultation was undertaken across the borough to influence the development of the 10 year Violence Against Women and Girls Strategy (2016-2026).

6.3.2 The violence against women and girls consultation involved an online consultation with local residents and organisations working in Haringey; targeted focus groups with survivors, local residents and young people; individual interviews with key stakeholders and consultation through our local VAWG and professional networks.

6.3.3 A draft consultation strategy was developed with 4 key strategic objectives:

1. Developing a Coordinated Community Response
2. Prevention

- 3. Support for victim/survivors
- 4. Holding perpetrators accountable

6.3.4 The draft strategy was developed in partnership with a wide range of statutory, voluntary and community organisations from across Haringey. We utilised existing evidence around 'what works' in addressing and preventing violence against women and girls. We will ensure that we co-produce all of our action plans with communities and survivors to ensure that we deliver meaningful change.

6.3.5 We received 55 responses to the online and paper consultation; 53 took part in the focus groups and over we consulted with over 200 in our professional and local networks. We were able to capture demographic information for the majority of the respondents to the online and paper consultation and 29 of the respondents to the focus groups (10 were young people and 19 were women participating in the survivor focus groups. 5 professionals also took part in 2 additional focus groups where their demographic information was not captured.)

6.3.6 Demographics of consultation respondents:

6.3.6.1 Over the three different groups there were a wide range of ages – 90% of the young people who participated were under 18; 53% of the respondents to the online and paper questionnaire were aged between 26 and 45 and the median age for the survivor consultation was 34-39.

6.3.6.2 Across all groups, the majority of respondents identified as heterosexual – 95% in the survivor group, 100% in the young people group and 78% in the professional and local resident consultation. With the exception of the survivor consultation where 100% of participants were female, the gender split was almost 50% between female and male respondents.

6.3.6.3 Ethnicity for all 3 groups was also mixed although the professional and local resident group was the least mixed with 50% identifying as White British and 24% identifying as 'Any other Background' without specifying. 47% of those for whom we have the demographic information in the survivor consultation identified as White Other.

6.3.6.4 Disability figures were highest in the survivor consultation with almost a third identifying as having a disability. 12.7% in the professional and local residents' consultation had a disability and none of the young people identified as having a disability.

6.3.7 The executive summary of the Consultation Report is at Appendix 2 and the full Report will be available on-line. In summary, the consultation found that all respondents are supportive of our approach, including the 4 key priorities. The key element identified by all respondents was the crucial need for agencies across voluntary, community and statutory sectors to work closely with local residents and with survivors of abuse to design an approach that works across Haringey that can work towards a coordinated community response.

6.3.8 The key additional areas from the consultation which have shaped the final strategy were:

- The importance of education, particularly work in schools and other youth settings with young people.
- The importance of having a nuanced approach to the term 'community'. This is especially pertinent in cases of forced marriage and crimes committed in the name of 'honour' which are often committed in collusion with a particular 'community'.
- The importance of developing a range of communication campaigns covering a range of media, including increased presence on social media and in local print media.
- The need to develop work across sectors, including having a renewed focus on linkages between statutory and voluntary agencies
- Victim/Survivors need tailored, individualised support where they have a choice of services to access.
- The importance of focusing on support to older women; victim/survivors experiencing multiple disadvantage (homelessness, complex drugs and alcohol use, prostitution and mental health) as well as those with no recourse to public funds.

7. Contribution to strategic outcomes

- 7.1 The Violence Against Women and Girls Strategic Group reports to the Community Safety Partnership and focusing on domestic and gender based violence is a specific workstream within the 2013-2017 Community Safety Strategy.
- 7.2 The Violence Against Women and Girls strategy also contributes to Haringey's *Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2015-2018*, especially Priority 3: Improving Mental Health and Wellbeing.
- 7.3 Addressing and preventing violence against women and girls is a priority within the 2015-2018 Corporate Plan's *Clean and Safe* objective under which there is a specific objective around preventing violence against women and girls.
- 7.4 The Violence Against Women and Girls Strategy also contributes to delivering the Corporate Plan's *Outstanding for all* objective, Priority 1: *Enabling every child and young person to have the best start in life, with high quality education* and Priority 2: *Enable all adults to live healthy, long and fulfilling lives*.

8. Statutory Officers comments (Chief Finance Officer (including procurement), Assistant Director of Corporate Governance, Equalities)

8.1 Finance and Procurement

- 8.1.1 This report is consulting on a strategy, which would operate within whatever resources were available to support this area of work. The report is not seeking any additional funding.

8.2 Legal

- 8.2.1 The Council has voluntarily undertaken public consultation on the draft Strategy. As a consequence, there is a duty on the Council adhere to the common law consultation requirements. The consultation must take place at a time when the proposals are still at their formative stages. The Council must provide the consultees with sufficient information to enable them properly to understand the proposals being consulted upon and to express a view in relation to it. The information must be clear, concise, accurate and must not be misleading. The consultees must be given adequate time to consider the proposals and to respond. The consultation report in Appendix 2 sets out how the Council has discharged this common law duty.
- 8.2.2 The Council must give genuine and conscientious consideration to the responses received from the consultees during the consultation before making its final decision on the draft Strategy. The report at section 6.3 and Appendix 2 sets out the public responses to the consultation.
- 8.2.3 As part of its decision making process, the Council must have “due regard” to its equalities duties. Under Section 149 Equality Act 2010, the Council in exercise of its functions, must have “due regard” to the need to eliminate unlawful discrimination, advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a protected characteristic and those who do not, foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it in order to tackle prejudice and promote understanding. The protected characteristics are age, gender reassignment, disability, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation. The Council is required to give serious, substantive and advance consideration of what impact (if any) the draft Strategy would have on the protected group and what mitigating factors can be put in place. This exercise must be carried out with rigour and an open mind and should not be a mere form of box ticking. These are mandatory consideration. In line with its equalities duties, the Council have undertaken an Equality Impact Assessments (EQIA) of the proposals on the protected groups and are set out in Appendices 3 and at section 8.3 of the report together with the steps to mitigate the impact of the Strategy.
- 8.2.4 The responses to the consultation on the Strategy and the EQIA must be considered before Cabinet makes its decision on the proposals.

8.3 Equality

- 8.3.1 The Council’s equalities duties are set out above in paragraph 8.2.3. A full Equalities Impact Assessment has been carried out for this proposal - see EQIA in Appendix 3.

- 8.3.2 Violence against women and girls is a form of gender inequality. In the rolling year to June 2016, MOPAC data shows that women make up 76% of the victim/survivors in Haringey and 95.3% of victims referred to our high risk panel meeting (the multi-agency risk assessment conference) between April 2015 and March 2016 were female; 65% were from BME background; 1.8% were LGBT and almost 10% had a disability.
- 8.3.3 This strategy demonstrates our commitment to addressing the inequality issues faced by women and girls
- 8.3.4 There is a lack of data about certain protected characteristics. In mitigation, we have designed a new data recording tool which will allow us to collect information on all protected characteristics. We have also ensured that the monitoring framework for all newly commissioned services (post April 2016) include information on all the protected characteristics for referrals received and service users who engage with the services.

9. Use of Appendices

Appendix 1: Violence Against Women and Girls Strategy

Appendix 2: Violence Against Women and Girls Consultation Report
(Executive Summary)

Appendix 3: Equalities Impact Assessment

10. Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985

- 10.1 Environment and Scrutiny Panel (2015) *Scrutiny Project – Violence Against Women and Girls*, available at:
<http://www.minutes.haringey.gov.uk/documents/s80239/Item%2014%20VAWG%20FinRep%20Draft%203.pdf>

