



CABINET

17th April 2019

Subject Heading:

Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG) Strategy 2019- 2022

Cabinet Member:

Councillor Viddy Persaud, Cabinet Member for Public Protection and Safety

SLT Lead:

Caroline Bruce

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Policy context:

The Havering Community Safety partnership plan 2017-2020 was approved by Full Council on 12th July 2017.

Addressing Violence Against Women and Girls was identified as a key priority within the plan

Financial summary:

The strategy will be delivered through existing resources.

Is this a Key Decision?

Significant effect on two or more Wards

When should this matter be reviewed?

Crime and Disorder O&S reviewed the draft strategy on 11th September 2018.

For progress review in February 2020

Reviewing OSC:

Crime and Disorder O&S

The subject matter of this report deals with the following Council Objectives

Communities making Havering
Places making Havering
Opportunities making Havering
Connections making Havering

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SUMMARY

The Violence Against Women and Girls Strategy (VAWG) sets out the council's commitment to tackling all forms of violence against women and girls in Havering. It sets out clear priorities and a programme of work through a dedicated action plan.

Havering has a Mayor's Office for Policing and Crime (MOPAC) target to reduce repeat victimisation for domestic violence by 5% aligned to its London Crime Prevention Grant 2019-2021.

RECOMMENDATIONS

That Cabinet approve the VAWG strategy 2019-2022

REPORT DETAIL

- 1.1 In A Safer City for All Londoners: [The London] Police and Crime plan 2017-21, the Mayor set out his priorities for policing and crime reduction for his term in office. Tackling violence against women and girls (VAWG) is one of the three overarching priorities within that plan, and the Mayor subsequently published A Safer City for Women and Girls in spring 2018; setting out actions to tackle issues and improve services. The Council has a statutory duty under the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 to produce an annually refreshed community safety plan. Addressing violence against women and girls is a key priority within the Havering Community Safety Partnership, Partnership Plan 2017/18 to 2019/20. This is the second VAWG strategy for the Borough.
- 1.2 Havering has aligned its objectives with those set out in the Mayoral Violence against Women and Girls Strategy for London, and we have set the following aims:
 - Prevention and early identification of violence against women and girls
 - Protection and support all for those experiencing violence and abuse
 - Taking enforcement action against perpetrators, and ensuring that police and partners are supported in using their powers to full effect.
- 1.3 The work programme is set out in a dedicated action plan and is available in Appendix 1.
- 1.4 Consultation on the VAWG Strategy 2019-2022 took place with the Havering Community Safety Partnership on 18th July 2018 and 18th October 2018, Overview and Scrutiny on 11th September 2018 and with a

service user focus group facilitated by Havering Women's Aid over the summer of 2018.

- 1.5 The recent Annual Strategic Assessment reviewed crime data from the period October 2017 to September 2018. Havering experienced 2405 domestic abuse (DA) crimes during this period, an increase of 5.3 % when compared to the previous 12 months. The level of DA violence with injury for this period was 665 crimes. The level of DA incidents, which refers to incidents between partners or family members where the police have been called but no crime has been committed, however has reduced by 309 incidents, or 7.1%
- 1.6 A Domestic Violence Multi Agency Risk Assessment Conference (DVMARAC) is a victim focused information sharing and risk management meeting attended by all key agencies, where high risk cases are discussed. The role of the MARAC is to facilitate, monitor and evaluate effective information sharing to enable appropriate actions to be taken to increase public safety. In a single meeting, MARAC combines up to date risk information with a timely assessment of a victim's needs and links those directly to the provision of appropriate services for all those involved in a domestic abuse case: victim, children and perpetrator.
- 1.7 In Havering, the MARAC is held every 3 weeks, chaired by a detective inspector from the East Area BCU Safeguarding team. From 1st January 2018 to 31st December 2018, there were 339 cases referred to the MARAC. In 325 cases the victim was female and in 14 cases the victim was male. Nine of the victims were aged 17 or below. There were 505 children identified as being part of the 339 households. Four cases involved individuals aged 17 or below as perpetrators of domestic abuse.
- 1.8 A number of services to support victims of domestic abuse are available in the Borough:
 - Refuge provision: - Havering Women's Aid are commissioned to provide refuge space and floating support to women fleeing violence. The refuge provides space for 23 women and their children.
 - Domestic abuse advocacy project: - Havering Women's Aid provides advocacy support to victims of domestic abuse. Victims can contact the service directly to receive advice and support Monday to Friday. They offer floating support, group support and 1-2-1 counselling is also available on 01708 728759. This service is funded to March 2021.
 - Men only service: - MENDAS is an organisation based in Havering that can offer support to male victims of domestic violence. They offer floating support and 1-2-1 counselling. This service is funded to March 2021.
 - Pan London Independent Domestic Violence Advocate (IDVA) service: - The Mayor's Office for Policing and Crime (MOPAC) fund 3 IDVAS in Havering. They are co-located in Romford Police Station, Queens Hospital (Maternity and A&E) and Children's Services to provide ongoing

support to high risk victims of domestic abuse. This service is currently being recommissioned by MOPAC and will be aligned to the Tri-Borough BCU going forward.

- Solace Women's Aid:- Funded through the London Councils grant scheme, Solace Women's Aid provide support groups and counselling through Havering's Children's Centres

- 1.9 The VAWG Strategy is to be delivered over a three-year period. The action plan will be refreshed annually to take into account emerging trends, or developments in legislation or working practices. This Strategy will be implemented and monitored by the VAWG Strategic Group which reports directly to the Havering Community Safety Partnership. The strategic group will also have oversight of the Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conference (MARAC). Progress will be reported annually to the Crime and Disorder Overview and Scrutiny Group.

REASONS AND OPTIONS

Reasons for the decision:

- 2.1 The Council and other statutory partners, including Health, have a duty under the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 to produce a plan to reduce crime and disorder within the borough for combatting the misuse of drugs, alcohol and other substances and for reducing re-offending. There is no apparent legal arising directly from this report.
- 2.2 The Havering Community Safety Partnership Plan 2018-19 identified violence against women and girls as a priority.
- 2.3 This plan is in line with sections 5 -7 of the Crime & Disorder Act 1998, Police and Justice Act 2006 and The Crime and Disorder (Formulation and Implementation of Strategy) Regulations 2011/1830.
- 2.4 The existing VAWG strategy ended in 2018.

Other options considered:

- 3.1 Not to develop a VAWG strategy. This was not considered a viable option due to the levels of domestic abuse in Havering and the risks posed by this to residents.

IMPLICATIONS AND RISKS

Financial implications and risks:

- 4.1 The Strategy will be delivered through existing resources. £60K has been secured from the MOPAC London Crime Prevention fund to fund a continuation of advocacy services from April 2019 to March 2021.
- 4.2 Refuge provision is commissioned through Adult Social Care.

Legal implications and risks:

- 5.1 The Havering Community Safety Partnership Plan 2018-19 identified violence against women and girls as a priority.
- 5.2 This plan is in line with sections 5 -7 of the Crime & Disorder Act 1998, Police and Justice Act 2006 and The Crime and Disorder (Formulation and Implementation of Strategy) Regulations 2011/1830. The Council and other statutory partners including Health have a duty under the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 to produce a plan to reduce crime and disorder within the borough for combatting the misuse of drugs, alcohol and other substances and for reducing re-offending. There is no apparent legal arising directly from this report.

Human Resources implications and risks:

6. No HR implications directly arising from this report

Equalities implications and risks:

- 7.1 The Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) under section 149 of the Equality Act 2010 requires the Council, when exercising its functions, to have due regard to:
 - (i) the need to eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under the Equality Act 2010;
 - (ii) the need to advance equality of opportunity between persons who share protected characteristics and those who do not, and;
 - (iii) foster good relations between those who have protected characteristics and those who do not.

Note: 'Protected characteristics' are: age, sex, race, disability, sexual orientation, marriage and civil partnerships, religion or belief, pregnancy and maternity and gender reassignment.

- 7.2 A full EIA has been completed as part of the refresh of the VAWG strategy and is available as Appendix 2.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

Appendices

1. *Havering VAWG Strategy 2019- 2022*
2. *Havering VAWG Strategy EIA 2018*