

<b>Item No.</b> 11.	<b>Classification:</b> Open	<b>Date:</b> 17 March 2015	<b>Meeting Name:</b> Cabinet
<b>Report title:</b>		Domestic Abuse Strategy	
<b>Ward(s) or groups affected:</b>		All	
<b>Cabinet Member:</b>		Councillor Michael Situ, Environment, Recycling, Community Safety and Volunteering	

**FOREWORD – COUNCILLOR MICHAEL SITU, CABINET MEMBER FOR ENVIRONMENT, RECYLING, COMMUNITY SAFETY AND VOLUNTEERING**

I am delighted to present to the cabinet the approval of the domestic abuse strategy which is one of our Fairer Future Promises. This strategy represents a bold and holistic new approach to tackling domestic abuse which has had a devastating effect on victims, their families and our wider community. It also reflects the input of our key partners the Safer Southwark Partnership, Southwark Health and Well Being Board, Southwark Safeguarding Adults Board and Southwark Safeguarding Children’s Board who have made it a shared priority. Working in a multi-agency partnership remains the most effective way to reduce Abuse at both an operational and strategic level and this is a theme that runs through this strategy.

More significantly however, this strategy reflects the views of local communities in the borough: survivors; support workers and voluntary and community groups’ representatives, as well as youth organisations. For at its core, the strategy builds communities’ capacity for early prevention by working closer with community leaders, advances greater intervention by health care practitioners, and challenges relevant agencies to take a sterner approach to enforcement. Above all, this strategy leaves it in no doubt that this council and its partners will not tolerate any form of domestic abuse.

**RECOMMENDATIONS**

1. That the cabinet approve the Domestic Abuse Strategy (DAS) set out in Appendix 1 and the Strategy Delivery Plan as set out in Appendix 2.

**BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

2. The Home Office defines domestic abuse as any incident or pattern of incidents of controlling, coercive, threatening behaviour, violence or abuse between those aged 16 or over who are, or have been, intimate partners or family members regardless of gender or sexuality. The abuse can encompass, but is not limited to psychological, physical, sexual, financial and emotional.
3. Controlling behaviour is a range of acts designed to make a person subordinate and/or dependent by isolating them from sources of support, exploiting their resources and capacities for personal gain, depriving them of the means needed for independence, resistance and escape and regulating their everyday behaviour.
4. Coercive behaviour is an act or a pattern of acts of assault, threats, humiliation and

intimidation or other abuse that is used to harm, punish, or frighten their victim.

5. Domestic abuse is recognised as a global challenge which persists in many countries around world. As highlighted by the World Health Organisation, domestic abuse: "...has devastating consequences for those... who experience it and a traumatic effect on those who witness it, particularly children" (WHO, 2005).
6. Addressing domestic abuse and its long term effects is a shared priority for the Safer Southwark Partnership (SSP) the Health and Well Being Board, the Southwark Safeguarding Adults Board and the Southwark Safeguarding Children's Board. This is joint strategy that has been developed in collaboration with board members and the agencies they represent.
7. In 2010 the council adopted the Southwark Violent Crime Strategy (SVCS) 2010-15, which included violence against women and girls as a specific priority. The key recommendation was that the provision for domestic abuse and sexual offences to be reconfigured to make it easier for victims to access the most appropriate level of support through one point of contact. As a result, in 2012, the council commissioned Southwark Advocacy and Support Service (SASS), a specialist domestic violence support service for the borough.
8. The service was further shaped and developed following the recommendations found in the September 2012 Report of the Housing, Environment, Transport & Community Safety Scrutiny Sub-committee into services relating to domestic violence and abuse in Southwark.

### **National context**

9. In March 2011 the Home Office published an action plan committing government to a wide range of actions to end violence against women and girls. This was followed by a number of progress reviews and update action plans in March 2012, 2013 and 2014. The action plan contains actions across areas like prevention, provision of services, partnership working, justice outcomes and reducing risk to victims. The most recent update has seen the roll out of programmes such as Clare's Law and domestic violence protection orders.
10. Domestic abuse and violence is not a criminal offence in itself. It is an aggravating factor for other types of crime. On the 18 December 2014, following consultation the Home Secretary announced plans to create a new domestic abuse offence of coercive and controlling behaviour. The maximum penalty for the new offence will be five years imprisonment and a fine.
11. Nationally each year, on average 1.2 million women suffer domestic abuse, around 330,000 women are sexually assaulted and there are around 700,000 male victims of domestic abuse.

### **Regional context**

12. London's Mayor launched a revised pan-London Strategy on Violence against Women and Girls (VAWG) in November 2013 to build upon the previous strategy "The Way Forward". The strategy outlines priorities around prevention, by working with young people and in schools, ensuring women and girls have access to protection, justice and support to rebuild their lives and hold perpetrators to account.

## **Southwark context**

13. In Southwark, domestic abuse has a significant impact upon our communities:
  - There are on average 2,200 – 2,400 recorded domestic abuse incidents a year.
  - 1,400 cases are referred to Southwark specialist advocacy service.
  - Over three quarters of victims are women over the age of 16 and four out of five of the perpetrators are male.
  - Two out of three victims of domestic abuse had children living with them.
  - 50 per cent of the abuse experienced is psychological abuse or controlling behaviour.
  - The number of victims who are 71 or older and report domestic abuse has trebled (7 to 20) between 2012/13 – 2013/14.
  - The number of victims aged 16-18 increased from 26 to 69 between 2012/13 – 2013/14.
  - 66 per cent victims of domestic abuse had children who regularly witnessed the abuse.
  - Respondents through our consultation on domestic abuse highlighted that the most common type of abuse experienced was verbal bullying leading to lack of self confidence.
  - 71 per cent of respondents of those who had experienced domestic abuse had told someone about it (a friend family member or GP).
  - During 2013/14 domestic abuse in same sex relationships accounted for around 2.5 per cent of SASS cases (Southwark data analysis 2014).
14. The council and its partners have recognised domestic abuse as a priority for over the last ten years, this culminated in a new reconfigured domestic abuse service being commissioned in April 2012.
15. In addition, the council funds a number of other services related to domestic abuse and violence against women and girls. These currently include:
  - A women's safety smart phone application.
  - A specialist sexual violence advocacy service.
  - A programme for adolescent perpetrators of abuse.
  - A service for young women associated with gangs.
  - A safe and healthy relationships school programme.
  - Refuge provision for victims fleeing domestic abuse.
16. The SSP operates a Multi Agency Risk Assessment Conference (MARAC) on a monthly basis. Officers from key agencies meet to coordinate a multiagency response discuss high risk cases. In 2013/14 there were 276 referrals to MARAC, 115 more cases than in 2012/13.

## **KEY ISSUES FOR CONSIDERATION**

17. Based on the evidence gathered through our consultation and research, the DAS sets out some key principles which will help to further develop the council's approach to address domestic abuse over the next five years. These are :
  - A clear statement of intent that abuse is not acceptable.
  - Challenging the normalisation of domestic abuse.

- Supporting those who need it, in the settings where they feel most comfortable seeking it and for survivors to thrive.
  - Taking tough action on those who perpetrate abuse.
  - Ensure agencies work together to get it right first time.
18. Domestic abuse is not just an issue that impacts those directly involved. The controlling, coercive and physical abuse can also affect family members, friends and local community into future generations and future relationships. The strategy recognises the importance of developing and adopting an intervention model that creates a multi agency approach, drawing on the good practice that already exists in each of priority areas such as Troubled Families, Substance Misuse, Mental Health or Child Sexual exploitation to name a few.
19. The strategy acknowledges that there has been considerable progress made in Southwark to support those who are affected by domestic abuse and take action against perpetrators. However, as the research and consultation findings have highlighted, there are further opportunities to provide a fully effective domestic abuse intervention programme focusing on:-
- prevention and awareness,
  - early identification and support and
  - enforcement
20. In light of these findings, the strategy recommendations are as follows:

#### **Prevention and awareness**

1. Aim to “Get it right first time” by providing support and clear referral pathways for friends and families including the expansion of existing Domestic Abuse Champions in community, faith and work based settings.
2. Establish a multi faceted education and support programme for young people.
3. Greater support for LGBT, people with disabilities and those from the diverse range of communities, who suffer abuse through establishing a multi faceted awareness raising programme.

#### **Early identification and support**

4. Achieve a greater balance between criminal justice, health and community support for those affected by domestic abuse.
5. Establish an integrated support service for complex cases of domestic abuse, as part of our approach to commissioned services.
6. Work with the Mayors Office for Policing and Crime to establish a consistent pan London approach to addressing domestic abuse.

#### **Enforcement**

7. Take action against persistent perpetrators by establishing a multi agency enforcement approach.
8. Improving the criminal justice process including lobbying for domestic abuse specialist court in Southwark.
9. Carry out an annual needs assessment review of domestic abuse.

## **Implementation**

21. Actions arising from the recommendations and set out in the Delivery Plan (Appendix 2) will be shared across the key agencies and monitored on a quarterly basis through the VAWG delivery group and annually through the SSP Executive Board.

## **Policy implications**

22. The Domestic Abuse Strategy will contribute to delivering the council's fairer future promises, as set out in the 2 July 2014 Cabinet report- Delivering a Fairer Future for all in Southwark. More specifically they will help to support fairer future promise 7- Safer Communities. It will also contribute to the fair future promise of making the borough a place to be proud of.
23. This strategy is also in line with the Safer Southwark Partnership's rolling action and commissioning plan, the council's Violent Crime Strategy 2010 –15 and the Children and Young People's Plan 2013–16, all of which recognise domestic abuse as a priority.

## **Community impact statement**

24. An equalities analysis has been carried out on the proposed DAS. No negative potential impacts have been identified.
25. Due to the nature of the DAS, the extensive consultation and the involvement of partners in this process, the proposals set out in this report are likely to create only positive impacts in relation to protected characteristics.
26. The equality analysis demonstrates that the policy shows no potential for discrimination.

## **Resource implications**

27. The above recommendations will be developed through existing resources and the re-commissioning of current provision.

## **Financial implications**

28. The overall costs of domestic abuse to the council are estimated to be in the region of £20m per annum. These costs arise from homelessness applications, children social care, specialist commissioned services, adult care services, mental health services and domestic homicide reviews.
29. The council currently invests £718,000 in specialist domestic violence and abuse (DVA) support services. The amount includes a grant of £91,000 from the Mayor's Office for Policing and Crime. These specialist services provide advice, support and accommodation to children and adults affected by this problem.
30. There are no additional financial implications introduced by this report. Any costs of implementing the proposed strategy will be contained within existing revenue budgets.

## **Legal implications**

31. Please see concurrent below.

## **Consultation**

32. The development of the strategy has involved extensive consultation through a variety of methods such as questionnaires, meetings and focus groups with representatives of various partnership boards, service providers and service user.
33. Domestic abuse is not an easy subject to talk about particularly for those who have experienced it first hand. The questionnaires were used as a helpful supplement to the on-going work officers have been doing on this subject. The questionnaire was promoted through the council's website and social media as well as the council's quarterly printed publication and council public meetings such as community councils. 45 questionnaires were received.
34. Recognising that domestic abuse is a complex issue the consultation programme also involved focus groups for both service providers and users along with consultation in a range of community settings where those supporting victims could engage in the process. This enabled officers to listen to and capture experiences and opinions first hand from a range of affected parties. To this end officers spoke to over 152 people including survivors, support workers key officers and elected members within the partnership.
35. The development of the strategy has been a collaborative process which has also involved extensive consultation with representatives of the Health and Well Being Board, the Southwark Safeguarding Adults Board and the Southwark Safeguarding Children's Board.

## **SUPPLEMENTARY ADVICE FROM OTHER OFFICERS**

### **Director of Legal Services**

36. This report seeks approval of the Domestic Abuse Strategy for 2015-2020 and the associated Strategy Delivery Plan. The legislative landscape for tackling domestic is set out under paragraph 11 of the Strategy document.
37. The Crime and Disorder Act 1998 (as amended) established Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnerships, now known as Community Safety Partnerships ("CSPs") in order to facilitate a multi-agency approach to the reduction of crime, substance abuse, anti-social behaviour, domestic abuse and re-offending.
38. The 1998 Act imposes statutory duties on those agencies (including local, police and fire and rescue authorities and the Probation Service) to form CSPs and work together to implement a strategy to tackle priority problems. In Southwark the CSP is called the Safer Southwark Partnership ("SSP").
39. The Police and Justice Act 2006 amended the partnership provisions of the 1998 Act to make CSPs a more effective resource, and imposed obligations on them to implement strategies to tackle, amongst other things, domestic abuse. The Crime and Disorder (Formulation and Implementation of Strategy) Regulations 2007 make provision as to the formulation and implementation of such strategies
40. Under the requirements of the 1998 Act and 2007 Regulations the SSP has

prepared a strategy to address domestic abuse in Southwark. In accordance with the co-operative duties of the 1998 Act the council must approve and implement strategies prepared by the SSP and must work with other responsible authorities to achieve implementation.

41. Under Part 3 of the council Constitution the approval of the new strategy is the responsibility of the Cabinet as the strategy may impact on a number of portfolios.
42. Paragraph 24 advises that an equality analysis has been carried out in order to inform the proposed strategy. This is an essential tool to assist local authorities to comply with their equalities duties and to make decisions fairly. In carrying out the analysis officers must have been mindful of the Public Sector Equality Duty prescribed by the Equality Act 2010 which requires proper consideration of the likely effect and impact of the decision on individuals and groups having a protected characteristic.
43. Some of the actions proposed as part of the strategy are specifically targeted at women and girls. This is reflective of the evidence available to the council that a significant proportion of victims are female. Section 158 of the Equality Act 2010 permits a limited range of positive action in cases where, amongst other things persons who share a protected characteristic (such as gender) suffer a disadvantage connected to that characteristic. In those circumstances action may be permitted which is a proportionate means of meeting their needs or enabling or encouraging them to overcome or minimise that disadvantage.
44. The new strategy should be reviewed as necessary in order to take into account the requirements of forthcoming legislation, notably the Children and Families Act 2014 and the Care Act 2014.

**Strategic Director of Finance and Corporate Services (FC14/054)**

45. The strategic director of finance and corporate services notes the strategy set out in this report and confirms that there are no direct additional financial implications arising. Officer time to implement this decision can be contained within existing resources.

**BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS**

Background Papers	Held At	Contact
None		

**APPENDICES**

No.	Title
Appendix 1	Domestic Abuse Strategy (circulated separately)
Appendix 2	Domestic Abuse Strategy Delivery Plan (circulated separately)
Appendix 3	Domestic Abuse Services in Southwark (circulated separately)

## AUDIT TRAIL

<b>Cabinet Member</b>	Councillor Michael Situ, Environment, Recycling, Community Safety and Volunteering	
<b>Lead Officer</b>	Deborah Collins, Strategic Director of Environment and Leisure	
<b>Report Author</b>	Eva Gomez, Safer Communities Team Manager	
<b>Version</b>	Final	
<b>Dated</b>	4 March 2015	
<b>Key Decision?</b>	Yes	
<b>CONSULTATION WITH OTHER OFFICERS / DIRECTORATES / CABINET MEMBER</b>		
<b>Officer Title</b>	<b>Comments Sought</b>	<b>Comments Included</b>
Director of Legal Services	Yes	Yes
Strategic Director of Finance and Corporate Services	Yes	Yes
Strategic Director Children and Adults' Services	Yes	No
<b>Cabinet Member</b>	Yes	Yes
<b>Date final report sent to Constitutional Team</b>		4 March 2015