

<b>Item No.</b> 21.	<b>Classification:</b> Open	<b>Date:</b> 13 June 2023	<b>Meeting Name:</b> Cabinet
<b>Report title:</b>		Report of the Housing and Community Safety Scrutiny Commission: Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG), Hate Crime and Domestic Abuse	
<b>Ward(s) or groups affected:</b>		All	
<b>From:</b>		Housing and Community Safety Scrutiny Commission	

## RECOMMENDATIONS

1. That cabinet note the recommendations from the housing and community safety scrutiny commission arising from the scrutiny review of housing repairs service, council leaseholders and empty homes in the Borough of Southwark, paragraphs 6 to 8.
2. That cabinet request that the relevant cabinet member reports back to cabinet on the recommendations within eight weeks.

## BACKGROUND INFORMATION

3. At its first meeting on 22 July 2022, the housing and community safety scrutiny commission agreed to focus on trust and visibility of policing in Southwark, beginning with the workings of Safer Neighbourhood Teams and including the local response to hate crime and Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG) in Southwark. It was after the conclusion of the commission's meetings for the 2022-3 municipal year that the report of the review into the standards of behaviour and institutional culture in the Metropolitan Police Service, undertaken by Baroness Louise Casey, was published; many of the findings of the review echo the concerns raised by the commission.
4. The commission received the following evidence relating to its community safety remit:
  - At its meeting on 12 July 2022, a verbal update from the Chief Inspector in charge of Southwark's Safer Neighbourhood Teams at London Metropolitan Police on the overview and structure of neighbourhood policing, partnership arrangements and community policing.

- At its meeting on 15 February 2023, an interview with the cabinet member for community safety on Southwark's Community Safety Plan, the impact of the change of domestic abuse service providers from Solace to Refuge, and the projected impact of the cost-of-living crisis on Southwark council housing tenants with regards to effects on Domestic Abuse (DA) and Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB)
  - At the same meeting, an interview with the outgoing Commander for the Central South Basic Command Unit on trust and visibility of policing in the community.
5. The commission considered and agreed the set of recommendations at its meeting on 13 April 2023. The rationale and commission recommendations are set out in paragraphs 6 to 8.

### **KEY ISSUES FOR CONSIDERATION**

Set out below are the recommendations of the housing and community engagement scrutiny commission.

6. The commission noted with approval that the council has set up the 'Through Her Eyes' campaign to tackle misogyny and VAWG and has committed to upgrade street and estate lighting. In addition, the commission heard that the council plans to have 40 safe havens for women across the borough and to use the changing of service providers as an opportunity to get feedback from the community and voluntary sector to improve its delivery of community safety services. However, it is important that the council delivers on its public commitment to set up a Women's Safety Centre to ensure targeted and visible services and support for Southwark's women and girls at risk of VAWG, especially in the wake of high-profile instances such as the murders of Sarah Everard and Sabina Nessa.

Recommendation 1 - That the Cabinet prioritise the delivery of the Women's Safety Centre, aiming to launch a consultation with relevant voluntary sector organisations in the borough within the year 2023-24.

7. The commission observed with concern that Southwark has high levels of reported homophobic crime, at 18 % compared to the national level of 13%; it heard that this was mainly due to the presence of a larger LGBTQ community. The commission believes that it is important to understand how often Southwark residents are targeted on the basis of a protected characteristic, and notes that that the incidence of crime triggered by misogyny is not known, because such offences are not legally recognised as hate crimes in the first place. Engagement and information-sharing with voluntary sector service providers would allow the council to build an enhanced picture of hate crime on the ground, including misogynistic hate crime that is not currently recorded as such by the police. This data should be considered alongside existing hate crime data in order to establish cross-cutting issues such as targeted attacks on women from the LGBTQ

community, BAME women or women with disabilities, and should be reviewed annually to maintain its accuracy.

Recommendation 2 - That the cabinet member for community safety work with the Metropolitan Police, Mayor's Office for Policing and Crime and the voluntary sector to establish enhanced collection of data on misogynistic hate crime and non-hate crime incidents, including how this intersects with the other protected characteristics in the borough of Southwark, and that the data from these reports is reviewed annually.

8. The commission heard that the Metropolitan Police is looking at ways in which they could identify and root out predatory police officers such as the murderer of Sarah Everard. The report of Baroness Casey's review into the standards of behaviour and internal culture of the Metropolitan Police Service, published after the conclusion of the commission's meetings for the year, found that the Met is failing to protect women and children and that there is institutional racism, sexism and homophobia inside the organisation in terms of how officers and staff are treated, and outside the organisation in terms of how communities are policed. The Baroness also noted in her report that the Metropolitan Police does not routinely collect feedback from vulnerable victims of sexual and domestic crimes on their experience and the service they received.

Recommendation 3 - That the cabinet member for community safety liaise with the Metropolitan Police, Mayor's Office for Policing and Crime and the voluntary sector to ensure that feedback is routinely collected from victims of domestic and sexual violence about their experiences of the police, in line with the findings of the Baroness Casey Review.

9. It is for the cabinet to decide whether or not to accept the scrutiny commission's recommendations.
10. Overview and scrutiny procedure rule 15.3 requires the cabinet to consider and provide a written response to the report within two months.

## BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

Background Papers	Held At	Contact
Housing and Community Safety Scrutiny Commission agenda and minutes- 12 July 2022	Southwark Council Website	Amit Alva <a href="mailto:Amit.alva@southwark.gov.uk">Amit.alva@southwark.gov.uk</a>
<b>Link (please copy and paste into browser):</b> <a href="https://moderngov.southwark.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CIId=605&amp;MIId=7431&amp;Ver=4">https://moderngov.southwark.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CIId=605&amp;MIId=7431&amp;Ver=4</a> (see item 4)		
Housing and Community Safety Scrutiny Commission agenda and minutes - 15 February 2023	Southwark Council Website	Amit Alva <a href="mailto:Amit.alva@southwark.gov.uk">Amit.alva@southwark.gov.uk</a>
<b>Link (please copy and paste into browser):</b> <a href="https://moderngov.southwark.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CIId=605&amp;MIId=7435&amp;Ver=4">https://moderngov.southwark.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CIId=605&amp;MIId=7435&amp;Ver=4</a> (see item 5 & 6)		
Baroness Casey Review	Met Police Website	
<a href="https://www.met.police.uk/SysSiteAssets/media/downloads/met/about-us/baroness-casey-review/update-march-2023/baroness-casey-review-press-notice.pdf">https://www.met.police.uk/SysSiteAssets/media/downloads/met/about-us/baroness-casey-review/update-march-2023/baroness-casey-review-press-notice.pdf</a>  <a href="https://www.met.police.uk/police-forces/metropolitan-police/areas/about-us/about-the-met/bcr/baroness-casey-review/">https://www.met.police.uk/police-forces/metropolitan-police/areas/about-us/about-the-met/bcr/baroness-casey-review/</a>		

## APPENDICES

No.	Title
None	

## AUDIT TRAIL

<b>Lead Member</b>	Councillor Ellie Cumbo, Chair, Housing and Community Safety Scrutiny Commission	
<b>Lead Officer</b>	Everton Roberts, Head of Scrutiny	
<b>Report Author</b>	Amit Alva, Scrutiny Officer	
<b>Version</b>	Final	
<b>Dated</b>	1 June 2023	
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<b>CONSULTATION WITH OTHER OFFICERS / DIRECTORATES / CABINET MEMBER</b>		
<b>Officer Title</b>	<b>Comments Sought</b>	<b>Comments Included</b>
Assistant Chief Executive - Governance and Assurance	No	No
Strategic Director of Finance	No	No
<b>Cabinet Member</b>	No	No
<b>Date final report sent to Constitutional Team</b>	1 June 2023	