

<b>Item No.</b> 16.	<b>Classification:</b> Open	<b>Date:</b> 5 December 2023	<b>Meeting Name:</b> Cabinet
<b>Report title:</b>		Gateway 0 - Strategic Options Assessment Domestic Abuse and Gender Based Violence Services	
<b>Ward(s) or groups affected:</b>		All	
<b>Cabinet Member:</b>		Councillor Evelyn Akoto, Health and Wellbeing	

## **FOREWORD – COUNCILLOR EVELYN AKOTO, CABINET MEMBER FOR HEALTH AND WELLBEING**

The tragic events over the last two years has shown there is a need for stronger responses and to intervene earlier against all forms of Violence against Women & Girls and Domestic Abuse. The council need to ensure all survivors get the support they need. One of our highest priorities as a council is to do everything possible to keep women safe.

In Southwark, 61% of women have experienced harassment in public places, there are almost five thousand reports of Domestic Abuse incidents reported to police each year. Safelives, report only 1 in 5 survivors ever call the police, there are also significant inequalities in who report incidents, seek and subsequently access support. In Southwark most people seeking help locally are women aged 25 to 50 years. The Council should work towards providing services to meet the needs of everyone regardless of protective characteristics.

Every Domestic Homicide is one too many, and too many victims are older and for different reasons have not reported incidents and accessed the support currently available. This is not dissimilar to other parts of the country. Although, in Southwark tackling, stopping and preventing Violence against Women and Girls and all forms of Domestic Abuse are a high priority which is why services and how they are developed are fundamentally important to the council. Under the council's contribution, the commissioning of these services would not require the approval of Cabinet. However, by bringing this report to Cabinet it demonstrates both the importance placed on this area as a priority and these services for people impacted by violence and abuse who are some of the most vulnerable residents living in very high risk situations.

The council's current commissioned provider and wider service offer provides high quality provision. However, the numbers of people experiencing all forms of violence and abuse are too high, the council are aware of the trend of escalating risk in relation to domestic abuse cases and too many survivors returning to unsafe relationships. More needs to be done to address the abusive and violent behaviours of perpetrators, safely intervening earlier to prevent abuse. There are huge

inequalities in terms of people accessing services, with too much focus on rehousing survivors as a primary focus without tackling offending behaviour.

This report and approach seeks to find a new partner to work alongside the council to develop innovative solutions to tackle these high risk incidents of violence and abuse as complex issues, including exploring how renowned models internationally could work within a Southwark context.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

1. That Cabinet approves this Strategic Options Assessment for delivery of the Domestic Abuse and Gender Based Violence Services for Southwark Council and notes the next steps set out in this report.
2. That Cabinet delegates the decision to approve the Gateway 1 procurement strategy for the Domestic Abuse and Gender Based Violence Services to the Strategic Director for Environment, Neighbourhoods and Growth, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Community Safety.

## **BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

3. Reducing Violence against Women and Girls (VAWG) including domestic abuse is a key priority for the council and the statutory Community Safety Partnership. In 2015, Southwark developed a five year Domestic Abuse (DA) Strategy. In 2019, this was replaced with a five year VAWG Strategy in recognition of the need to deliver a partnership response to all areas of gender based violence, not only domestic abuse. These include harmful practices such as female genital mutilation (FGM) and honour based violence, as well as sexual harassment and stalking.
4. Cabinet has committed to the development of a Women Safety Centre by June 2026, and its development will need to be considered as a vehicle to support the delivery of a newly commissioned service for those experiencing Domestic Abuse along with exploring other forms of support for VAWG services.
5. The Southwark council VAWG programme has been refocused to include more public realm safety in the aftermath of tragic murders of women in public spaces. For Southwark, this has included the development of Safe Spaces and Safe Havens, the Women's Safety Charter and Women's Safety in the Night Time Economy and has resulted in a more place-based approach for both women and girls. Through the council's work on women's safety, it developed a ground breaking misogyny campaign targeted at the behaviour of young men which has been made available to all secondary schools both in Southwark, across London and in youth provision in Southwark.
6. Successive council commissioned services in Southwark have focused on domestic abuse and sexual violence services, with a focus on survivors more so than on addressing perpetrator behaviour and with no wider VAWG service support. This is not dissimilar to other local authorities and provides the rationale for why the council is more informed about the need and demand for

Domestic Abuse services. Further to this, demographic data from service delivery shows that a high number of survivors are females between 25 and 50 and national research shows that anyone can experience Domestic Abuse so there is a need when considering future commissioning, how a wider demographic can be encouraged to seek support.

7. The Southwark Community Safety Partnership Strategic Needs Assessment details that Southwark has one of the highest police reported rates of domestic abuse offences in London. There is a need to proactively try to prevent and reduce this number by identifying people at risk of experiencing domestic abuse at the earliest opportunity, engaging them through an early intervention and prevention approach, whilst continuing to provide specialist services to vulnerable people already experiencing domestic abuse.
8. Local residents also have access to other VAWG and DA services across the borough commissioned directly by Hospital Trusts, London Councils grants, Mayor's Office for Police and Crime and the Home Office. These are mainly delivered by the Community & Voluntary Sector and provide both additional capacity and more targeted services for diverse and seldom heard voices.
9. Since the development of the VAWG strategy in 2019, the landscape has changed significantly. The COVID-19 pandemic saw significant increases in demand and risk. Although demand levels appear to have returned to pre-pandemic levels, the way that survivors seek support and how the council now deliver domestic abuse services has changed, specifically with the requirement for face to face contact and increase in requests for online engagement and support. All of this demonstrates the need for flexibility. This has been further compounded by the cost of living crisis which, in turn, has seen changes to how and which survivors access support.
10. As a response to the changing nature of support required the council developed a virtual offer of support to bring wider access to a range of support and advice in one place, via the council's website.

#### National Context

11. It is nationally recognised that anyone can be affected by domestic abuse, regardless of age, disability, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender reassignment, race, religion or belief. In addition, domestic abuse can manifest itself in different ways within different communities. Please see Appendix 1 Domestic Abuse and VAWG definitions.

#### Southwark Context

12. During 2021-2022, 4667 Domestic Abuse incidents were reported to have taken place in Southwark and were subsequently recorded by the Metropolitan Police. The Southwark Domestic Abuse Multi-agency Risk Assessment Conference (MARAC), which reviews the highest risk cases, for the period of

2021-22 received 599 referrals, 632 children were recorded within the total number of referrals received. Please see Appendix 2 for further information.

### Previous Council Domestic Abuse Provision

13. The council has previously commissioned the delivery of specialist support services for people impacted by Domestic Abuse. Solace Woman's Aid delivered Survivor Advocacy and Support Services between 2015 and spring 2023. In February 2023 the Refuge Safe Accommodation contract was widened to include all delivery of council commissioned DA specialist support services for Southwark residents. Please see Appendix 3 for further information.

### **Finance**

14. The total annual expenditure for the Southwark DA service is £872,556. Of which £708,353 funds the main service and £164,203 funds the safe accommodation element. Of the total expenditure £221,680 is grant secured until March 2025.

## **KEY ISSUES FOR CONSIDERATION**

### **Future service requirements and outcomes**

15. It is believed that new, collaborative ways of working and transformational service delivery will benefit residents at risk of and/or impacted by DA, aiming to include:
  - a) **Integrated Specialist Prevention and Support Services**  
Co-designed, co-produced and co-located with specific emphasis from victims and survivors.
  - b) **Accessible Victim/Survivor Referral Pathway's**  
Considering whole families, which lead to high quality, person-centred, appropriate specialist support services which are easy to navigate for all acknowledging and responding to intersectionality.
  - c) **Effective Needs-Led Services**  
Striving to meet the needs of all victims/survivors and their families working towards empowering people to create positive change.
  - d) **Service Delivery in Community Settings**  
Suitable for Southwark communities and removing barriers to accessing support.
  - e) **Zero Tolerance to all forms of Gender Based Violence**  
Acknowledging that violence against all genders is a violation of an individual's human rights. Increase victim/survivor safety by challenging

perpetrator behaviours through enforcement and appropriate interventions.

- f) Equality and Diversity**  
Tailoring strategies and service delivery actions with regard to specific issues faced by different groups aiming to equal outcomes for all.
  - g) Consistent Effective Communication strategy and plan**  
Wide ranging delivery formats, reflective imagery, publicity, including service delivery referral pathways to specific specialist support.
16. Future provision will need to replace the existing Domestic Abuse contract, both accommodation and support services, and will be the council's key delivery vehicle for supporting those experiencing all forms of domestic abuse with a dual focus on both support for survivors and addressing the behaviour of perpetrators.
  17. Preliminary research identified that there is merit in the consideration of the adoption of a wider safety provision to tackle domestic abuse including principles of the Dutch "Oranje Huis" model, to provide a combination of Domestic Abuse support services aligned with risk management, aiming to provide services collectively under one roof, to improve support offered from the earliest stage possible.
  18. Currently Southwark residents also have access to other Domestic Abuse services largely delivered by the Community and Voluntary Sector and funded externally from the Council. Any future service will need to be developed to maximise the strength of this wider local infrastructure and offer.

## **Policy Implications**

19. There are statutory duties and legislative measures that provide national and regional frameworks and initiatives aiming to promote awareness, protect victims and survivors and prioritise safety, provide specialist support victims and survivors and reduce Domestic Abuse and VAWG in London and England. See Appendix 4 for further information.
20. Violence against Women & Girls, including Women Safety, is a key strategic priority for the Southwark Community Safety Partnership, as identified through the latest Community Safety Strategic Needs Assessment, 2023. The next steps will involve refreshing the current strategy to ensure that it includes women safety within the public realm and underpins the key related recommendations as set out in the Baroness Casey Review 2023.<sup>1</sup>
21. Domestic Abuse is also a joint priority for both the Southwark Children's Partnership and the Adult Safeguarding Board. Southwark Council colleagues have been working closely across this wider partnership space, to support the production of a strategic needs assessment which will set out in more detail

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<sup>1</sup> [BARONESS CASEY REVIEW Final Report \(met.police.uk\)](#)

data and insight along with the survivor's voice to shape future strategic intentions.

22. Integrated Care Boards and NHS London who are also part of these partnerships have signed up to six core pledges set out by the Mayor of London to tackle misogyny, sexual harassment and violence against women and girls through their services and in health environments. This include:
  - Recognising all forms of violence against women and girls in everything we do
  - Embedding action to end perpetration of VAWG
  - Working together to actively tackle VAWG
  - Strengthening work based safety
  - Promoting a collaborative learning environment
  - Ensuring an anti-misogynistic environment.
23. There is an identified provider market of voluntary sector and charitable organisations of varying scale and size with the requisite experience, knowledge and skills to deliver effective, high-quality, safe services in this field. Current providers operate nationally and others within specific geographic areas based on funding allocation. The sector as a whole has seen significant funding reduction and demonstrable impact on frontline delivery, which means there is a strong likelihood that this will have a further detrimental impact on market interest in tendering for future contracts, with a possible resulting outcome of the council not receiving any tender submissions.
24. Market knowledge has raised awareness that some London boroughs have recently encountered difficulties in attracting bids when tendering for these services. There are identified sector wide staff shortages which are impacting on service provision throughout the country. Over the last year, specialist providers have reported challenges with recruitment and retention of staff due to low rates of pay being insufficient for staff due to the current UK cost of living crisis. Specialist providers are strongly considering the financial implications before submitting tender bidding applications. As part of market testing, the council will explore this and its implications.
25. Specialist providers are experiencing the impact of the current UK cost of living crisis, in terms of premises and associated running costs and increased utilities and energy bills, combined with experienced staff leaving the sector in order to remove themselves from in work poverty. These factors may negatively impact on the frontline delivery.
26. Current market knowledge conveys that a majority of London boroughs do not deliver Domestic Abuse Services in house. This due to a number of reasons, although specifically as these services include independent advocacy which potential service users don't associate a public body such as a council having.

### **Strategic service delivery options and assessment**

27. The following options have been considered for the future delivery of the service as set out in the following paragraphs.

## **In-Source**

28. Insourcing this service would require highly specialist professionals with the necessary expertise, governance, knowledge and skills that are not currently available within the council. Although, this is an option to consider through a short-term contract, the key challenge is the lack of perceived independency of a service directly delivered by the council as a public organisation. Trust and confidence are critical to the success of any Domestic Abuse provision and given the reluctance already of survivors to report to other authorities such as the police, there would be a significant risk to future effective delivery if this was insourced to the council. Engagement with survivors highlights that both confidentiality and independency is key to success in securing and maintaining trust in order to support recovery and resilience.

## **Shared Service Delivery with other boroughs**

29. At the time of writing, the nature of Domestic Abuse victim, survivor and perpetrator service delivery required for Southwark requires distinct and dedicated borough service delivery to ensure risks are managed. Further to this, officers are not aware of any neighbouring boroughs that are planning to re-commission their domestic abuse provision. Officers believe the most appropriate service delivery is achieved through commissioning an independent contract completely aligned with the borough's victim and survivor requirements. This will best serve residents and maximise the council's influence over the delivery of the provision.

## **Decommissioning Services/Do Nothing**

30. Taking a decision to decommission the services without commissioning a new contract is not viable and would result in the council being unable to meet the needs of existing and ongoing victim and survivor needs and would put vulnerable people at further risk of harm and serious danger for people experiencing and impacted by Domestic abuse. Further to this, commissioning a service will support the council delivering its various statutory functions as set in this report.
31. Taking a decision to do nothing, is not a viable option as the current contract is not meeting the needs and demands more widely of those experiencing domestic abuse and other forms of VAWG along with the legislative changes.

## **External Procurement, including voluntary sector/not for profit**

32. The service contract is currently delivered by a community and voluntary sector provider, with this sector commonly delivering these services across England as set in paragraph 23.
33. The current procurement legislation (Public Contracts Regulations 2015; PCR 2015) contain provision for a specific set of rules governing the procurement

of service contracts that tend to be of lower interest to cross border competition, including social, health and education services (formerly Part B services; PCR 2006), which is referred to as the Light Touch Regime (LTR). The services detailed in this report are considered to fall within the LTR.

34. LTR services provide authorities with significant flexibility to use any process or procedure they choose to run a competitive procurement process subject to compliance with Contract Standing Orders (CSO's); and the principles of public procurement with reference to the services detailed in this report:
  - a. **Public good** - procurement should support the delivery of strategic national priorities including economic, social, ethical, environmental and public safety.
  - b. **Value for money** - procurement should enable the optimal whole-life blend of economy, efficiency and effectiveness that achieves the intended outcome of the business case.
  - c. **Transparency** - openness that underpins accountability for public money, anti-corruption, and the effectiveness of procurements
  - d. **Integrity** - good management, prevention of misconduct, and control in order to prevent fraud and corruption.
  - e. **Fair treatment of suppliers** - decision-making by contracting authorities should be impartial and without conflict of interest and should not be discriminatory.
35. These principles will assist the council with designing a procurement process that provides assurance of high quality and best value, and are of high importance in contracting of effective services for vulnerable people with complex needs.
36. As outlined previously, the VAWG and Domestic Abuse landscape, including legislation and national focus, has rapidly and significantly changed in recent years and this has brought opportunities to review the council's current commissioned services portfolio for these services and to consider different models of service provision, including scope for the future.
37. The council could take a view to re-commission the future provision based on existing service specifications, but this would fail to incorporate legislative changes that affect access to Domestic Abuse services and would not build confidence that the proposed provision is fit for the future and representative of the best service offer or meeting the needs of all residents experiencing Domestic Abuse. There are significant opportunities for innovation in the future design of the service contract offer and officers consider it prudent to consider a procurement strategy option to allow the council to engage with the market sector as part of the tender process to identify an innovative solution to



borough requirements, and, to assess if the market sector is ready and able to deliver services in different ways.

38. A hybrid competitive dialogue process, under the LTR, provides a flexible procurement solution to the council's requirements for these services. There are a range of circumstances where competitive dialogue is appropriate, namely:
  - i. Where needs cannot be met without adaptation of readily available solutions;
  - ii. Where the services include design or innovative solutions.
39. It is considered that there is currently no solution available off-the-shelf and that readily available solutions (e.g. the current specification) will need adapting to meet requirements and that the solution involves a refreshed or innovative approach to reflect changing conditions and / or methods of delivery and this would give rise to the use of an LTR competitive dialogue model procurement route adapted to the councils needs with LTR provisions. The proposed procurement route intention is to follow a procurement process based on a competitive dialogue model as adapted to the council's requirements
40. Adopting this route will offer significant benefits to the council and bidders as it will provide the ability to have dialogue throughout the procurement process. This will be underpinned by a dialogue/negotiation strategy in order to ensure that best value money is optimised through the process as well as sourcing a high quality, fit for purpose future model.
41. For the council, the process will build confidence in our ability to ensure best value and minimise risk by testing solution deliverability, exploring options for innovation throughout the contractual term and building and testing the relationship between the council as commissioner and providers as suppliers, to ensure that this will be successful. For bidders, they will be provided with the opportunity to test the future relationship with the council, discuss areas of concern, understand future financial exposure and demonstrate to their own governance system that the proposed contract is deliverable and will provide a return on investment, an issue that is critical in a marketplace where suppliers are carefully considering the viability of contracts and opting to participate accordingly. A key element in the ambition to deliver transformation in this area will seeking to test the maturity and capability of the market in line with affordability.

### **Existing frameworks**

42. There are no existing frameworks for this type of service provision.

## Recommended Strategic Delivery Option

43. As indicated in paragraph 39, the recommended strategic delivery option is to procure an external service contract through a LTR competitive dialogue process, the full details of which will be outlined in a subsequent GW1 report. In summary, the proposed procurement route intention is to follow a procurement process based on a competitive dialogue model as adapted to the council's requirements and subject to approval of a preferred option, provision will be commissioned in alignment with the council's Fairer Future Procurement Strategy.
44. Detailed work will continue over the coming weeks to plan and prepare for the proposed procurement strategy and the details of this will be outlined in a GW1 report.

## Identified risks for the service and recommended strategic option

No.	Description of risk	Mitigating action	Risk rating (mitigated score)
R1	Poor procurement response could result in no providers submitting a tender for the services	Significant and ongoing soft market testing and market engagement opportunities planned prior to GW1 stage.	Low
R2	Delays to procurement would result in the need to extend the existing contract which ends August 2024 with a possible risk of legal challenge	A formal project board will be established to oversee the procurement timetable. A short extension to the current contract will be considered to align with the procurement approach. This is unlikely to attract a legal challenge.	Medium
R3	Resource/capacity risk – intended procurement route will be resource intensive	Clear project plan milestones, and identification of dedicated resource to delivery. This will include securing strategic procurement partner arrangements.	Low
R4	Market failure – an appropriately qualified and sized provider may be unable to tender for the services.	Extensive market engagement opportunities are planned prior to GW1. There are identified specialist providers that	Low

No.	Description of risk	Mitigating action	Risk rating (mitigated score)
		are likely to be interested in the opportunity.	
R5	Current service quality may decrease during the transitional period including staff resources	A plan will be put into place between the commissioners and provider for the 6 months prior to the end of the current contract which will consider realistic KPIs and milestones. Ongoing support will involve weekly telephone briefings, monthly and quarterly meetings.	Medium
R6	Current service provider does not wish to extend contract which is due to expire in August 2024	Initial discussions with provider on viability to extend have been explored. Contingency plan will be in place should other options be required.	Low
R7	Current market not ready for the transformation of service delivery required.	Transformation plan to be developed which sets out the scope for change which can be explored at market testing stage ahead of GW1.	Medium

### Key/Non Key decisions

45. This is a key decision.

### Next Steps

46. Following completion of this GW0 process a GW1 - Procurement Strategy will be prepared for the Domestic Abuse and Gender Based Violence Services in early 2024. Following this a GW2 document will be prepared.
47. This report is seeking that the future GW1 procurement strategy is approved by Strategic Director for Environment, Neighbourhoods and Growth, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Community Safety. Doing so will enable officers to progress the procurement of services and the development of a women safety centre in line with Cabinet timetables.
48. The council is carefully considering the resources that will be needed to support the process including project team make up and a senior responsible owner to guide the procedures. A competitive dialogue process is resource intensive and requires procurement specialism. Strategic procurement partner

arrangements will be secured through the council’s Contract Standing Orders pathway. Consideration is being given to developing an appropriate timetable and ensuring that robust recording keeping, data sharing and decision log and project, action management processes are in place to capture the details of the process as they emerge.

### **Service Delivery Project Plan (Key Decisions)**

<b>Activity</b>	<b>Complete by:</b>
Enter Gateway 0 decision on the Forward Plan	17/10/2023
DCRB Review Gateway 0	01/11/2024
CCRB Review Gateway 0	02/11/2023
CMT deadline	02/11/2023
CMT sign off	07/11/2023
Agenda planning	21/11/2023
Approval of Gateway 0: Strategic Options Assessment	05/12/2023
Scrutiny call in period and notification of implementing decision of gateway 0	13/12/2023
Current contract end date	06/08/2024

### **Community, equalities (including socio-economic) and health impacts**

#### **Community impact statement**

49. The council’s VAWG strategy 2019–2024 clearly shows a need for provision of domestic abuse services to meet the needs of Southwark residents in this regard and there will be a focus through the service design and testing process to ensure that people affected by domestic abuse are able to access and receive the right level of support at the right time when it is needed.
50. VAWG and Domestic abuse occurs across the whole of society. Women and girls are disproportionately affected, however, the risk and protective factors are different for everyone. As part of the new service model developmental process, consideration will be given to access and eligibility criteria for the service provision in line with legislation, equality impact assessment and needs assessment.

#### **Equalities (including socio-economic) impact statement**

51. There are well established links between VAWG, domestic abuse and socio-economic factors. Women are disproportionately affected by domestic abuse and are also more likely to be financially dependent upon another person or the state, which is driven by a range of factors. Often, the precarious economic

position that many women experience has a direct impact on their safety due to remaining at the same address as the perpetrator upon whom they are financially dependent and this situation has been compounded by the current cost of living crisis.

52. An inter-related range of structural socio-economic factors, including poverty and inequality are experienced by many people experiencing domestic abuse. Domestic Abuse occurs across all income brackets, however, there is some direct association between domestic abuse and poverty where vulnerabilities of survivors and exposure to abuse can be significantly increased due to a poor, unsafe living situations, and the ability to leave is sometimes reduced for victims and survivors who may become financially poorer if they leave the relationship.
53. Women in low income households are three and a half times more likely to report Domestic Abuse than women in households with higher income levels, abuse often includes economic abuse, and coercive control of finances (97% of victims), and financial exploitation (87%) and victim sabotage (89%). Additionally, financial insecurity can contribute to the impact on decision-making to leave abusive relationships, particularly where there are dependent children in the home.
54. Economic abuse is often less visible to professionals, a form of abuse that involves the perpetrator exerting economic power and control over the victim in a variety of ways including using coercion and threats, intimidation, use of emotional abuse and isolation, denial and blaming, using children, and male privilege.
55. Some groups of women experiencing domestic abuse, including those with protected characteristics and especially women with disabilities, are even more disproportionately impacted due to possessing fewer resources as they may not be able to sustain employment along with benefit reductions which have made it increasingly difficult to have enough money to live on.
56. Financial and economic abuse impacts on older survivors too, perpetrators controlling finances, restricting access to financial information and/or new banking apps / technology, accessing money, withholding money and using it without consent and refusing to pay it back. Abuse of financial power over joint finances, exaggerating care and support needs and obtaining power of attorney.
57. Women with no recourse to public funds are also vulnerable to domestic abuse from an economic perspective as their options if they leave are even worse as they cannot access state support and there are a reduced number of services that are able to support them due to their status. Language and stigma can be a barrier to seeking help or the so called shame of bring dishonour to families.
58. Services for male victims and survivors are often embedded within female dominated services and can present as significant barriers for men in accessing services. It is worthwhile noting that in the main, refuge spaces are

single sex spaces, provided for women and women survivors with children, including boys up to the age of 14 years old.

59. A service delivery offer responsible for responding to the needs of male survivors should be appropriate and men should not feel stigmatised, or their experiences minimised.
60. People identifying as LGBT+ victims are sometimes threatened with being 'outed' or have concerns about homophobia when trying to access services and maybe apprehensive about accessing support or the support being inappropriate.
61. Pursuant to section 149 of the Equality Act 2010, due regard has been given to the Council's decision-making processes to the need to:
  - a) Eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation or other prohibited conduct.
  - b) Advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and those who do not.
  - c) Foster good relations between those who share a relevant characteristic and those that do not share it.
62. An Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) was undertaken in 2019 in consideration of the development of the VAWG Strategy. This has been reviewed and updated in January 2022 as part of the developmental work for the recommissioning of domestic abuse services. The findings of the EQIA 2022 will be used to inform considerations around the development of the future service model and how it will maximise engagement with different groups in order to reduce risk and harm. The 2022 EQIA (Appendix 5) will be reviewed and refreshed subject to any new or emerging themes or relevant health information as part of the recommissioning process/cycle and form part of the GW1 report.
63. The health impact of domestic abuse is well researched and is evidenced throughout the VAWG Strategy and this GW1 report. SafeLives summarises a range of health impacts as follows:
  - a) Number of people murdered by partner
  - b) Number of people that commit suicide
  - c) 1 in 5 high-risk victims reported A&E attendance as a result of injuries sustained in the year before receiving help.

Victims experience a range of long-term physical health conditions associated with abuse including asthma, bladder and kidney infections, cardiovascular disease, fibromyalgia, chronic pain, central nervous system disorders, gastrointestinal disorders, migraines and headaches, and gynaecological disorders with associated reproductive consequences.

64. At least a fifth (18%) of children living in homes where domestic abuse is present are injured as a result of the abuse.
  - a) 40% of high-risk victims report having mental health issues;
  - b) 16% of victims report thoughts or attempts of suicide as a result of the abuse, and 13% report self-harm.
65. Victims and survivors can experience a range of psychological responses to abuse, including anxiety, depression, suicidal thoughts and behaviour, lower self-esteem, inability to trust others, flashbacks and sleep disturbances, and can be at an increased risk of experiencing acute responses to trauma such as post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD).
66. Families known to children's services are significantly more likely to have disclosed complex needs, including drug misuse (6% vs 2%), alcohol misuse (8% vs 3%) and/or mental health issues (36% vs 26%), compared to families with children who are not known to children's services. However, it should be noted that many victims do not disclose these needs, as identified by Safe Lives' report 'Cry for Health', resulting in under-representation of true prevalence. Where there are children in the family, this can be an added barrier to disclosing both domestic abuse and other support needs.
67. Overcoming these barriers to disclosure and understanding the full range of experiences within the household is vital to supporting children affected by domestic abuse. Adverse childhood experiences (ACEs), such as being exposed to domestic abuse or substance misuse in the home, have been found to have an impact on long term health and behavioural outcomes, and a combination of ACEs can increase this risk even further.
68. The term 'toxic trio' has been used to describe the presence of concurrent domestic abuse, mental ill-health and substance misuse, and these are identified as common features of families where harm to children and adults has occurred. If all three factors are present, there can be an increased risk of harm to families. Work in this area has shown a large overlap between parental risk factors and possible impact on child outcomes for children into adulthood through the research into Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs).
69. Findings from an analysis of Domestic Homicide Reviews have identified that domestic abuse, mental; health and substance misuse as being major factors in some domestic homicides.

### **Climate change implications**

70. The climate change implications of the proposed contract have been considered; this section should be read in conjunction with the environmental/sustainability section of this report.
71. The contract will require accessibility within the borough to provide the scope of the service specification; invariably, the service hub will generate waste, and will also use energy and consumables. There are a range of options that the council could expect from the successful provider(s) in order to reduce the

climate change implications of the use of a physical hub, and associated service delivery, including:

- a) the use of building(s) that are as energy efficient as possible;
  - b) the use of sustainable paper options and usage offset by planting of new trees;
  - c) the use of renewable energy;
  - d) reducing carbon emissions in the supply chain of service consumables;
  - e) recycling of service waste into energy and consumables, thus reducing the amount of waste that goes to landfill;
  - f) reducing the use of single use plastics in service delivery;
  - g) Options for resourcing the service with recycled items.
72. The service will also be delivered through an outreach model; this will primarily be on foot, with nil generation of carbon emissions, or by public transport, thus minimising transport-related emissions by spreading them out over many passengers.
73. The onset of the pandemic in March 2020 resulted in a rapid transition to a remote delivery model for the provider, with service users able to access 1:1 and group interventions via digital technology. This proved very effective for many people, and the future service offer will reflect a hybrid model of face to face and virtual engagement opportunities. This shift from 100% face to face delivery will substantially reduce the number of people travelling across the borough to attend a physical hub, thus supporting the reduction of travel-related carbon emissions.

### **Social Value considerations**

74. The Public Services (Social Value) Act 2012 requires that the council considers, before commencing any procurement process, how wider social, economic and environmental benefits that may improve the wellbeing of the local area can be secured. Domestic abuse services by their nature support social value. They are focused on the most vulnerable in our communities which, through the support provided improves the health and wellbeing of survivors, their children and perpetrators of abuse. This meets the council's commitment to be a fair and just borough.
75. Social value considerations and how the delivery of these services can benefit the local area are detailed below and will be developed further in the GW1 report, including how the service will be engaging with some of the most vulnerable residents in the borough.

### **Economic considerations**

76. The nature of the services requires delivery within the borough and this will provide opportunities for local labour, bringing local economic benefits.
77. The services will be located and primarily delivered within the boundaries of the borough, providing local economic benefits for residents who may be



employed as staff and service users who will be supported to contribute to the local economy through addressing their identified support needs.

### **Social considerations**

78. The key priority for service provision is to prevent and reduce the prevalence of domestic abuse and associated VAWG in Southwark, including the numbers of victims experiencing these issues for the first time and those already experiencing them, and to reduce the severe health and social inequalities experienced by victims through a rapid response and facilitated access to support pathways and suitable accommodation, where appropriate. The service will contribute to making Southwark a more equal, fair and just borough.
79. The service will seek to improve the health and wellbeing outcomes of Southwark residents with domestic abuse and associated VAWG support needs and their families. Extensive local, regional and national wide ranging performance and outcomes measures will be developed to underpin and assess the effective delivery of the new provision.
80. The delivery of the service contract provides additional opportunities for individuals or groups facing greater social barriers. Through a robust partnership delivery management approach, the services will support people experiencing domestic abuse and associated VAWG, and their children, to engage with a range of care and support services which helps them to escape from these experiences by navigating a wide range of services to meet their needs and improve their health, wellbeing and social functioning. These activities contribute to reducing the economic, human and social costs associated with domestic abuse and VAWG where there is no intervention.
81. The council will require the future provision to demonstrate not only a commitment to improving the health and wellbeing of vulnerable victims of domestic abuse and associated VAWG, as well as any children in the home, but also to commit to work practices that improve staff wellbeing, reduce absenteeism due to ill health and recognise mental health as an issue.
82. The council places a high level of emphasis on community engagement within this service to ensure that the voices and views of people with lived experience shape both the design and development of the services.
83. The council is an officially accredited London Living Wage (LLW) Employed and is committed to ensuring that, where appropriate, contractors and subcontractors engaged by the council to provide works or services within Southwark pay their staff at a minimum rate equivalent to the LLW rate. Successful contractors will be expected to meet LLW requirements, and contract conditions requiring the payment of LLW will be included in the tender documents.
84. The council will include a request for the necessary information from tenderers (using the council's standard documentation in relation to blacklisting). The

council's contract conditions will include an express condition requiring compliance with the blacklisting regulations and include a provision to allow the contract to be terminated for breach of these requirements.

### **Environmental/Sustainability considerations**

85. Areas to be explored for inclusion are opportunities to reduce carbon emissions, to reduce waste and increase recycling, for use of recyclable or reusable products, to increase recycling rates, to use renewable energy in physical premises, for greener versions of staff transport and to underpin environmental activities with membership of accredited schemes.

### **Plans for the monitoring and management of contract**

86. The contract will be managed and monitored by officers in the council's Community Safety and Partnership Business Unit. Governance will be provided by the Violence against Women and Girls' Group, which forms part of the statutory Community Safety Partnership.
87. Formal contract monitoring processes will take place on a quarterly basis with representation from the council and provider(s). A bespoke contract monitoring report template will provide the council with a range of quantitative and qualitative information about the delivery of the services during the quarter. There is a need to ensure that the voices and views of people with lived experience are considered as part of every formal review process.
88. In addition, a monthly meeting will be scheduled between all parties to ensure that the council has current and relevant knowledge of contractual delivery, including highlights, new initiatives and challenges. This will be in addition to the minimum weekly telephone contact between the council and provider(s) to meet any business-as-usual requirements.
89. A more intensive pattern of contact will be established between the council and provider(s) during the mobilisation period (minimum of six months following contract commencement), and until such a time as the council is satisfied that successful implementation of the service specification has been achieved. This will serve to support the development of effective partnerships in the borough, including a strong relationship with Partnership Southwark, and health services.
90. Performance reporting will be in alignment with the council's contract standing orders and will include an annual review and reporting that will also form the basis of contract performance KPIs that may be subject publication under the Procurement Act.

### **Resource implications**

91. Community Safety and Partnerships, legal and procurement resource has been identified to deliver this procurement project. Council officers and people with expertise and knowledge of the services will form part of the project team

oversee this transformation. Any further resource implications will be detailed in the GW1 report.

### **TUPE/Pensions implications**

92. There are no immediate implications arising from the recommendation of this report to continue to a Gateway 1 report that would have a direct bearing on the application of the Transfer of Undertakings (Protection of Employment) Regulations 2006 (TUPE). Implications and advice relating to TUPE and pensions will be sought by the council's legal team and considered ahead of the submission of GW1 and GW2 reports.

### **Financial implications**

93. The total annual expenditure for the Southwark Domestic Abuse Service is £872,556. Of which £708,353 funds the main service and £164,203 funds the safe accommodation element. Of the total expenditure £221,680 is grant secured until March 2025.
94. There are no financial implications arising directly from this report at this stage. All financial implications will be identified in the GW1 and GW2 reports and assessed against the current council budget allocations following the council's annual budget setting process

### **Legal implications**

95. Please see concurrent from the Assistant Chief Executive of Governance & Assurance.

### **Consultation**

96. This report has taken into account data and insight from the strategic needs assessment undertaken on Domestic Abuse and Expertise by Experience.
97. The council is currently undertaking further consultation with a wide range of interested parties as part of future planning, the details of which will be included in the subsequent GW1 report.

### **Other implications or issues**

98. There are no other implications or issues arising directly from this report.

## **SUPPLEMENTARY ADVICE FROM OTHER OFFICERS**

### **Strategic Director of Finance, (ENG23/097)**

99. The Strategic Director of Finance notes the recommendation to Cabinet to approve the Strategic Options Assessment for the council's Domestic Abuse and Gender Based Violence provision and notes the timescales for the Gateway 1.

100. The strategic director notes the current annual expenditure for the Southwark Domestic Abuse service and the source of funding including fixed term grants. The strategic director also notes there are no direct financial implications arising from this report at this stage and that the financial implications will be identified in the GW1 and GW2 reports and assessed against the current council budget allocations.
101. Officers' time and any other costs associated with this recommendation will be contained within existing departmental revenue budgets.

### **Head of Procurement**

102. This report seeks approval of the Gateway 0 strategic options assessment for the council's Domestic Abuse and Gender Based Violence provision and notes the request to delegate the decision to approve the Gateway 1 procurement strategy for the Domestic Abuse and Gender Based Violence Services to the Strategic Director for Environment, Neighbourhoods and Growth, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Community Safety. In accordance with the council's Contract Standing Orders, decision must be taken by the relevant Cabinet member (or referred to Cabinet for decision) following review by DCRB and CCRB.
103. Analysis and accompanying narrative associated with each of the proposed strategic options is contained within paragraphs 27 - 42.
104. Headline risks associated with the recommended strategic option are contained within table at paragraph 44.
105. Intended alignment with the Fairer Future Procurement Framework (FFPF) is explicitly referenced at paragraph 43, and within the content of paragraphs 49 – 85 more generally.
106. Proposed methodology for performance/contract monitoring is detailed within paragraphs 86 - 90. The report also confirms that an annual performance review will be provided to the council's DCRB and CCRB in alignment with council Contract Standing Orders.
107. The Community, Equalities and Health Impact Statements are set out in paragraphs 49 - 69.
108. The Climate Change, Social Value, Economic and Environmental / Sustainability statements are set out in paragraphs 70 - 85.

### **Assistant Chief Executive – Governance and Assurance (SB16112023)**

109. This report seeks approval of the strategic options assessment for delivery of the council's Domestic Abuse and Gender Based Violence prevention services.

110. Under the council’s Contract Standing Orders, a pre-procurement/Gateway 0 report is required for any service contract with an estimated contract value of £10m or more, or other strategically important contract for services, goods or works where requested by the relevant Cabinet member. The decision to approve the report recommendation is reserved to the relevant Cabinet member, who may elect to refer the decision to Cabinet, following consideration of the report by the Departmental and Corporate Contract Review Boards.

111. The report notes that the recommended strategic delivery option is for the council to follow a procurement process based on a competitive dialogue model as prescribed by the Public Contracts Regulations 2015 and adapted to the council’s requirements. Subject to approval of the recommendations of this report the details of that competitive dialogue process will be finalised and set out in a Gateway 1 report together with the proposed procurement timetable.

**Director of Exchequer (For Housing contracts only)**

112. N/A

**BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS**

<b>Background Documents</b>	<b>Held At</b>	<b>Contact</b>
Violence Against Women & Girls Strategy 2019-2024	Community Safety & Partnership, Environment, Neighbourhood & Growth, Southwark Council	Caroline Thwaites 02075250805
<b>Link:</b> <a href="#">Violence Against Women and Girls Strategy 2019 to 2024 - Southwark Council</a>		
Community Safety Strategic Assessment	Community Safety & Partnership, Environment, Neighbourhood & Growth, Southwark Council	Caroline Thwaites 02075250805
<b>Link:</b> <a href="#">Agenda for Cabinet on Tuesday 5 December 2023, 11.00 am - Southwark Council (item 16)</a>		

## APPENDICES

No	Title
Appendix 1	Domestic Abuse and Violence Against Women & Girls Definitions
Appendix 2	Southwark Context
Appendix 3	Current Domestic Abuse Service
Appendix 4	Policy and Legislation
Appendix 5	EQIA 2022

## AUDIT TRAIL

<b>Cabinet Member</b>	Councillor Evelyn Akoto, Health and Wellbeing	
<b>Lead Officer</b>	Caroline Bruce, Strategic Director of Environment, Neighbourhoods & Growth	
<b>Report Author</b>	Caroline Thwaites, Assistant Director of Community Safety & Partnerships	
<b>Version</b>	Final	
<b>Dated</b>	23 November 2023	
<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>
Strategic Director of Finance	Yes	Yes
Head of Procurement	Yes	Yes
Assistant Chief Executive – Governance and Assurance	Yes	Yes
Director of Exchequer (For Housing contracts only)	No	No
<b>Contract Review Boards</b>		
Departmental Contract Review Board	01 November 2023	Yes
Corporate Contract Review Board	02 November 2023	Yes
<b>Cabinet Member</b>	Yes	Yes
<b>Date final report sent to Constitutional Team</b>		23 November 2023