

Item No. 12.	Classification: Open	Date: 16 July 2019	Meeting Name: Cabinet
Report title:		Response to Recommendations from Community Safety Scrutiny Commission Report, Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG) Scrutiny Review	
Ward(s) or groups affected:		All	
Cabinet Member:		Councillor Evelyn Akoto, Community Safety and Public Health	

FOREWORD – COUNCILLOR EVELYN AKOTO, CABINET MEMBER FOR COMMUNITY SAFETY AND PUBLIC HEALTH

I welcome the recommendations made in the Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG) Scrutiny Review which was extremely timely considering the work underway in developing a new council VAWG strategy. These have been incorporated into the new strategy and will also be reflected in the associated VAWG delivery plan which is being developed consecutively.

Violence Against Women and Girls in all its forms is unacceptable. It affects all communities and has an incalculable impact on the lives of those individuals affected, their families and the wider community. Tackling violence against women and girls is therefore ‘everybody’s business’. Southwark benefits from the diversity of its statutory, voluntary and community partners whom contribute to tackling gendered violence both formally and informally. We acknowledge that support networks provided by friends, family and faith groups have an important role to play in our response to tackling violence against women and girls. Through building on the community foundations we already have in place, I am confident that by working together we will achieve our vision, and reduce the harm caused by gendered based violence for future generations. I am also clear in my vision that VAWG should not be seen in isolation to other forms of violence and vulnerability and the strategy needs to be considered as part of a collective response to all forms of community harm and exploitation.

RECOMMENDATION

1. That the cabinet notes the response to the VAWG Scrutiny recommendations as set out in Table 1.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

2. In 2018-19 the council committed to developing a VAWG Strategy (council plan). This was in recognition that although we already have in place a five-year Domestic Abuse Strategy (2015–2020), there is a need to develop a broader VAWG Strategy to ensure that we are delivering a strategic partnership response to all areas of VAWG, not only Domestic Abuse. This includes harmful practices such as FGM and Honour Based Violence as well as Sexual Harassment and Stalking.
3. In October 2019 the Community Safety Scrutiny Commission announced it would

be conducting a review on VAWG, with a particular focus on girls, with an emphasis on prevention, protection and support, and working with our partners to improve effectiveness.

4. The Commission chose to focus on three areas:

- Safe and healthy relationships; teaching in schools and youth clubs as this is an opportunity to influence young people at a young age and there is evidence of high rates of domestic abuse amongst young people.
- Safeguarding practices; to try and understand how effectively girls are protected and to look at data trends around levels of sexual harassment and assault.
- The Scrutiny Commission also reviewed the Women’s Safety Charter (WSC) which was established in 2015 to tackle harassment of women in Southwark at night time.

KEY ISSUES FOR CONSIDERATION

5. The review put forward 12 recommendations for the council, Police, schools, and NHS. These are detailed in Table 1. Below with the considered response

6. Table 1. Response to VAWG Scrutiny Recommendations

Recommendation	Response
<p>1. Work towards a more integrated approach on prevention and promoting healthy relationships is needed. The council should lead the way in producing relevant and useful resources for primary and secondary, with primary schools encouraged to teach sex and health relationships in the final years, including consent.</p>	<p>Agreed</p> <p>Officers will look to compliment and provide additional resource to PSHE education delivered by the Department of Education in this Area.</p> <p>From September 2020 Health Education and Relationships Education (primary) and the secondary Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) aspects of PSHE education will be compulsory in all schools. The PSHE Association provides a toolkit to assist delivery of PSHE for key stages 1 & 2 and 3 & 4.</p>
<p>2. Develop Southwark Relationship Education (RE) and Relationship and Sex Education (RSE) curriculum resources, making sure that these emphasise developing relationship skills and emotional literacy, and are appropriate to the ethos of different schools, and the needs and ages of different children. These ought to be high quality, electronic, flexible resources with clearly defined permissions that schools can use to</p>	<p>Agreed, noting that the local authority can encourage schools to implement this recommendation not mandate.</p> <p>Existing resources and toolkits are already available and being delivered in schools from the PSHE Association, ACET UK and SHER toolkit. The SHER toolkit includes the use of images and a short video. The local authority is unable to mandate schools which toolkit they should be using,</p>

Recommendation	Response
<p>create their own lesson plans - with an emphasis on images and short videos. Input ought to be sought from young people (e.g. Southwark Young advisors) in their development to ensure that they reflect the concerns of today's young people.</p>	<p>however we can work to provide a recommended list of providers to schools as suggested in recommendation 3 and inclusive of young people's input, aligned to Southwark's Healthy Schools work.</p>
<p>3. Develop a resource list of quality external providers (SHER, Tender etc.) and consider commissioning these.</p>	<p>Agreed</p> <p>A resource list of external providers can be created and be made available for commissioning of services (subject to meeting commission requirements).</p> <p>The council currently commissions ACET UK to deliver relationships and sex education support in secondary schools. In addition Bede House delivers the SHER (Safe, Healthy, Equal Relationships) programme to secondary schools (approximately 220 young people per year). This is funded through the Mayor's Office for Policing And Crime (MOPAC) London Crime Prevention Fund (LCPF) for which funding is confirmed until March 2021.</p>
<p>4. Schools ought to be encouraged and enabled to provide support to parents and carers to help their children to develop healthy relationships.</p>	<p>Agreed</p> <p>The council is working towards increasing its engagement and work with parents through the 'Southwark Keeping Families Strong' work being undertaken by Children's Services, and Parents Group (supported by YOS). It is recognised that this work needs to be developed further through the prevention and violence and vulnerability agenda.</p>
<p>5. The Police and Southwark Council should work closely with schools, via the headteachers networks and other forums, in order to get a better picture of what is going on in schools and to share information. Agreement ought to be sought on how to consistently report data on sexual harassment and assault so this can be monitored for trends. The model safeguarding policy ought to be updated to enable this, alongside the provision of guidance and training,</p>	<p>Agreed</p> <p>There are already a number of existing networks in place through which schools can share information with the Police this is via Police Schools officers, and also Operation Encompass (notification of a domestic incident).</p> <p>A refreshed model Safeguarding policy could form part of a consultation</p>

Recommendation	Response
network events and inset days aimed at Maintained schools, Trusts, and Academies – as appropriate.	to Governing Bodies, and feedback shared.
6. Run an awareness campaign on harassment, how to identify it, had how to address it. This should include a specific schools focused campaign with consistent messages and education on what constitutes sexual harassment and consent. One approach could be a week long campaign every year (in November to coincide with 14 days of action on VAWG).	<p>Agreed</p> <p>The recommendation to carry out a public awareness campaign to address harassment is included in the VAWG Strategy. In addition there is also a specific action to target work with schools and colleges to address attitudes that support VAWG, including education events focused on the links between gang involvement, serious and sexual attitudes and beliefs amongst young people.</p>
7. Create specific guidelines and recommendations to address online abuse, in school and outside of school, and run a public awareness campaign of what is acceptable.	<p>Online safety is already available and being delivered to schools. This includes an e-safety day whereby schools hold special assemblies/lessons in PHSE using NSPCC material. Schools also send info to parents / hold e-safety meetings for parents.</p> <p>The response to recommendation one addresses the issue of a public awareness campaign</p>
8. Conduct an impact assessment of the women's safety charter to understand how effective it has been.	<p>Agreed</p> <p>A review of the Women's Safety Charter is included in the VAWG Strategy. This will be implemented in September following the night time levy work.</p>
9. Require signing up to the charter as a licensing condition.	Mandatory signing up to the Women's Safety Charter can't be used as a legal requirement as the licensing act doesn't allow for this. It can however be implemented as a best practice scheme for licensees. This has been in place in Southwark since 2015 (launch of women's safety charter).
10. Make it compulsory for all licensed premises to address sexual harassment by putting in place policies and training	<p>Please see response above as this is what the Women's Safety Charter does. Compliance is monitored by licensing officers and the night time economy team.</p> <p>Should the council agree to the proposal for a late night levy officers</p>

Recommendation	Response
	will be able to do more to help safeguard women whilst out enjoying the night time economy.
11. Ensure the VAWG strategy includes tackling sexual harassment in public places.	<p>Agreed</p> <p>Harassment (including sexual harassment) is included in the VAWG Strategy. This includes a public awareness campaign to address harassment in private and in public and in the workplace and supporting agencies, business and communities to work together to prevent and respond to harassment and all forms of VAWG.</p>
12. A councillor ought to be appointed to lead on VAWG	<p>Agreed</p> <p>VAWG is included in the Community Safety and Public Health Cabinet Member portfolio.</p>

Implementation

13. These recommendations will be incorporated in the Violence Against Women and Girls Strategy and associated delivery plan. The strategy and delivery plan will be implemented and monitored by the VAWG Strategic Group which reports to the Safer Communities Delivery Group.

Policy implications

14. There are no policy implications arising from this report. A separate report on the VAWG strategy will also be considered by cabinet on violence against women and girls strategy and any relevant implications will be set out in this report.

Community impact statement

15. An equalities analysis has been carried out on the proposed VAWG Strategy. The equality analysis demonstrates that the policy shows no potential for discrimination.

Resource implications

16. There are no resource implications arising from this report. A separate report on the VAWG strategy will also be considered by cabinet on violence against women and girls strategy and any relevant implications will be set out in this report.

Legal implications

17. There are no legal implications arising from this report. A separate report on the VAWG strategy will also be considered by cabinet on violence against women and girls strategy and any relevant implications will be set out in this report.

Financial implications

18. There are no financial implications arising from this report. A separate report on the VAWG strategy will also be considered by cabinet on violence against women and girls strategy and any relevant implications will be set out in this report.

BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

Background Papers	Held At	Contact
Community Safety Partnership Plan 2017 - 2020	160 Tooley Street London SE1 2QH	Sharon Ogdon 020 7525 4396
Link (please copy and paste into your browser): http://safeguarding.southwark.gov.uk/assets/files/491/Southwark-Community-Safety-Partnership-Plan-2017-2020.pdf		

APPENDICES

No.	Title
Appendix 1	Violence Against Women and Girls Strategy (circulated separately)
Appendix 2	Violence Against Women and Girls Scrutiny Review (circulates separately)

AUDIT TRAIL

Cabinet Member	Councillor Evelyn Akoto, Community Safety and Public Health	
Lead Officer	Michael Scorer, Strategic Director of Housing and Modernisation Stephen Douglas, Director of Communities	
Report Author	Sharon Ogden, Safer Communities Team Manager	
Version	Final	
Dated	4 July 2019	
Key Decision?	No	
CONSULTATION WITH OTHER OFFICERS / DIRECTORATES / CABINET MEMBER		
Officer Title	Comments Sought	Comments included
Director of Law and Democracy	No	No
Strategic Director of Finance and Governance	No	No
Strategic Director Children and Adults' Services	No	No
Cabinet Member	Yes	Yes
Date final report sent to Constitutional Team	4 July 2019	