

CABINET

13 November 2012

Title: Domestic and Sexual Violence Strategy 2012-15	
Report of the Cabinet Member for Crime, Justice and Communities	
Open Report	For Decision
Wards Affected: All	Key Decision: Yes
Report Author: Helen Oliver, Group Manager Adult Safeguarding	Contact Details: Tel: 020 8724 8857 E-mail: helen.oliver@lbbd.gov.uk
Accountable Divisional Director: Glynis Rogers, Divisional Director, Community Safety and Public Protection	
Accountable Director: Anne Bristow, Corporate Director, Adult and Community Services	
Summary: <p>Tackling Domestic and Sexual Violence (D&SV) is crucial for creating a community within which everyone is safe: as strategic assessments continuously demonstrate, Barking and Dagenham has some of the highest Domestic Violence rates in London. This report introduces the final draft of the Community Safety Partnership's D&SV Strategy 2012-15 (Appendix 1) and Delivery Plan (Appendix 2). The report outlines the strategy, the local and national context within which it is being published, and the steps that have been taken to ensure that it is a Partnership document. The overall aim of the strategy is to ensure that the Partnership has an effective co-ordinated community response to D&SV: this will be achieved by focussing on the following objectives:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">(a) preventing D&SV from happening in the first place;(b) providing support to victims where violence does occur;(c) reducing the risk and bringing perpetrators to justice; and(d) working better as a Partnership locally to achieve the best outcomes for victims. <p>Barking and Dagenham has the highest rate of Domestic Violence offences reported per head across the whole of the Metropolitan Police Service: it constitutes the majority of violent crimes in Barking and Dagenham. In 2011-12, there were 1,718 incidents of domestic violence reported to the Police: although this is a reduction of 4% on the previous year, this remains one of the highest numbers in London.</p>	
Recommendation The Cabinet is recommended to agree the Domestic and Sexual Violence Strategy and Delivery Plan 2012-15 attached as Appendices 1 and 2 to the report, for implementation by the Community Safety Partnership.	
Reason(s) D&SV affects many of the Borough's residents: accordingly, the Council committed to continuing to 'help communities keep children and adults safe' in its <i>Statement of Priorities 2012-13</i> . A bespoke D&SV strategy will help to steer domestic and sexual violence action	

plans for the next three years in a way that builds the community's confidence in the Council and the broader Partnership.

1. Introduction and Background

1.1 The Council is committed to working with the community of Barking and Dagenham to 'keep children and adults safe' in its *Statement of Priorities 2012-13*; this is also reflected in the Council's *Policy House*, which envisions 'a Borough that safeguards children, young people, and vulnerable adults.' Accordingly, working across agencies, both voluntary and statutory, the Community Safety Partnership has drawn up a bespoke strategy for tackling the Borough's Domestic and Sexual Violence (D&SV).

1.2 What is D&SV and how is it dealt with in Barking and Dagenham?

In Barking and Dagenham, Domestic and Sexual Violence (D&SV) is categorised into three distinct areas:

- (a) **Domestic Violence:** a pattern of coercive control that can include physical, sexual, psychological and/or financial abuse, by a current or former partner or family members.
- (b) **Sexual Violence:** any sexual act, attempt to obtain a sexual act, unwanted sexual comments/advances, or acts to traffic directed against a person's sexuality using coercion, by any person regardless of their relationship to the victim, in any setting. This includes rape, stalking, sexual harassment, prostitution, and trafficking:
 - **Rape:** forced sexual intercourse
 - **Stalking:** repeated harassment causing fear, alarm, or distress. Can include threatening phone calls, texts, letters, damaging property, and spying on or following the victim.
 - **Sexual harassment:** unwanted verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature. This can take place anywhere and includes flashing, obscene and threatening calls, and online harassment.
 - **Prostitution.** This is addressed within the strategy because of its gendered and often forced nature. This strategy recognises prostitution as a victim-centred crime, and recognises that those who are coerced, abused and exploited require holistic help and support to exit.
 - **Trafficking:** the recruitment and transportation of people using force, coercion, abuse of power, or deception for the purposes of exploitation, including prostitution, sexual exploitation and forced labour.
- (c) **Harmful Practices:** forms of violence that have been committed, predominantly against women, in certain communities and societies for so long that they are considered part of accepted practice:
 - **Female Genital Mutilation (FGM):** the complete or partial removal or alteration of the external genitalia of a female for non-medical reasons. FGM is based on ancient beliefs surrounding the need to

control women's fertility and sexuality. FGM is not a requirement of any religion.

- **'Honour' based violence:** violence committed to protect or defend the 'honour' of a family or community. Victims, often young girls, are perceived to have acted outside community boundaries or perceived acceptable behaviour, especially in relation to sexual matters.
- **Forced Marriage:** a marriage conducted without the valid consent of one or both parties, where duress is a factor.

1.3 The Council addresses D&SV across its services, particularly within Community Safety, Housing, Environment and Enforcement Services, and Children's Services. In addition, Partnership teams addressing D&SV include such agencies as the Police, Health, Probation and Victim Support, which optimises the Borough-wide response.

1.4 The Community Safety Partnership (CSP), which brings together the Council, Police, Probation, Fire Brigade, NHS, and community and voluntary organisations, provides the Borough's strategic lead in dealing with D&SV. Within the CSP's sub-group tasking structure, responsibility for this lies with the Domestic & Sexual Violence Strategic Group.

2. Local Context

2.1 Barking and Dagenham has the highest rate of offences reported per head across the whole of the Metropolitan Police Service. It is estimated that 24,000 females (1 in 4) and 15,000 males (1 in 6), living in Barking and Dagenham will experience domestic abuse at some stage during their lifetime.

2.2 In 2011-12, there were 1,718 incidents of domestic violence reported to the Police: although this is a reduction of 4% on the previous year, this remains one of the highest numbers in London.

2.3 Between April 2011 and March 2012, 275 sexual offences (including rape) were reported to Barking and Dagenham Metropolitan Police. Between 1st April and 31st July 2012, 24 sexual abuse allegations were raised in relation to children and in 2010/11 there were 29 sexual abuse investigations involving adults at risk.

2.4 Local data indicates that approximately a quarter of domestic violence assault offences in Barking and Dagenham involved young people as victims.

2.5 Domestic violence is estimated to cost Barking and Dagenham £19.1 million a year (this estimate does not including human and emotional costs).

3. Domestic and Sexual Violence Strategy 2012-15: Proposal and Issues

3.1 As the CSP's strategic assessments, other national and local research, direct service requests and Members' enquiries and complaints demonstrate, tackling D&SV is key to ensuring that the Borough's residents are safe.

3.2 The Borough's commitment to addressing D&SV have steered the D&SV Strategic Group's decision to develop a bespoke D&SV strategy for 2012-15; the final version for agreement is attached at Appendix 1.

3.3 A discrete strategy will ensure that the wider Partnership is tasking its resources in a manner that addresses D&SV as effectively and efficiently as possible. The D&SV strategy:

- consolidates the issues;
- co-ordinates the response; and
- clarifies the responsibility of Council departments and the role of partner agencies in addressing D&SV in the Borough.

As such it will enhance our work to improve community safety, support vulnerable adults and children and increase confidence in the wider Partnership.

3.4 Strategic Objectives

This new D&SV strategy replaces a domestic violence strategy that was agreed in 2008. While the previous strategy centred around six objectives, the D&SV Strategic Group has agreed, following consultation, that this new, broader strategy should mirror the four objectives in the Government's *Call to End Violence against Women and Girls*, these are:

- (a) preventing domestic and sexual violence from happening in the first place;
- (b) providing support to victims where violence does occur;
- (c) reducing the risk and bringing perpetrators to justice; and
- (d) working better as a partnership locally to achieve the best outcomes for victims.

The strategy's delivery plan (Appendix 2) prioritises these areas accordingly.

3.4.1 A comprehensive Equalities Impact Assessment was undertaken in order to shape the strategy and delivery plan.

3.5 Outcomes

In delivering against the plan, the Borough will see:

- Staff across all agencies who are able to appropriately recognise, refer and support survivors to safely exit all forms of domestic and sexual violence;
- A better early response by health services, including maternity and GPs of those experiencing Female Genital Mutilation;
- A reduction in the repeat abuse of high risk victims;
- Better support through the criminal justice system for victims and witnesses;
- The commissioning of access to specialist domestic and sexual violence services;
- Raised awareness of how to address the issue in schools and colleges;
- An increase in challenge to perpetrators and more offenders brought to justice;
- Higher detection rates and less 'cracked cases';

- Improved intelligence and analysis on the different strands of D&SV;
- A focus on plans to respond to the impact of criminal gangs and serious youth violence on women and girls.

4. Options Appraisal

4.1 The strategy and delivery plan are in their final draft. The Community Safety Partnership has asked all agencies to take the documents, in their final form, to their governing bodies asking them to endorse the strategy or make further recommendations prior to sign off by the CSP Responsible Authorities.

5. Consultation

5.1 The Strategy has been subject to widespread consultation following analyses of local strategic assessments and a focussed workshop session. The strategy has been considered by internal Council Boards and also by the Serious Youth Violence Partnership, the LSCB, the Disability and Equality Forum, Safeguarding Adults Board and Health and Well-being Board. Feedback from these groups has helped to shape the strategy.

5.2 Members of the Safer and Stronger Communities Select Committee (SSCSC) considered the Domestic and Sexual Violence Strategy and associated Delivery Plan at its meeting on 3 October 2012. Members asked the Chair to recommend to the Portfolio Holder for Crime, Justice and Communities that:

- The strategy be endorsed;
- Cabinet note that the Select Committee were encouraged to see a focus on Female Genital Mutilation in the report; and
- The Portfolio Holder should ask the Corporate Director of Children's Services to liaise with schools to receive feedback as to how domestic violence is addressed with all age groups.

6. Financial Implications

Implications completed by: Dan Herholdt, Accountant

6.1 The Domestic and Sexual Violence Team costs the Council £108,300 per annum. In addition, the Community Safety Partnership also procures an Independent D&SV Advocacy Service at £290,000 per annum and pays £40,000 towards the East London Perpetrator Programme.

6.2 The above costs of £438,300 is funded from the local authority core funding of £246,800, and contributions from the Housing Revenue Account of £40,000, NHS Barking & Dagenham PCT of £120,000 and Metropolitan Police Service of £31,500. Delivery of the strategy and delivery plan will be achieved within the budget for this service.

6.3 London Borough of Barking and Dagenham has been allocated £117,316 Community Safety Funding in 2012-13 from the Mayor of London Office for Policing and Crime (MOPaC). The CSP will be responsible for the management of this funding and should be incorporated in the planning of our community safety budget and activities for 2012-13. The MOPaC funding priorities are unchanged from 2011-12, and are as follows:

- (a) reducing reoffending
- (b) reducing violence against women and girls; and
- (c) reducing serious youth violence

6.4 Moving forward to 2013-14 and beyond, it needs to be noted that there is no guarantee that future Community Safety Funding allocations will be in line with those previously received, either in terms of the sums received nor in the priorities against which these should be spent.

6.5 Section 9 of the Domestic Violence Act 2005 brings into law a requirement on local authorities to hold a multi-agency review following a case of adult domestic homicide, as detailed below in Legal Implications. Responsible authorities of the CSP have to determine where a DV Homicide Review is appropriate in consultation and inform the Home Office of that determination. Where such a review is agreed the Responsible Authorities have agreed that these will be jointly funded.

7. Legal Implications

Implications completed by: Shahnaz Patel, Lawyer

7.1 The Government's *Call to End Violence against Women and Girls* was published in November 2010. In it, the Government set out its vision for tackling such crimes. In March 2011, the Government published a detailed range of supporting actions for taking the strategy forward which forms the foundation. The underlying principles of the strategy remain in force. Section 9 of the Domestic Violence Act 2004 not in full force brings into law a requirement on local authorities to hold a multi-agency review following a case of adult domestic homicide. Such reviews are an effective learning and prevention tool for local areas.

7.2 The Equality Act 2010 introduced a new public sector duty requiring the public to consider how its policies to meet the needs of all those who uses its services. Authorities will be required to publish its data. The Act allows a public body to deliver services to targeted groups. The D&SV Strategy of Barking and Dagenham supports the very core values of the Government.

8. Other Implications

8.1 **Risk Management** - There is no legal obligation upon the Council or its partners to have a D&SV Strategy. However, the work that the partnership undertakes serves to prevent serious injury and homicides. Therefore, leaving D&SV poses a significant reputational risk to the Council and the broader Partnership that would not only reduce public confidence, but would also exacerbate the human and emotional costs of D&SV: a Borough that leaves D&SV unaddressed sends the message that D&SV is acceptable and further serves to isolate victims and survivors. This bespoke D&SV strategy provides a focus for the work in this area and allows the Council and its partners to monitor our performance against agreed indicators.

8.2 **Contractual Issues** - In dealing with D&SV, the Council currently commissions a number of schemes:

- (a) Victim Support (VS): VS are contracted to provide the Safer Homes Project. The Safer Homes Project includes the Sanctuary Scheme which provides victims of domestic, sexual violence and hate crime with preventative security measures for their home such as alarms and lock changes.
- (b) Domestic Violence Intervention Project (DVIP): DVIP run a community based perpetrator programme (there are two types of perpetrator programme: those run by the Probation Service (IDAP), for convicted offenders, and community-based programmes run by the voluntary sector). The programme is for perpetrators of domestic violence, who wish to stop their violent behaviour. DVIP also provides a woman's support service to partners and ex-partners of men who access the perpetrator programme.
- (c) Barking and Dagenham Independent Domestic and Sexual Violence Advocacy Service (Refuge): This service provides short-term independent advice and support to high risk victims of domestic violence. The service works closely with the Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conference arrangement to offer support to the Borough's most at-risk clients.
- (d) Barking and Dagenham Refuges (Refuge): The Council provides funding for specialist refuge provision in the Borough, for women and children fleeing domestic violence.
- (e) Barking and Dagenham Floating Support (Refuge): The Domestic Violence Floating Support service offers support to women who are affected directly or indirectly by issues of domestic violence primarily around resettlement and housing.

8.3 **Staffing Issues** - The strategic aims contained within the strategy are to be delivered within existing Council and Partnership resources.

8.4 **Customer Impact** - Figures suggest that 1 in 4 women and 1 in 6 men will experience D&SV: this means that in Barking and Dagenham approximately 24,000 female and 15,000 male residents will experience domestic abuse at some stage during their lifetime. To date, the Community Safety Partnership has made significant progress in addressing this. The development of this more wide-ranging strategy will consolidate achieved progress further, and the comprehensive action plan and performance measures will assist further improvement.

The D&SV Strategy has undergone a comprehensive Equality Impact Assessment, which demonstrates that the strategy will benefit all groups living and working in the Borough.

8.5 **Safeguarding Children & Adults at Risk** - 75% of children in care have witnessed or experienced domestic violence in their lives. This makes tackling this agenda essential if we are to safeguard our children from the long term effects of witnessing violence at home. Our Barking and Dagenham Youth Forum has highlighted concerns regarding sexual violence and respect for young women as risk issues in our Borough. There must be strong information sharing and an agreed strategic approach across services working with adults and children to reduce the impact for victims, but also to help children and young people who may become future perpetrators.

This Strategy has been jointly developed across services working with children and adults. The role of the Children's Trust and Local Safeguarding Children's Board and their sub-groups will be crucial in implementing the strategy, which is reflected in the Children and Young People's Plan. The new Troubled Families Board will be an important contributor to tackling the impact of violence in families, building on the work of the Children's Centres, Multi-Agency Locality Teams and Youth Offending Team. The strong links with the Serious Youth Crime and Community Safety Partnerships will be essential in ensuring that tackling D&SV is a cross-generational approach.

Safeguarding Adults at Risk is another integral part of this strategy with strategic links being made to the Safeguarding Adults Board Strategy. It is felt that this discrete D&SV strategy will serve to further galvanise the response to all individuals including Adults at Risk.

- 8.6 **Health Issues** - While perpetrators can often have physical and/or mental health issues, D&SV can usually affect its victims' physical and/or mental health. By focussing on the provision of support for victims of D&SV, and working in Partnership with ONEL and Mental Health, the D&SV strategy aims to address the health and well-being issues that cause and exacerbate the effects of D&SV.

Given that those with substance misuse, mental health, physical disabilities and learning disability issues are often at higher risk of becoming victims of D&SV, the D&SV strategy continues and enhances the existing procedures for safeguarding those with needs that could make them particularly vulnerable.

- 8.7 **Crime and Disorder Issues** - Section 17 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 requires local authorities to integrate consideration of the impact on crime and disorder of any decision, policy, activity or strategy that it performs. The authority is required to ensure that there is no negative impact on crime and disorder of any such decisions. While a discrete D&SV strategy is not a statutory requirement, it will improve community safety and increase confidence in the Partnership: there are no negative impacts arising from this strategy.

Background Papers Used in the Preparation of the Report:

A list of linked and associated reports, strategies and research documents are contained within the draft strategy:

- (a) Domestic Violence Strategy 2008
- (b) Government Paper: *Call to End Violence Against Women and Girls*
- (c) GLA Strategy: *The Way Forward: A Call for Action to End Violence Against Women*
- (d) Barking and Dagenham Community Safety Partnership: *Strategic Assessment 2011*

List of appendices:

- Appendix 1:** Domestic & Sexual Violence Strategy 2012-15
- Appendix 2:** Domestic & Sexual Violence Delivery Plan 2012-15