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| <b>Subject:</b>          | <b>Domestic and Sexual Violence and Abuse and Violence Against Women and Girls Strategy</b> |   |                          |
| <b>Date of Meeting:</b>  | <b>11<sup>th</sup> March 2019</b>   |   |                          |
| <b>Report of:</b>        | <b>Executive Director, Neighbourhoods, Communities and Housing</b>                          |   |                          |
| <b>Contact Officer:</b>  | <b>Name:</b>  | <b>Lindsay Adams</b>                      | <b>Tel: 01273 291032</b> |
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| <b>Ward(s) affected:</b> | <b>All</b>  |   |                          |

## **FOR GENERAL RELEASE**

### **1. PURPOSE OF REPORT AND POLICY CONTEXT**

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to seek approval from the committee on the framework for the Domestic and Sexual Violence and Abuse and VAWG Strategy for Brighton and Hove and East Sussex and to update the committee on planned development work to finalise the Strategy 2019-2024, and associated governance and partnership action plan.
- 1.2 The strategy is a partnership strategy to which the Council will sign up through the Community Safety Partnership, recognising Domestic and Sexual Violence and Abuse including Harmful Practices as one of the partnership's priorities.

### **2. RECOMMENDATIONS:**

- 2.1 That the Committee approves the Strategy Framework as set out at Appendix 3;
- 2.2 That the Committee notes the planned further stakeholder engagement work as set out at Appendix One to develop the full Strategy and Action Plan.

### **3. CONTEXT/ BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

- 3.1 It was agreed at the NICE Committee meeting on the 9<sup>th</sup> October 2018 that officers would present the refreshed Domestic and Sexual Violence and Abuse and VAWG Strategy to the committee.
- 3.2 Since October 2018 and reflecting government guidance (VAWG Commissioning Toolkit) the Joint Unit has been working with partner agencies across Brighton and Hove and East Sussex on a broad stakeholder engagement programme to develop the new strategy. There is further stakeholder engagement work planned until May 2019 to utilise local insight and expertise in developing the full partnership strategy document and detailed 5 year action plan; agree new partnership governance structures that will support delivery of the work; and

enhance local collaboration to meet the needs of those affected (adults and children) by domestic and sexual violence and abuse.

- 3.3 A small cross sector working group with representation from BHCC, ESCC, OSPCC and the local Voluntary Sector has developed the Strategy Framework presented to the NICE Committee, and will continue to support development of the full strategy and action plan. It is committed to extending opportunity for further stakeholder involvement through consultation, participation and involvement to:
- Shape the final document
  - Create 'fit for purpose' governance arrangements that perpetuate ongoing stakeholder involvement from grassroots to strategic level;
  - Develop and agree a SMART partnership action plan that acknowledges agencies/organisations' responsibility, and opportunity for new collaboration.
- 3.4 Strategy Development will be advised and monitored by an officers meeting with cross sector membership, called the Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence Partnership Board (Formerly VAWG Commissioning Group) This will provide the necessary sectoral conduits to ensure effective stakeholder involvement, as well as senior level representation from agencies providing local resources and specialist expertise. This partnership will be engaged in designing fit for purpose governance going forward, and in sharing the framework and subsequent drafts for comment and input.

#### **4. DEVELOPING THE STRATEGY**

- 4.1 From the outset of development it has been important to consider who and what the strategy is for and how we balance ambition for change with realistic objectives. Stakeholders have said:
- The Strategy is for everyone with an interest in seeing a reduction in domestic and sexual violence and abuse and should be written so that people 'get it' and feel motivated to get involved;
  - It should also be accessible for the public;
  - It should be an investment in capacity building- understanding how we can work better together;
  - And driven by a clear and easily understood set of principles behind which clear commitments will be made- we need to move away from trying to achieve everything and be targeted in our commitments and associated actions.
  - It should recognise the considerable existing expertise and seek to build on this
  - It should speak to a future without violence and abuse not just to a crisis response.
- 4.2 At the heart of the new strategy is an acknowledgement of the increasingly challenging financial environment in which we all work and the impact this can have on service scope and flexibility to meet the needs of those we try to support.

- 4.3 Whilst there is cross party commitment to maintain resources for the victims of domestic and sexual violence and abuse, since 2015, when the last service commission took place there has been an unprecedented rise in the number of people seeking support. This currently sees commissioned specialist services at times working 140% above the numbers they were contracted to support.
- 4.4 The strategy represents a commitment through partnership, to using the resources we do have most efficiently, and a commitment to improve cross sector and cross area working relationships to unlock new opportunities through: understanding our local picture and our shared and individual priorities; sharing resources; being prepared to fight for new funding resources; acknowledging the central role of the voluntary and community sector, and trying new collaborative approaches to service delivery in order to sustain core services and remain responsive to changing needs and levels of demand.
- 4.5 The strategy will directly influence the recommissioning of specialist domestic and sexual violence and abuse services across Brighton and Hove and East Sussex, but due to necessary timescales in place for the recommission, there is parallel work underway whilst the strategy is finalised to review some aspects of service recognising the central role that specialist services play in core service delivery. Information about the work being completed is available at Appendix One.
- 4.6 The framework for the Partnership Domestic and Sexual Violence and Abuse and VAWG Strategy can be found at Appendix Two.

## **5. ANALYSIS & CONSIDERATION OF ANY ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS**

- 5.1 There is already a significant commitment from cross sector partners to prevent or disrupt domestic and sexual violence and abuse across the city and to provide the best support possible for victims and survivors as they: take proactive action to build on their existing strengths, to find safety from their abuser, flee harm, navigate the criminal justice system, create space for recovery and to lead the life they choose. The strategy development process has enabled a reflection of good practice happening all over the city, and elsewhere, which will be represented in the final strategy document, along with a comprehensive strategic needs assessment.
- 5.2 It has also enabled us to galvanise support for collective review of what we currently provide including: mapping existing services and resources and considering sustainability; identifying gaps in provision and opportunities for innovation, and additional intelligence for a full analysis of issues and needs. This work is supported by partners and has begun.

## **6. COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT & CONSULTATION**

- 6.1 Appendix one outlines the stakeholder engagement intentions around development of the strategy and recommissioning of services. It is important that those affected by domestic and sexual violence and abuse and their families (including perpetrators) have a voice both now, and going forward and there is intention to engage victims and survivors in the process. Service user voice is central to understanding how to deliver the right services and we work with

specialist services to ensure that engagement is accessible, and undertaken in a sensitive way that recognises that potential impact that involvement can have on recovery.

## **6. CONCLUSION**

- 6.1 Progressing development of the Partnership Domestic and Sexual Violence and Abuse and VAWG Strategy for Brighton and Hove and East Sussex is key to developing more sustainable and responsive services doing forward.
- 6.2 The Strategic Commissioner for DV/SV and VAWG is available for further enquiry and discussion on the development and finalisation of the strategy; and ongoing delivery of services should elected members request it.

## **7. FINANCIAL & OTHER IMPLICATIONS:**

### Financial Implications:

- 7.1 The council's contribution towards developing the Partnership Domestic and Sexual Violence and Abuse and VAWG Strategy is largely in the form of staff time and will be met from within the current budget resources.

*Finance Officer Consulted: Monica Brooks*

*Date: 07/02/19*

### Legal Implications:

- 7.2 There are no legal implications arising from this report.

*Lawyer Consulted: Elizabeth Culbert*

*Date: 19/02/19*

### Equalities Implications

- 7.3 A full Equality Impact Assessment is being completed reflective of identified issues that have been raised during stakeholder consultation. Development of the strategy and detailed partnership action plan will be a response to identified issues and will seek to mitigate them.

## **SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION**

### **Appendices:**

Appendix 1:

Partnership and Stakeholder Engagement Programme

Appendix 2:

Strategy Framework: Brighton and Hove and East Sussex Partnership Domestic and Sexual Violence and Abuse and VAWG Strategy 2019-2024