

Brighton & Hove City Council

EQUALITIES, COMMUNITY SAFETY AND HUMAN RIGHTS COMMITTEE

Agenda Item 22

Subject: Brighton and Hove Violence Against Women and Girls Strategy 2023-2026

Date of meeting: 13 October 2023

Report of: Executive Director Housing, Neighbourhoods, and Communities

Contact Officer: Name: Anne Clark
Email: anne.clark@brighton-hove.gov.uk

Ward(s) affected: All Wards

For general release

1 PURPOSE OF REPORT AND POLICY CONTEXT

1.1 The purpose of this report is to ask Committee to note the work undertaken on this topic and to seek approval to go out to public consultation on the Draft Violence Against Women and Girls Strategy 2023-2026, and associated governance.

1.2 Committee is asked to note that the Strategy is being developed in partnership, and will be considered by the Community Safety Partnership before it is brought back to Committee for approval.

2 RECOMMENDATIONS

2.1. That the Committee notes the work undertaken to date and agrees that officers commence a public consultation on the draft Strategy attached as Appendix 1.

2.2 That Committee notes that the Strategy will be brought back to this Committee for formal approval once it has been finalised with the Community Safety Partnership.

3 CONTEXT/ BACKGROUND INFORMATION

3.1. Under the previous cross- County Domestic Abuse, Sexual Violence and VAWG Joint Unit arrangements between Brighton and Hove City Council and East Sussex a Violence Against Women and Girls Strategy Framework was agreed by the Council's Neighbourhoods, Inclusion, Communities & Equalities Committee on 3 March 2019, which included proposals to undertake stakeholder engagement work to develop a full Strategy and Action Plan. The draft Strategy attached to this Report builds upon the foundations of this Framework and outlines what has been achieved, incorporating the learning from stakeholder consultations as well as the feedback from more recent consultative events, national and regional policy

developments, the learning from Domestic Homicide Reviews, thematic reviews and recent legislation.

3.2 Strategy development will be advised and monitored by officers meeting with cross sector membership via collaboration working groups and VAWG Team reporting to the Community Safety Partnership Board. 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.

3.3. Strategy development has taken into account considering who and what the strategy is for and how we balance ambition for change with realistic objectives. The Strategy is for everyone affected by VAWG whether it occurs in private or public spaces, through developing a coordinated community response where everyone has a role to play in tackling VAWG. The strategy is driven by a clear and easily understood set of principles behind which prevention is key to reducing crisis intervention. The strategy has four key priorities:

- Priority 1: Develop an integrated, coordinated community response to all forms of VAWG irrespective if the incident occurs in private or public space.
- Priority 2: Improve prevention of VAWG through working with all partners to develop improved prevention and early intervention approaches to tackling VAWG.
- Priority 3: Ensure those affected by VAWG receive high quality trauma informed support
- Priority 4: Hold perpetrators to account to reduce the harm they cause

3.4. This VAWG strategy aligns with the key aims of Brighton & Hove's Community Safety and Crime Reduction Strategy 2023-2026 <https://www.democracy.brighton-hove.gov.uk> with its central aims of:

- Taking early action to prevent crime and disorder
- Tackling the issues which have the biggest impact on people
- Reducing fear of crime and meeting the needs of victims.

The draft strategy also aligns with the Pan Sussex Domestic Abuse and Support in Safe Accommodation Strategy 2021-2024 and the principles of the Councils Anti Racism Strategy 2023-2028 <https://www.brighton-hove.gov.uk>

3.5. Central to 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. This consideration highlights the importance of earlier intervention to avoid costly crisis intervention.

3.6. 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; acknowledging the key 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 ANALYSIS & CONSIDERATION OF ANY ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS

4.1. There is already a significant commitment from cross sector partners to prevent and disrupt VAWG across the city and to provide the best support possible for victims and survivors as they: take proactive action, to build on their strengths, to find safety from their abuser/s, navigate the criminal justice system and create space for recovery. The strategy development process has enabled a reflection on the good practice happening all over the city, and elsewhere, which is represented and further developed in the draft Strategy.

5. COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT & CONSULTATION

5.1. Several initiatives have been undertaken which are detailed in the strategy. The next step is going out to public engagement which will further influence the final strategy.

6. CONCLUSION

6.1 Progressing development of the Violence and Abuse and VAWG Strategy for Brighton and Hove is key to increasing safety, improving health inequalities and developing more sustainable and responsive services doing forward.

7. FINANCIAL & OTHER IMPLICATIONS:

7.1 The council's contribution towards developing the Strategy is largely in the form of staff time and will be met from within the current budget resources.

*Finance Officer Consulted: Mike Bentley
21/09/23.*

Date:

Legal Implications:

This Committee is (amongst other things) responsible for discharging the Council's functions relating to equalities and community safety, as well as inclusion. In this, this Committee is the successor Committee to the (now decommissioned)

Neighbourhoods, Inclusion Communities & Equalities Committee, and is the correct body to consider this Report.

Lawyer Consulted: Victoria Simpson
25.9.23

Date:

Equalities Implications:

A full Equality Impact Assessment is being completed reflective of issues identified and which have been raised by consideration of local trends and stakeholder feedback. Development of the strategy and detailed partnership action plan will be a response to identified issues and will seek to mitigate them.

Sustainability Implications:

None