

	<h2>Community Leadership Committee</h2> <h3>21 June 2017</h3>
<p style="text-align: center;">Title</p>	<p>London Borough of Barnet Violence against Women and Girls(VAWG) Strategy 2017-2020</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">Report of</p>	<p>Strategic Director of Environment</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">Wards</p>	<p>All</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">Status</p>	<p>Public</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">Urgent</p>	<p>No</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">Key</p>	<p>No</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">Enclosures</p>	<p>Appendix A – Barnet Violence against Women and Girls Strategy 2017 - 2020</p>
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<h2>Summary</h2>	
<p>Barnet Safer Communities Partnership Board is the statutory partnership that develops and oversees the delivery of Barnet’s Community Safety Strategy. Violence against Women and Girls (VAWG) is one of the key priorities in Barnet’s current Community Safety Strategy. The partnership have developed a new 2017-2020 VAWG Strategy for Barnet that will be agreed and signed off at the next Safer Communities Partnership Board taking place on 21 July 2017.</p> <p>As part of this process the Community Leadership Committee are being asked to comment and endorse the strategy prior to its final sign off.</p> <p>This paper provides an overview of the Barnet’s Violence against Women and Girls (VAWG) strategy 2017- 2020. It outlines its aims and the partnership objectives. It sets out the strategic context of its development, how it responds to regional, national and international commitments and expected standards relating to the Violence Against Women and Girls agenda. It includes details of the consultation and engagement exercise held locally to develop this strategy.</p>	

Recommendations

- 1. That the Community Leadership Committee confirms its support of the strategy and endorses the objectives set out in the Barnet's Violence against Women and Girls (VAWG) Strategy 2017-2020.**

1. WHY THIS REPORT IS NEEDED

- 1.1 At the last Community Leadership Committee meeting (8th March 2017), the Committee took note of a presentation on the development of the London Borough of Barnet's Violence against Women and Girls (VAWG) strategy 2017-2020. The Committee commented on the proposed vision, partnership strategic objectives and approach for Barnet's 2017-2020 VAWG strategy.
- 1.2 The committee noted that, following subsequent consultation (including a members' workshop and presentation of the draft strategy to the Safer Communities Partnership Board) the final draft of the Strategy would be presented to the Community Leadership Committee for endorsement. The final draft of the strategy is, together with this report, provided to the Committee.
- 1.3 The consultation feedback has assisted in the development of this strategy which clearly sets out the on-going partnership commitment to work together to respond to and prevent VAWG in Barnet. This partnership focus is a central element to the strategy and is underpinned by the follow partnership objectives.
- 1.4 The 4 partnership objectives are:
 - i. Preventing Violence against women and girls
 - ii. Improving outcomes for victims and their children
 - iii. Holding perpetrators to account
 - iv. Enhancing joint working practices between agencies
- 1.5 Preventing violence against women and girls is everybody's business. We want to ensure that everyone can identify victims, and can intervene early to prevent situations from escalating to crisis point.
- 1.6 We also want to ensure that we understand the needs of victims and their families. This will help us to provide the best response we can, to intervene at the right time and providing them the right services.

1.7 This final draft strategy:

- Enables victims and survivors of domestic violence and abuse to feel supported, and encourages the local community to report instances of VAWG.
- Informs the community how we would like to work with them to reduce the risk of VAWG in Barnet.
- Provides clear direction on joint working for the strategic partners, voluntary and community group to ensure a consistent co-ordinated service.
- Sets out the VAWG priorities that partners can embed into their own organisational strategic and commissioning plans.
- Holds perpetrators to account for their behaviour through our zero tolerance approach to VAWG.
- Promotes a move towards a model of encouraging better collaboration and joined-up approaches between local authorities and health commissioners, and specialist VAWG service providers. The commissioning of intervention programmes will be guided by evidence based assessment of needs, and incorporate early intervention; establishing and embedding the best ways to help victims and their families; and taking steps to reduce the prevalence of domestic violence and abuse.

1.8 Our final draft strategy recognises and takes into account:

- The Government's 'Ending Violence against Women and Girls Strategy 2016 – 2020', which focuses on service provision, prevention, pursuing perpetrators and partnership working.
- The Home Office's 'Violence Against Women and Girls National Statement of Expectations' (NSE) published in December 2016, which outlines the expected standards for local areas when commissioning services.

1.9 Our approach is framed within a VAWG strategy because we know that these crimes are disproportionately gendered. However, we intend to benefit all victims of these crimes. Men and boys can also be victims of violence and abuse and so proposals supporting men's services will not be excluded from consideration in this strategy. Our strategy acknowledges the gendered nature of VAWG.

1.10 Our strategy puts the victim at the centre of service delivery; has a clear focus on perpetrators; keeping victims safe; and acknowledges the need to raise local awareness of the issues. .

1.11 Based upon this strategy, the VAWG Delivery Group (a sub group of the Safer Communities Partnership Board) will agree an annual delivery plan and a set of

partnership indicators that will measure success and outcomes against the objectives set out in the strategy. These will be reported to the VAWG Delivery Group Quarterly and the Safer Communities Partnership Board annually.

1.12 The delivery of the strategy will be overseen by Barnet's Safer Communities Partnership Board.

2. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

2.1 To seek the support of the Community Leadership Committee for the Barnet Violence against Women and Girls (VAWG) strategy 2017-2020.

3. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED AND NOT RECOMMENDED

3.1 Not relevant in relation to this report.

4. POST DECISION IMPLEMENTATION

4.1 Barnet's Violence against women and Girls (VAWG) strategy 2017- 2020, once signed off, will replace the Domestic violence (DV) and VAWG Strategy 2013 – 2016. The new strategy has a focus on preventing VAWG, improving outcomes for victims and their children, holding perpetrators to account and enhancing joint working practices between agencies.

4.2 The Barnet's VAWG Strategy 2017-2020 will be published on the council website supported by annual communications plan.

5. IMPLICATIONS OF DECISION

5.1 Corporate Priorities and Performance

5.1.1 The Council's Corporate Plan 2015-20 sets out the following strategic objectives:

5.1.2 That Barnet Council, working with local, regional and national partners, will strive to make sure that Barnet is the place:

- Of opportunity, where people can further their quality of life.
- Where responsibility is shared, fairly.
- Where people are helped to help themselves, recognising that prevention is better than cure.
- Where services are delivered efficiently to get value for money for the taxpayer.

5.1.3 The effective implementation of the VAWG Strategy supports Barnet in achieving the commitment set out in the corporate plan: that Barnet will be

amongst the safest places in London, with high levels of community cohesion, and residents feeling safe.

5.2 **Resources (Finance & Value for Money, Procurement, Staffing, IT, Property, Sustainability)**

5.2.1 Funding of Domestic Violence services is made up of Council funding and funding secured through grant applications. The commitment to provide services set out in the VAWG Strategy are funded either through the council, the partners or through securing grants from the government.

5.2.2 **Council Core funding**

The council has an annual budget of £694,556 to commission the following services:

- 1 The Advocacy services
- 2 Refuge Services
- 3 Perpetrator programme Services
- 4 Risk Assessors
- 5 DV MARAC

All these services have been procured in line with the Council's procurement procedures, and a contract performance monitoring regime is in place to ensure the services deliver and demonstrate value for money. The cost for the delivery of the above services will remain within the existing budget allocations.

Where suitable opportunities exist we work with local partners, including health, police, education, housing, and the wider third sector to secure additional external sources of funding to fund initiatives to support the delivery of the VAWG strategy in response to our local needs assessment and the best available evidence of what works.¹

Given the above, there are no significant resource implications arising from the recommendations of this report.

5.3 **Social Value**

Not relevant in relation to this report.

5.4 **Legal and Constitutional References**

5.4.1 S6 of Crime and Disorder Act 1998 ('the 1998 Act') places a statutory duty on

¹For example - £100,000 of funding was secured from DCLG in February 2017 for refuge spaces for homeless families fleeing domestic abuse

responsible authorities (including local authorities, the Police, Probation Trusts, and Fire and Rescue Authorities) to formulate and implement strategies for the reduction of crime and disorder (including anti-social behaviour), for combating the misuse of drugs, alcohol and other substances; and for the reduction of reoffending.

5.4.2 The BSCP is a Community Safety Partnership set up in accordance with the requirement of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 as amended by the Policing and Crime Act 2009.

5.4.3 Under s.17 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998, it is also a duty of the Council (and other partner agencies, including police, fire & rescue, GLA, TfL) when exercising its functions to have due regard to the likely effect of the exercise of those functions on, and the need to do all that it reasonably can to prevent crime and disorder (including anti-social behaviour), misuse of drugs, alcohol and other substances and re-offending.

5.4.4 The Police and Justice Act 2006 states that every local authority shall ensure that it has a crime and disorder overview and scrutiny committee with power to review or scrutinise decisions made, or other action taken, in connection with the discharge of crime and disorder functions and to make reports or recommendations to the local authority or its executive with respect to the discharge of those functions. The Crime and Disorder (Overview and Scrutiny) Regulations 2009 complement these provisions and are supported by Home Office guidance. Barnet operates a committee system form of governance and consequently does not have a system of overview and scrutiny committees save for the statutory Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee. However, the duty to perform crime and disorder scrutiny remains a requirement in committee system authorities. As such, Barnet have elected that the Community Leadership Committee to be the committee responsible for discharging responsibilities relating to the scrutiny of crime and disorder matters.

5.4.5 Responsibility for Functions, Annex A, in the council's Constitution sets out the Terms of Reference of the Community Leadership Committee which includes:

- *To contribute to achieving better outcomes in the Safer Communities Strategy through CCTV, fighting crime and anti-social behaviour, combating graffiti fly-tipping and other environmental crime, action against Domestic Violence and any other relevant Council activity. To work together with partners on the Barnet Safer Communities Partnership including Police, Fire and Criminal Justice Agencies to help make Barnet a safer place.*
- Provide scrutiny aspect of Community Safety in accordance with the provisions of the Police and Justice Act 2006.

5.5 Risk Management

5.5.1 Risk management varies according to the different initiatives. The partnership or appropriate agencies are made aware of risks and actions to mitigate the risk are agreed and put in place. There is always risk that the partnership may not achieve the targets set due to factors outside its direct control – however there is strong partnership working in place enabling agencies to identify and highlight risk and be open to addressing the risk collectively.

5.6 Equalities and Diversity

5.6.1 Section 149 of the Equality Act 2010 sets out the public sector equality duty to which the authority must have due regard. The Council's public sector equality duty is set out in s149 of the Equality Act 2010:

5.6.2 A public authority must, in the exercise of its functions, have due regard to the need to —

a) Eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under this Act;

b) Advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it;

c) Foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.

5.6.3 The relevant protected characteristics are age; disability; gender reassignment; pregnancy and maternity; race; religion or belief; sex and sexual orientation.

5.6.4 The Barnet's VAWG) Strategy 2017-2020 and the services delivered as part of this strategy take into account the protected characteristics to ensure services are accessible and fair to all sections of the community.

5.6.5 The Barnet's VAWG Strategy 2017-2020 will have a positive impact on groups affected by equalities issues as the Strategy recognises that Domestic Violence and Abuse is underreported. To address this issue the Strategy promotes measures to encourage and support victims to report crimes so that appropriate action can be taken to reduce the risks to the victim and stop the harmful behaviour which is causing the victim concern.

5.6.6 Although the focus of this strategy is on supporting women and girls, we acknowledge men and boys will also experience and be affected by the range of issues that encompass DVA and VAWG. It is important to ensure appropriate service responses are in place to support male victims, as gender

may be an additional barrier to seeking help. Men and boys who are victims of or are impacted by this type of violence are included in all aspects of our strategy, particularly our prevention and awareness raising work. We hope to engage with more men and boys in Barnet about DVA issues.

5.6.7 We are committed to ensuring that any victim of Domestic Violence and Abuse and Violence against Women and Girls receives a sensitive and appropriate response so that they get the help and support they need.

5.6.8 We also acknowledge that DVA and VAWG disproportionately affects women and girls, and our response is tailored accordingly, ensuring our strategy follows a victims/survivors centred approach.

5.6.9 Other groups of people who may experience additional barriers to seeking help include those from black, Asian, minority, ethnic and refugee (BAMER) communities, disabled victims, elderly victims, the LGBT community, those with no recourse to public funds, those with complex needs and/or substance users and those under the age of 18 years old. We will seek to ensure that our services are able to meet individuals' needs in a sensitive and consistent manner. This will be carried out in line with the relevant legislation

5.7 Consultation and Engagement

5.7.1 Consultation of the strategy included:

- Community Barnet workshop held on 27 February 2017
- Barnet Youth Forum workshop held 28 February 2017
- Service users workshop held on 06 March 2017
- All schools were consulted via School Circular on 20 February 2017
- CLC held on 8 March 2017
- VAWG Delivery Board held on 22 March 2017
- VAWG Forum held on 18 April 2017
- SCPB held on 28 April 2017
- Members workshop held on 8 May 2017

5.7.3 Feedback from the consultation highlighted that service users wanted the process for accessing help, which can often involve multiple agencies, to be as straightforward and clear as possible with strong co-ordination between the agencies involved. A related theme to emerge from the consultation was a desire for more integrated specialist services for children in families where DVA is present.

5.7.4 This consultation feedback has assisted in the development of the strategy which clearly sets out the partnership commitment to work together to respond to and prevent DVA and VAWG in Barnet. In response to the feedback the strategy emphasises that "Preventing violence against women and girls is everybody's business" with the aim of ensuring that everyone can identify

victims, and can intervene early to prevent situations from escalating to crisis point.

5.7.5 The strategy also has a focus on achieving the best outcomes for victims and their children, and is clear that our response needs to be co-ordinated and consistent; it needs to consider the whole family, particularly children. Early intervention and building resilience needs to remain a priority

5.8 **Insight**

Not relevant in relation to this report.

6. **BACKGROUND PAPERS**

23rd November 2016

Agenda Item 7: Annual update on the 2016 Community Safety Strategic Assessment

<https://barnet.moderngov.co.uk/documents/s36135/Preventing%20and%20Responding%20to%20Violence%20against%20Women%20and%20Girls%20Domestic%20Violence%20and%20Abuse%20VAWG%20.pdf>

<https://barnet.moderngov.co.uk/documents/s30236/Appendix%201%202015%2016%20Action%20Plan%20Review%202.pdf>

28th April 2017

Safer Communities Partnership Board, Agenda Item 5: Domestic Violence and Abuse and Violence Against Women and Girls

https://barnet.moderngov.co.uk/documents/s39459/Agenda_Item_2_DVA%20VAWG%20data%20March%202017.pdf