

DECISION-MAKER:	CABINET
SUBJECT:	DOMESTIC ABUSE AND VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN AND GIRLS STRATEGY 2023-2028
DATE OF DECISION:	20 DECEMBER 2022
REPORT OF:	COUNCILLOR RENYARD CABINET MEMBER FOR SAFE CITY

<u>CONTACT DETAILS</u>			
Executive Director	Title	Executive Director for Communities, Culture and Homes	
	Name:	Mary D'Arcy	Tel: 023 8083 4611
	E-mail	Mary.D'Arcy@southampton.gov.uk	
Author:	Title	Domestic Abuse Coordinator	
	Name:	Caroline Bate	Tel: 023 8254 5351
	E-mail	Caroline.Bate@southampton.gov.uk	

STATEMENT OF CONFIDENTIALITY

None

BRIEF SUMMARY

The Southampton Domestic Abuse Strategic Partnership Board (“the Domestic Abuse Local Partnership Board”), has commissioned the development of a new multi-agency five-year strategy (2023 – 2028). This strategy aims to tackle the continuum of Violence against Women and Girls (“VAWG”) – including domestic abuse – in Southampton. The aim is for the new strategy to be in force from 1st January 2023.

The establishment of a Domestic Abuse Partnership Board is a statutory requirement of the Domestic Abuse Act 2021. The core members of the Board are:

- Hampshire and Isle of Wight Constabulary.
- Local service providers.
- NHS Hampshire, Southampton and Isle of Wight Integrated Care Board.
- Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner for Hampshire and the Isle of Wight.
- Probation Service.
- Solent NHS Trust.
- Southern Health NHS Foundation Trust.
- Southampton City Council.
- Southampton Local Safeguarding Boards (represented jointly).
- University Hospital Southampton NHS Foundation Trust.

This paper outlines the final documents for the new 5-year strategy for approval and subsequent adoption.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

	(i)	To approve the new Domestic Abuse and Violence Against Women and Girls Strategy for the city as attached at Appendix 1.
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REASONS FOR REPORT RECOMMENDATIONS	
1.	The current strategy expired in 2020 and a new strategy is required to replace it, as well as ensuring that any new changes and duties under the 2021 Domestic Abuse Act are incorporated into any new city strategy to tackle Domestic Abuse.
2.	Whilst there is no statutory requirement for local authorities to have a Domestic Abuse Strategy (there is now a statutory duty for a safe accommodation strategy, which was adopted in December 2021 – see point 3), there are various duties imposed by legislation that require the Council to safeguard individuals and assist in preventing crime and anti-social behaviour. This includes the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 and the Anti-Social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014. The Care Act 2014 also imposes a statutory duty on the Council to safeguard vulnerable people who have needs for care and support who are suffering from abuse or neglect.
ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED AND REJECTED	
3.	Not having a city-wide strategy to tackle Domestic Abuse and Violence Against Women and Girls (DA and VAWG) in Southampton risks the safety of those affected in the city. Legal duties set out in the 2021 Domestic Abuse Act, under which local authorities are required to develop and publish a Domestic Abuse Strategy for their local area, only relates to Part 4 ('Provision of Support in Safe Accommodation') – this Part 4 strategy has been in force since December 2021.
DETAIL (Including consultation carried out)	
4.	Southampton's Domestic and Sexual Abuse Strategy expired in 2020. The delay in creating a replacement strategy was initially due to onset of the Covid-19 pandemic. Subsequent delays were due to the necessity to undertake a needs assessment to ensure compliance with the new Domestic Abuse Act duties, establish a new board and publish a Safe Accommodation Strategy, a mandatory requirement of the Act. The Domestic Abuse Coordinator has worked with partner representatives of the DA Local Partnership Board and the Policy and Strategy Team, under the guidance of the Chair and Board, to develop a new strategy that addresses both domestic and sexual abuse, and the broader continuum of gendered violence against women and girls. The strategy is named and structured to reflect this widening of scope whilst also recognising that there are specific interventions and support services for people who are subjected to domestic abuse.
5.	The strategy expands upon the objectives of the council's Strategy for the Provision of Support in Safe Accommodation (Appendix 1) which was adopted by Cabinet in December 2021 and published in January 2022. The proposed DA and VAWG strategy will bring the resources and expertise of agencies across the city to bear on barriers and gaps in local service provision.
6.	The strategy has been developed following a review of evidence of local needs and service performance, with input provided by one-to-one discussions with key internal staff and with strategic partners within health, police, probation, and commissioners. Development has also involved consultation with public health experts, the expertise of practitioners and with reference to the experiences of survivors.

7.	<p>The aim of the strategy is to prevent Domestic Abuse and violence against women and girls and to find better ways to support victims/survivors (adults and children). To achieve this, the work of the strategy is split into four priority areas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prioritising prevention; • Support for survivors; • Building an accountable community and changing perpetrator behaviour; • A stronger coordinated response.
8.	<p>A full 12-week public consultation was undertaken on the strategy draft from 20th July to 12th October 2022. This was publicised internally to colleagues, externally through partners in the city, as well publicly through the following channels:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Website • Social media • E-bulletins • Press release • Digital posters.
9.	<p>There were 246 separate responses to the consultation. Of this, 186 were submitted via the online questionnaire and 60 via email, letter, or focus groups. Feedback has been analysed and changes incorporated accordingly into this final draft (please see Members Room Document 3 for a full table of consultation feedback and officer responses). In addition, proactive feedback was sought on the draft strategy from Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee (OSMC) on 13th October 2022, where representatives from a local commissioned domestic and sexual abuse service (Yellow Door) were in attendance and raised additional points for consideration on the draft strategy.</p>
10.	<p>The strategy has been refined in response to the feedback received during all stages of the engagement and public consultation process, as well as through forums (including a session with over 60 Adult Social Care workers) and through feedback received from OSMC. The strategy now has additional information about the gendered focus of the document, more explanation of the range of data used and the complexities of data on this topic, as well as clearer information about services for all victims, revised terminology where required, and more information on strategy budget and implementation, alongside other smaller changes and updates.</p>
11.	<p>A review of the demographic data of respondents to the consultation shows a low number of responses gathered from Black, Asian and other minoritised ethnic groups within the city (83% reported as white British). These low numbers reflect the data from the needs assessment completed for the Domestic Abuse Safe Accommodation Strategy published in 2021 that shows low numbers of people from these groups recorded as accessing services. National research and data show that victims/survivors from these groups experience additional barriers to safety and for this reason the strategy has made specific commitments to review access to services by people with protected characteristics so that services can be changed to address barriers and improve equality of access. As part of this work, Southampton City Council is the process of using New Burdens funding to commission a pilot project to provide specialist advocacy and gather information directly from</p>

	communities about how we can meet the needs of Black, Asian and minoritised ethnic survivors (a similar project will also be commissioned in relation to the needs of LGBTQ+ victims/survivors). A pilot focused on the needs of disabled victims/survivors has already been commissioned.
12.	Once adopted, the DA and VAWG strategy will undergo a final design process, and the fully designed version will be available in early 2023.
RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS	
<u>Capital/Revenue</u>	
13.	The strategy aims to coordinate action that is already being delivered by the council and its partners within current budget frameworks. Any additional activity identified as part of action plans will be considered for feasibility by partners within normal yearly budgeting activity.
14.	Where proposed actions required to achieve outcomes fall within Part 4 duties, these have been costed against available New Burdens grant funding. Further detail on spend will be outlined in future strategy action plans.
<u>Property/Other</u>	
15.	None
LEGAL IMPLICATIONS	
<u>Statutory power to undertake proposals in the report:</u>	
16.	Under section 1(1) of the Localism Act 2011 a local authority has the power to do anything that individuals generally do, subject to certain prohibitions not applicable in this case.
17.	In addition, the council, as a relevant local authority within the meaning of the Domestic Abuse Act 2021, is obliged under section 57 of the Act to prepare and publish a strategy in relation to the provision of accommodation-based support to victims of domestic violence (Strategy for Provision of Support in Safe Accommodation 2021- 2024 – see Supporting Documentation). The wider Domestic Abuse and Violence Against Women and Girls strategy outlined in this report expands upon the council’s Strategy for Provision of Support in Sate Accommodation to set out wider strategies for tackling domestic abuse and violence against women and girls in the city.
<u>Other Legal Implications:</u>	
18.	The consultation and design of the proposed strategy, as well as the ESIA (see Members Room Document 1), has been undertaken having regard to the requirement of the Equality Act 2010, in particular s.149 of the Public Sector Equality Duty (“PSED”). All actions delivered under the strategy and associated Action Plans will be implemented having regard to this duty.
19.	This strategy has also been undertaken having regard to the council’s section 17 Crime and Disorder Act 1998 duty which obliges the council to exercise its functions with ‘due regard to the likely effect of the exercise of those functions on the need to do all it reasonably can to prevent crime and disorder in its area’.
RISK MANAGEMENT IMPLICATIONS	
20.	The DA Local Partnership Board will have quarterly reviews of the strategy and will monitor a range of indicators that will be available on a “DA data

	dashboard". This dashboard is currently under development by a specially appointed domestic abuse data analyst within the council's Data, Intelligence and Insight Team. A full action plan for delivering the strategy will also begin development once the strategy is in force.
21.	Issues relating to Data Protection and risks around the sharing of survivor and perpetrator data (as well as measures that would be taken to mitigate the risk) will be outlined in a Data Protection Impact Assessment (DPIA) once conversations around data sharing have happened with partners and more information on what this would involve is known.
POLICY FRAMEWORK IMPLICATIONS	
22.	This strategy will support relevant Policy Framework items (embedded in the council's Constitution: Part 2, Article 4.01) including the Crime and Disorder Reduction Strategy (the council's 'Safe City' Strategy 2022-2027) and the Health and Wellbeing Strategy (2020-2025).

KEY DECISION?	Yes
WARDS/COMMUNITIES AFFECTED:	All
<u>SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION</u>	
Appendices	
1.	Appendix 1 - Draft Domestic Abuse and Violence Against Women and Girls Strategy 2023 – 2028

Documents In Members' Rooms

1	DA-VAWG Strategy ESIA
2	DA-VAWG Strategy Full Consultation Results
3	DA-VAWG Consultation Considerations table
4	DA Partnership Board Terms of Reference

Equality Impact Assessment

Do the implications/subject of the report require an Equality and Safety Impact Assessment (ESIA) to be carried out?	Yes
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Data Protection Impact Assessment

Do the implications/subject of the report require a Data Protection Impact Assessment (DPIA) to be carried out?	No
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Other Background Documents

Other Background documents available for inspection at:

Title of Background Paper(s)	Relevant Paragraph of the Access to Information Procedure Rules / Schedule 12A allowing document to be Exempt/Confidential (if applicable)
1. None	