




# Executive Decision Report

<b>Decision maker(s) at each authority and date of Cabinet meeting, Cabinet Member meeting or (in the case of individual Cabinet Member decisions) the earliest date the decision will be taken</b>	Full Cabinet  Date of decision: 27 April 2015	
	Full Cabinet  Date of decision: not before 31 March 2015  Forward Plan reference:	 THE ROYAL BOROUGH OF KENSINGTON AND CHELSEA
	Full Cabinet  Date of meeting or formal issue: not before 31 March 2015	 City of Westminster
<b>Report title (decision subject)</b>	<b>VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN AND GIRLS SHARED SERVICES STRATEGY</b>	
<b>Reporting officer</b>	RBKC: Director of Strategy and Local Services LBHF: Executive Director for Environment, Leisure and Residents Services WCC: Executive Director of City Management and Communities	
<b>Key decision</b>	Yes	
<b>Access to information classification</b>	Public	

## 1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1. The purpose of this report is to seek approval from Council Cabinets of the London Borough of Hammersmith and Fulham, the Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea and the City of Westminster to adopt the Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG) Shared Services Strategy.

## 2. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1. That the Council Cabinets of the London Borough of Hammersmith and Fulham, the Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea and the City of Westminster adopt the three year Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG) Shared Services Strategy.

## 3. REASONS FOR DECISION

- 3.1. **A shift in strategic direction into a broader VAWG approach across the three boroughs (rather than a more narrowly applied definition of Domestic Violence) with the aim of working more effectively and collaboratively as stakeholders to the benefit of victims.**
- 3.2. The Shared Services VAWG Strategic Partnership has adopted the United Nations (UN) definition of VAWG<sup>1</sup> which defines it as: *“any act of gender-based violence that is directed at a woman because she is a woman, or acts of violence which are suffered disproportionately by women”*. The majority of gender based violence is perpetrated by men on women and girls; however men and boys will be affected by these issues as well and a response to them is also contained in the delivery of the strategy.
- 3.3. Council officers, in consultation with a wide range of stakeholders from the community, statutory and voluntary sectors, developed a VAWG Shared Services Strategy and three year action plan and have re-aligned strategic and governance structures to deliver this new approach. (Refer to Appendix B for VAWG Shared Services Strategy). The procurement of VAWG shared services across the three Councils supports the delivery of the Strategy.

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<sup>1</sup> Violence against women and girls brings together ten strands of policy under the one umbrella term. These are: 1.Domestic violence and abuse, 2.Sexual violence including rape, 3.Stalking, 4.Sexual Harassment, 5.Prostitution and trafficking, 6.Female genital mutilation (FGM), 7.Forced marriage, 8.“Honour” based violence, 9.Sexual exploitation and 10.Faith based abuse.

3.4. **Commissioning of VAWG shared services across the three councils.**

- 3.5. The three councils have undertaken a shared procurement for VAWG services which provides an innovative, survivor focussed framework of specialist services to prevent harm, reduce risk and increase immediate and long term safety. This collaborative approach between the three councils is supported by a wider network of professionals, survivors and the community.

4. **BACKGROUND**

- 4.1. The three councils commissioned an Independent VAWG Needs Assessment in 2013. Among its purposes was the identification and assessment of the efficiency of service responses, both specialist and mainstreamed, across the three Councils. The needs assessment provided a number of recommendations regarding the future commissioning of services in addition to changes in policy and governance arrangements. The proposed VAWG Shared Services Strategy for approval is in line with these recommendations.
- 4.2. The three councils were successful in securing £480,000 annual funding from the Mayor's Office for Policing and Crime (MOPAC) for the procurement of VAWG shared services contract across the three Councils. The commissioning process has been concurrent to the development of the strategy and it is required to be in place by 1 July 2015 when the newly commissioned services commence.
- 4.3. To support both the development of a VAWG Shared Services Strategy and procurement process, officers from the three Councils restructured the strategic and operational governance arrangements across the three councils to provide a single VAWG Strategic Board supported by seven thematic delivery groups aligned to the seven themes of the Strategy. Appendix A details the structure of the VAWG Strategic Partnership. The strategy will be assured by the VAWG Strategic Board, supported by a VAWG Strategic lead and delivered by thematic Operational Groups.

5. **PROPOSAL AND ISSUES**

- 5.1. To adopt the VAWG Shared Services Strategy and implement the proposals.
- 5.2. The move towards a single strategy, governance structure, delivery mechanisms and procurement process in respect of VAWG will ensure more effective delivery of a coordinated community response to VAWG. The Strategy will be supported by a SMART Action Plan with outcomes linked to evidenced need, national and regional frameworks and commissioning of services. These outcomes will be measurable and demonstrate the effectiveness of the VAWG response.

5.3. The strategy has a strong focus on prevention alongside outcomes for people affected by these issues. It demonstrates a commitment to deliver a coordinated community response to VAWG by engaging professionals from a range of sectors to work together. It keeps survivors and their children at the centre of its strategic and operational response, along with holding perpetrators accountable and providing opportunities to reform.

5.4. The 7 strategic priorities of the VAWG Partnership are:

- Access
- Response
- Community
- Practitioners
- Children and Young People
- Perpetrators
- Justice and Protection

## **6. OPTIONS AND ANALYSIS**

6.1. Cabinet Members may:

6.2. Accept the Recommendation to adopt the strategy.

6.3. Decline to adopt the strategy and alternatively consider a sovereign strategic approach to responding to these issues. This approach is not recommended by officers as it may impact upon the three Council's ability to deliver and performance manage a coherent service system procured across the three Councils.

6.4. Decline to have a VAWG strategy. This would mean an absence of strategic oversight and the delivery of a coordinated community response to VAWG. A lack of strategic management of these issues may place residents at increased risk of harm and have a reputational affect upon the three Councils.

## **7. CONSULTATION**

7.1 The Imkaan Women's Aid Partnership facilitated six independent stakeholder capacity building/consultation events during August to September 2014. These included a VAWG Shared Services consultation event with third-sector providers and commissioners; two third-sector feedback and capacity building events without commissioners and three service user consultations including one for BME survivors. The consultation established a series of recommendations which have informed the Strategy.

7.2 The Strategy has been informed by consultation with and comments and suggestions from the VAWG Strategic Board and officers from the Local

Safeguarding Children's Board, the Early Help Board, the Safeguarding Adults Executive Board, Clinical Commissioning Groups and Health and Well Being Boards over a six month period.

## **8. EQUALITY IMPLICATIONS**

- 8.1 An Equalities Impact Assessment has been conducted. In relation to the strategy, there will be a positive impact for women and girls and those with protected characteristics. Due to the expansion from domestic abuse and sexual violence strategic direction to wider VAWG issues, the wider response will be more accessible to a range of people experiencing a variety of issues, including male victims.

## **9. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 9.1. N/A

## **10. FINANCIAL AND RESOURCES IMPLICATIONS**

- 10.1 The adoption of the strategy does not have any direct financial implications. Financial implications of the VAWG Shared Service commissioning is detailed in the **Shared Services Violence Against Women and Girls Contract Award Key Decision Report**.

**Local Government Act 1972 (as amended) – Background papers used in the preparation of this report - none**

### **Contact officer(s):**

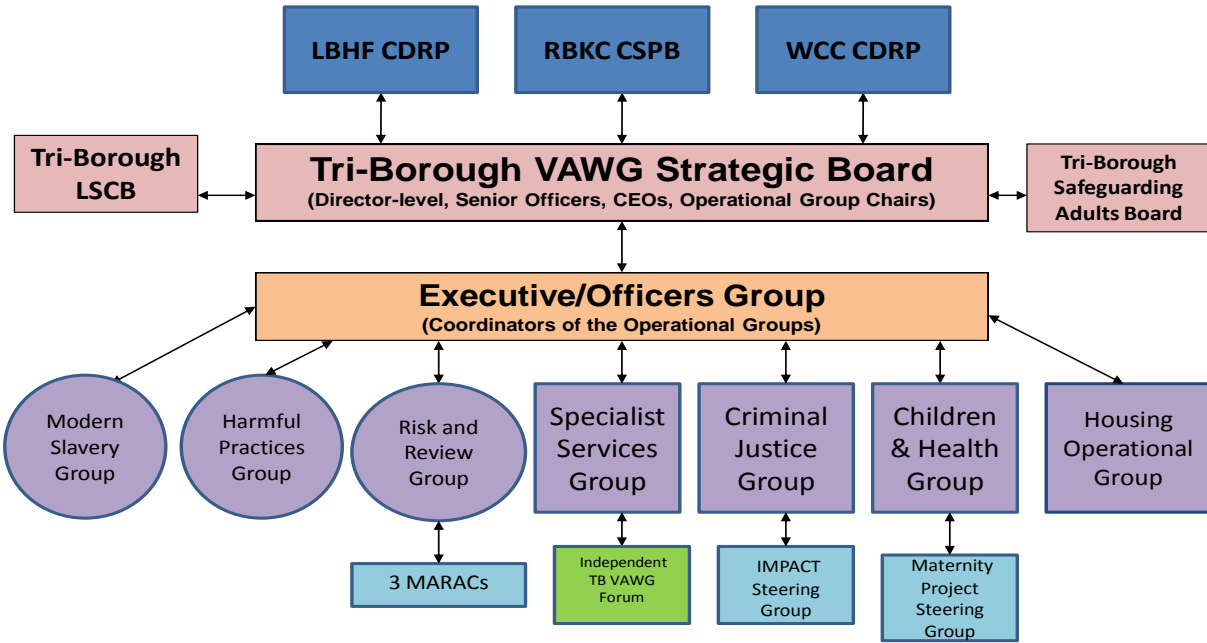
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**APPENDIX A (attached) VAWG Partnership Governance Structure**



**APPENDIX B (attached) Shared Services VAWG Strategy (pdf)**