

Contains Confidential or Exempt Information	N
Title	Male Violence Against Women and Girls Action Plan
Responsible Officer(s)	Nicky Fiedler, Strategic Director of Housing & Environment
Author(s)	Paul Murphy, Head of Community Safety
Portfolio(s)	Cabinet Member for Tackling Inequality
For Consideration By	Senior Cabinet
Date to be Considered	17 th April 2024
Implementation Date if Not Called In	23 rd April 2024
Affected Wards	All
Keywords/Index	

Details of decision: The purpose of this report is to approve the council's Action Plan setting out its response to male violence against women and girls (MVAWG).

Recommendations for DECISION

1. That Cabinet approves the implementation of the council's Male Violence Against Women and Girls (MVAWG) Action Plan 2024-2027.

Recommendations for NOTING

2. That Cabinet notes the priority areas highlighted within the council's MVAWG Action Plan (2024-2027) agreed in February 2023 in the context of the council's VAWG Strategy and the data analysis of national and local crime data and qualitative feedback received through the council's *Safer Ealing For Women* listening exercises on which this was developed.

1. Reason for Decision and Options Considered

- 1.1 Ealing Council and the Safer Ealing Partnership are committed to making the borough a safer place to live, work and visit for everybody. A key pillar of this

commitment is recognising and responding effectively to violence against women and girls.

- 1.2 The UN defines Violence Against Women and Girls as '*Any act of gender-based violence that is directed at a woman because she is a woman; or Acts of violence that are suffered disproportionately by women. This includes physical, sexual, and psychological/emotional violence, economic abuse, and sexual exploitation.*' Violence against women and girls can take place at home, at work, or in public places.
- 1.3 Male violence against women and girls is a health and human rights issue, cutting across all areas of work in the council's MVAWG Strategy and has links with a number local strategies, including our approach to health and wellbeing, education, Prevent and community safety. The council's MVAWG Strategy is informed by the government's *Tackling Violence Against Women and Girls Strategy* and by the *Mayor of London's Violence against Women and Girls (VAWG) strategy*, the work of the Mayor's Office for Policing and Crime (MOPAC) and the *Domestic Abuse Act (2021)*.
- 1.4 This action plan sets out a strong commitment to tackling MVAWG issues, setting out an ambitious approach to making the borough a safer place for women and girls. The action plan commits to 'tough action to prevent violence against women and girls, end female genital mutilation (FGM), and extend support through the Women's Wellness Zone network established in the borough.' The action plan also sets out that Ealing is 'committed to enforcing our public space protection order at Mattock Lane, ensuring women have access to family planning free from intimidation, and highlights our commitment to invest more than £1m in making public spaces safer and well lit'.
- 1.5 The council's Male Violence Against Women and Girls Strategy was refreshed in 2023. The refreshed strategy reflected the developed knowledge by professionals working with victims and survivors as well as with perpetrators. It also incorporated developments in the insight and understanding of the issues among the broader public and our residents and was underpinned by the feedback from over 2,800 women and girls who took part in the council's listening exercise, *A Safer Ealing For Women (SEfW)* in 2022.
- 1.6 The strategy incorporated misogyny and behaviours and offences that were not explicitly identified in the council's previous strategy, such as stalking and the challenge posed by perpetrators and repeat perpetrators. There was also a much sharper focus on women and girls' safety in public spaces in light of concerns prompted by the high-profile tragic murders of women in public places, including Sarah Everard, Sabina Nessa, Bibaa Henry and Nicole Smallman and others that received deserved national attention and generated widespread public reflection and debate.
- 1.7 The refreshed strategy sets our four key priorities in response to these challenges:
 - Prevention

- Support for victims/survivors
- Developing a community co-ordinated response
- Holding perpetrators to account

1.8 The council formerly recognise within the label applied to the Strategy that it is targeting those gender-based offences where the perpetrators are overwhelmingly male. Like a number of other local authorities, community safety partnerships and constabularies, the council has adopted the term MVAWG. Using this term does not mean the partnership do not recognise those instances of violence perpetrated on women by other women. Indeed, the partnership, the Council Plan and the strategy itself recognises there are complex behaviours within the context of interfamilial and honour-based violence, as well as FGM and abuse within same-sex relationships, where women perpetrate violence on other women or the lower number of cases where women perpetrate domestic abuse towards male partners. However, we know from the evidence reviewed, from careful data analysis and from feedback from a wide range of professional and voluntary sector partners that the majority of violence against women and girls are perpetrated by men and that the complexities of interfamilial violence stem from patriarchal hierarchies that re-enforce systems of abuse or control by men towards women and girls.

1.9 In London the messaging from City Hall and from MOPAC refers to 'male violence' when discussing issues of violence against women and girls. The recent well-received media communications and awareness campaigns by MOPAC, including the *'Have a word with yourself, then with your mates'* awareness campaign targeting men, remind us that violence 'starts with words' and that words matter.

1.10 The action plan has been developed by the council's VAWG strategic group under the oversight of the Safer Ealing Partnership, and key contributors include:

- Metropolitan Police Service (West Area BCU)
- Children and Families Services
- Adult Social Care
- Public Health
- Community Safety
- Licensing and Regulatory Services

1.11 A range of voluntary and third sector groups have also contributed to the plan, which is focused around tangible delivery of the four priority areas of the council's MVAWG Strategy.

1.12 Within the four sections of the action plan, actions and the anticipated outcomes are listed, alongside the lead agencies and boards who have governance oversight for those actions.

1.13 A lot of the actions outlined have been developed from examples of existing good practice and based on feedback from partners and from women and girls across the borough as part of the *Safer Ealing for Women* listening exercise

and the follow-on public consultation on the developed action plan. In many cases the actions described are already being delivered and the action plan primarily provides a framework for scrutiny and oversight. There are additionally actions focussing on new or developing practice, such as the use of licencing conditions in the prevention of MVAWG and the development of perpetrator programmes targeting perpetrators under the age of 18.

- 1.14 Tracking of the plan will be undertaken by the council's VAWG Strategic Group, with a quarterly progress report fed into the Safer Ealing Partnership and an annual report on delivery of the action plan being submitted to the council's Overview and Scrutiny Committee as part of the scrutiny on the work of the Safer Ealing Partnership.

2. Key Implications

- 1.1. The action plan will direct the Safer Ealing Partnership's work on responding to and tackling MVAWG in 2024-27. This period will bring a number of challenges in addressing cultural and institutional issues related to MVAWG within lead agencies.
- 1.2. That cultural context includes the significant challenges the Metropolitan Police Service (MPS) are facing in relation to public trust and confidence and, in particular, the trust and confidence women and girls in London have in the Police, where a number of high profile, deeply troubling cases involving serving MPS officers have significantly damaged trust and confidence.
- 1.3. In this context the strong partnership focus of the plan is important as a means to enable partners to act as critical friends and to constructively challenge each other. Through this approach, combined with the *A New Met for London* plan and the wider support of agencies, the council can play its part in supporting the MPS to deliver their stated objective of creating a new culture within their organisation where MVAWG is not tolerated and where it does occur, incidents are promptly reported and actioned swiftly as a means to restoring the trust of women and the wider public.
- 1.4. The action plan sets out goals for supporting our communities to regain and rebuild their trust in the Police and in developing stronger and more resilient communities, where we are clear that MVAWG behaviours are not welcome and will be challenged where they occur. Clear commitments from the MPS locally are set out within the action plan, including increased preventative work with schools around child sexual exploitation, increasing the use of Domestic Violence Prevention Orders and female-officer led walk and talk events in public spaces across the borough.

2. Financial

- 1.1. There are no financial implications to the report. The action plan will be implemented within existing community safety budgets.

2. Legal

- 2.1. There are no legal implications to this report.
- 2.2. In terms of the broader legal framework, the council's MVAWG Action Plan forms a key part of the Safer Ealing Partnership's commitment to tackling MVAWG in line with the council's MVAWG strategy, itself informed by the government's *Tackling Violence Against Women and Girls Strategy* and by the *Mayor of London's Violence against Women and Girls (VAWG) strategy*, the work of the Mayor's Office for Policing and Crime (MOPAC) and the *Domestic Abuse Act (2021)*. Additionally, under the *Police Crime Sentencing and Courts Act (2022)* tackling sexual violence is a key pillar of the council's *Serious Violence Duty*.
- 2.3. Additionally, under section 17 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 the council must exercise its functions with due regard to the likely effect on and the need to do all that it reasonably can to prevent crime and disorder in its area. The action plan set out in this report for ending MVAWG contributes to the council complying with its duties under these provisions.
- 2.4. The council has a range of broader statutory responsibilities that set out an expectation that it develops and strengthens its response to MVAWG. These include:
 - *The Children Act (1989)*
 - *Female Genital Mutilation Act (2003)*
 - *The Children Act (2004)*
 - *The Care Act (2014)*
 - *Forced Marriage Act (2014)*
 - *Serious Crime Act (2015)*

3. Value For Money

- 3.1. There are no specific Value For Money implications contained in this report, and the MVAWG Action Plan and its delivery do not impact on this area. The existing process for monitoring the effectiveness of commissioned services remains.

4. Sustainability Impact Appraisal

- 4.1. The MVAWG Action Plan does not have any tangible impact on environment or sustainability issues.

5. Risk Management

5.1. The risk of actions not being delivered to the standard of the commitments outlined within the plan will be managed through monitoring of delivery of the plan by the MVAWG Strategic Group and ultimately the Safer Ealing Partnership, with an annual report on the delivery of the plan forming part of the scrutiny of the work of the Safer Ealing Partnership, reviewed by the council's Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

6. Community Safety

1.1. The MVAWG Action Plan forms a key part of the council's community safety strategy. The strategy sets out clear priorities to preventing MVAWG, improving support, building resilience within communities and robustly targeting and tackling perpetrators.

2. Links to the 3 Key Priorities for the Borough

2.1. The MVAWG Action Plan forms an important part of the council's delivery on its commitment to fighting inequality and crime.

3. Equalities, Human Rights and Community Cohesion

3.1. The listening exercises and consultation, around which the Action Plan has been built, were delivered with regard to the requirements of the Equality Act (2010), and 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.

3.2. The proposals set out in this report will have a positive impact on Equalities and will demonstrate in tangible actions the council's commitment to protecting women and girls, tackling gender-based violence and calling out misogyny in all its forms.

3.3. Cabinet are not being asked to make any decision that adversely impacts any protected group or characteristic. The contents of this report do not relate to any action that will engage rights protected under the European Convention on Human Rights. MVAWG is a health and human rights issue, which cuts across all areas of work of the council, particularly in relation to our approaches to health and wellbeing, and crime prevention, and to mechanisms to provide support to all victims of crime.

4. Staffing/Workforce and Accommodation implications

4.1. There are no implications for staffing, workforce or accommodation within the action plan beyond the commitment to retain existing services and to explore options to grow the borough's offer and the broader community support network.

5. Property and Assets

5.1. There are no property implications.

6. Any other implications

6.1. There are no other implications that have not already been set out within the rest of this report.

7. Consultation

7.1. The Action Plan was informed by a wide range of partners via the Safer Ealing Partnership, Prevent Partnership, MVAWG Operational Group and MVAWG Strategic Group, as well as by the views of over 2,800 Ealing women and girls who took part in the Council's *Safer Ealing for Women* conversation during 2022-23. A further consultation on the developed Action Plan was undertaken in December 2023 – January 2024, which took into account the views of over 700 women and girls from the borough. The outcome of these conversations are outlined both within the Council's MVAWG Strategy and the 'You Said, We Did' summary produced as part of the follow-up conversation and consultation. The *Safer Ealing for Women* conversation continues and will be used to inform and measure the impact of the MVAWG Action Plan.

8. Timetable for Implementation

8.1. If Cabinet are minded to approve the MVAWG Action Plan, the council will adopt the plan with effect from the expiration of the call-in period and delivery will progress immediately.

9. Appendices

- Appendix 1: Ealing Council's MVAWG Action Plan 2024-2027.
- Appendix 2: Ealing Council's MVAWG Strategy, 2023-2027.
- Appendix 3: Ealing Council's MVAWG Action Plan delivery summary (Autumn 2023).

10. Background Information

10.1. All of the background information referred to within this report is included in Appendices 1 and 2.

Consultation

Name of consultee	Post held	Date sent to consultee	Date response received	Comments appear in paragraph:
Internal				

Justin Morley	Head of Legal Services			
Russel Dyer	Head of Accountancy			
Emily Hill	Strategic Director, Resources			
Nicky Fiedler	Strategic Director, Housing & Environment			
Cllr Jasbir Anand	Cabinet Member for Tackling Inequality and Crime			
Jess Murray	Assistant Director, Community Protection			
External				
	MVAWG Strategic Group			

Report History

Decision type:	Urgency item?
Non-key decision	N
Report no.:	Report author and contact for queries:
	Paul Murphy