


<b>Details of Leadership Team meeting or (in the case of individual Lead Member or Executive Director decisions) by whom and the <u>earliest</u> date the decision will be taken</b>	Leadership Team Meeting Date of report: 14 <sup>th</sup> December 2023 Date of decision: 17 <sup>th</sup> January 2024	 <p>THE ROYAL BOROUGH OF KENSINGTON AND CHELSEA</p>
<b>Forward Plan ref:</b>	KD1007457	
<b>Report title</b>	Serious Violence Strategy 2024	
<b>Reporting officer</b>	Callum Wilson, Strategic Director of Grenfell Partnerships.	
<b>Key decision</b>	Yes	
<b>Access to information classification</b>	Public	
<b>Wards</b>	All	

**1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

- 1.1 The Serious Violence Duty was introduced under the Police, Crime, Sentencing and Courts Act 2022. The Council is a statutory duty holder and has until 31 January 2024 to demonstrate compliance with the requirement of the Duty to the Home Office. The requirements for duty holder authorities are:
- undertake an evidence-based analysis of the causes of serious violence in their area (and have effective data sharing to enable this)
  - develop a strategic needs assessment based on the analysis.
  - develop and implement a strategy with solutions to prevent and reduce serious violence in their area, which will need to be reviewed every year.
- 1.2 These requirements of the Serious Violence Duty have been completed and the Serious Violence Strategy (**Appendix 2**) is the outcome of the in-depth analysis contained within the serious violence needs assessment. The recommendations have been approved by the Safer K and C Board, alongside extensive consultation with other stakeholder boards in the borough.
- 1.3. It is important to note the Strategy does not work in isolation and builds on the extensive work that was already underway in the borough. It should be read

alongside The Community Safety Plan, The Youth Violence and Exploitation Strategy, The Violence against Women and Girls Strategy, End Modern Slavery Strategy—all of which deliver detailed plans for how the borough will be made a safer place and reduce harm.

- 1.4. There are three outcomes that the Serious Violence Strategy will achieve to reduce the impact and prevent serious violence in RBKC. These align with the existing outcomes in the Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG) Strategy 2021/26 and the Youth Violence and Exploitation Strategy 2022/25. These are:
  - Those who commit violence are held to account and harmful behaviour is prevented.
  - Victims are supported to feel safe, and their voices inform direct action.
  - Communities most adversely affected are prioritised and engaged.

## **2. RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 2.1. The Leadership Team is recommended to:-

- 2.1.1 Approve the publication of the RBKC Serious Violence Strategy 2024 (**Appendix 2**) to ensure the Council complies with the Serious Violence Duty legal requirements and timescales.

## **3. REASONS FOR DECISION**

- 3.1. The Safer Kensington and Chelsea Partnership is the strategic partnership responsible for crime and community safety issues and the serious violence duty in Kensington and Chelsea, under the requirements the Police, Crime, Sentencing and Courts Act 2022. This partnership Board which includes members of all duty holders has approved the RBKC Serious Violence Strategy 2024.
- 3.2. During 2023, the Safer K and C Board which meets quarterly has overseen the development of the strategy and has agreed:
  - the adoption of the London definition of serious violence.
  - the scope of the data to be analysed.
  - the approach to resident engagement.
  - the findings and recommendations from the needs assessments
  - the priority outcomes for the strategy.
- 3.3 The Safer K and C Board has long established membership includes senior representation from the Police, Council, London Fire Brigade, Probation Service, Health, Public Health, Mayor's Office for Policing and Crime and the resident led Safer Neighbourhood Board. The Board has extensive experience of crime reduction and has published a number of Strategies and Plans relevant to the Serious Violence Duty. These include:
  - Community Safety Plan 2022

- Youth Violence and Exploitation Strategy 2022
- Violence Against Women and Girls Strategy 2021

3.4 Details of these can be found on the Council's Community Safety webpage.

3.5. The Board also agreed, that having published three relevant Strategies which are still current, not to publish a standalone Serious Violence Strategy but to instead publish an addendum chapter to the existing Community Safety Plan. This will function as the Serious Violence Strategy whilst accounting for, and aligning to, the existing local plans and strategies described at paragraph 3.2.

#### **4. BACKGROUND**

4.1. The Council Plan states that it will *work with the Police and communities to improve safety in the borough and to support the police to minimise and prevent crime* under the Safer priority. The Serious Violence Strategy forms part of this work and also delivers the Council's statutory responsibilities within context of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 and the new duty. The Strategy provides a clear statement of the Council and the other duty holders to make the borough a safer place and to protect residents and communities from violence.

4.2. The December 2022 Home Office guidance entitled 'Serious Violence Duty Preventing and reducing serious violence Statutory Guidance for responsible authorities' provides freedoms and flexibilities in the approach to developing a Strategic Needs Assessment and publishing a Serious Violence Strategy. These freedoms include the local definition of serious violence and the format of the Strategy. It states:

*"In recognition of a CSPs wider remit in relation to community safety, and that many issues concerning violent crime can be interrelated, a CSP may choose to incorporate their strategy for preventing and reducing serious violence into a wider plan which also encompasses their other priorities. This will also help to ensure that individual strategies are aligned without being duplicative."*

4.3 To ensure a consistent approach across the Capital, the Mayor's Office for London's Violence Reduction Unit, in collaboration with the London Heads of Community Safety, produced a definition of Serious Violence for London:

*"Violence and exploitation affecting young people under the age of 25, domestic abuse and sexual violence. Within the context of these types of violence, it encompasses homicide, grievous bodily harm, actual bodily harm, rape, assault by penetration, sexual assault, personal robbery, threats to kill and violence against property caused during the course of the commission of one of these offences. It will include any of the above offences where a knife, section one firearm or corrosive substance is used, threatened or intimidated. Domestic abuse is as defined in the Domestic Abuse Act 2021. "*

4.4 The data used to inform the Strategic Needs Assessment has been formulated from the guidance provided by the Violence Reduction Unit, as well as local knowledge of Council systems and records. This incorporates open-source data in regard to population demographics as well as data that has been shared specific for this project. Violence data sets obtained that are not open source include:

- Police Violence Crime Data.
- Family and Children’s Data for domestic abuse and exploitation.
- Youth Offending Data
- Adults Safeguarding Data for violent harm.
- Domestic Abuse Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conference (MARAC) Data
- Hospital Emergency Department Assault Data
- Community Safety Youth Violence Services Data
- Housing Management Data – domestic abuse and cases that meet definition for violent harm/ exploitation definition.
- Nation Probation Service Data for Violent Offenders

4.5 This Strategy does not start from scratch and much work is already being delivered across membership agencies. For Youth Violence and Exploitation and domestic abuse and sexual violence themes are reflective of extensive work with stakeholders to develop the additional separate strategies in 2021/22.

4.6 There have been many achievements with projects successfully delivered and services implemented – for example, help has been provided to 3,000 survivors of violence against women and girls, and over 200 young people affected by serious youth violence have been supported. This Strategy builds on areas of best practice, enhancing the work that is recognised to be achieving outcomes as well as developing responses where there is additional need.

## **5. OPTIONS, ANALYSIS AND PROPOSALS**

5.1. The Home Office, via the London Violence Reduction Unit has provided some finance resources to produce the strategy, but no additional resources to deliver outcomes. Therefore, the ambitions of the strategy need to align to existing capacity.

5.2. A number of the Community Safety services that deliver the work contained within the plan are externally grant-funded and the resources available will fluctuate with competing demands. The Strategy commits to making resources available as priority and requires that the Council and its partners work collaboratively, making use of external grant funding and opportunities where possible. However, any significant changes to resources may have an impact on the ability to deliver the outcomes.

5.3. The Council is only one of the duty holders and successful outcomes will depend on effective results across all stakeholders, including partners much broader than the named duty holders. However, the Chair of the Safer K and C Partnership is the Lead Member for Community Safety, and this Board holds the statutory

responsibility. The Community Safety Team have delivered all of the coordination to inform the strategy with the approval of the remaining duty holders. To reduce serious violence, it requires a whole systems response across a wide range of stakeholders and the duty make this a legal requirement upon all of the duty holders. Through the agreement of this Strategy the duty holders are affirming their commitment to reduce and prevent violence in RBKC.

## 6. CONSULTATION AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

- 6.1 The Serious Violence Needs Assessment has a chapter which has analysis of the local Community Voice and what is important to residents in the approach to reducing serious violence. The Safer K and C Partnership, as well as the Council has done extensive engagement with residents to understand their needs, views on local services, and their concerns and how agencies respond to them. Much of this existing consultation work has provided helpful insight to inform the serious violence duty. In addition, some targeted engagement has been undertaken on the specific themes of youth violence, exploitation, domestic abuse and sexual violence.
- 6.2 The key messages from the consultation and engagement activity have been to focus on access to support for victims, building trust and approaches to reporting, enforcement measures against those that cause the most harm and involving the community in the delivery.

Consultation and Engagement Type	Key Findings	Date	Full results
Community Safety Citizen's Panel	Community Safety Priorities: Drug related offences were viewed to be the biggest problem (60%), followed by antisocial behaviour (51%), Youth violence and exploitation (39%) and violence against women and girls (34%).	2022 and 2023	<a href="#">Findings 2022</a> <a href="#">Findings 2023</a>
VAWG Strategy Consultation	In regards personal experience of VAWG: 61% of respondents had experienced harassment/ cat calling, followed by 46% sexual harassment, 18% stalking, 17% domestic abuse and 16% sexual violence and rape.	2021	<a href="#">Findings</a>
Community Safety Plan workshops	The areas with the most mentions across the Community groups were: 1. Youth violence: including knife crime and criminal exploitation (for drug supply). 2. Antisocial behaviour: range of issues from begging, noisy neighbours to drug related behaviours 3. Drug related offending: this was frequently mentioned in regard to both question one and two,	2021	<a href="#">Findings</a>

Consultation and Engagement Type	Key Findings	Date	Full results
	<p>but also the impact that organised offending and drug supply has on many areas of safety and crime.</p> <p>4. Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG): mentions related to rise in domestic abuse during pandemic, concern about sexual exploitation of children and harassment/ female feelings of safety in public places.</p>		
Children's and Young People's Plan	<p>Findings for Priority 3: Children and young people feel safe, and are protected from serious youth violence, harm, harmful practices, abuse, and neglect at home, online and in the community. Young people told us that they are concerned about online safety, social media pressures. Some young people shared their concerns for their safety when travelling outside their own postcode area, how this impacts on other aspects of their lives including taking up employment and training opportunities. Young people spoke emotionally about their experiences and fears of 'stop and searches' and stories of young people let down by public services that have recently been in the media. Residents agreed and felt that the Council should focus on safety and perceptions of safety.</p>	2023	<a href="#">Children and Young People's Plan.</a>
Youth Violence and Exploitation "It takes a village" event and community conversation	<p>Residents' would welcome regular community conversations to discuss youth violence and exploitation. They are concerned about risk factors including school exclusion, trust in policing, use of social media, grooming and financial pressures for families.</p> <p>The community would welcome work to support parents with information, awareness and support. As well as building awareness and trust with specialist services available.</p>	2023	Not published.
VAWG Strategic Board	<p>The partners and stakeholders are concerned about poor and inconsistent police responses to call outs for Domestic Abuse. There is a heightened mistrust from BAME communities. More training and community outreach work, alongside resident awareness campaigns on services are a priority.</p>	2023	Not published.

Consultation and Engagement Type	Key Findings	Date	Full results
	A community/resident’s event around VAWG and the Police to be considered, to rebuild trust and increase reporting of incidents.		
Police Public Attitudes Survey	Respondents to the quarterly police public attitudes survey show that 57% of police do a good job, and 63% think that police respond to matters that are important to the local area. RBKC tends to perform well against other boroughs in this survey. Across London in the most recent quarter there have been reductions in the responses who think that violence is a problem in their area.	Quarterly reports 2022/23	<a href="#">MOPAC Findings</a>

## 7. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1 As a Specified Authority under the Police, Crime, Sentencing and Courts Act 2022 the Council is required to ensure compliance with the Serious Violence Duty as well as ensure compliance with the December 2022 Statutory Guidance entitled “Serious Violence Duty Preventing and reducing serious violence Statutory Guidance for responsible authorities”.
- 7.2 In order to meet the Duty, the Council must be able to demonstrate an understanding of local issues in order to identify the kinds of serious violence that occur in the council area and so far, as it is possible to do so, the causes of that serious violence. The guidance states that the Council should prepare, publish and implement a Strategy for exercising their functions to prevent and reduce serious violence in the area within the Community Safety Partnerships arrangement. The Council should ensure any Strategy is kept under review and, from time to time, revised. Good practice suggests the Strategy is reviewed by the Community Safety Partnership annually.
- 7.3 To complement the overarching Duty, amendments to the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 ensure that Community Safety Partnerships have an explicit role in evidence based strategic action on serious violence. The Council is one of a number of responsible authorities required to work together to combat and reduce serious violence in the council area.
- 7.4 This report outlines the requirement to evidence compliance by 31 January 2024. The Crime and Disorder (Overview and Scrutiny) Regulations 2009 also require the Council to scrutinise Community Safety Partnerships at least annually.

## **8. FINANCIAL, PROPERTY, IT AND ANY OTHER RESOURCES IMPLICATIONS**

- 8.1 There are no direct financial implications arising from the recommendations contained within this report.
- 8.2 All future work streams resulting from this strategy will require financial appraisal on a case-by-case basis to support decision making and appropriate funding sources will need to be identified.

## **9. HUMAN RESOURCES IMPLICATIONS**

- 91 There are no Human Resource implications arising from the implementation of this of this plan.

## **10. EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS**

- 10.1 An EqIA screening document has been completed with RBKC Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Lead and the duty has a positive effect on protected characteristic groups it was accepted and a full EQIA was not necessary. The screening report is attached alongside this document – **Appendix 1**.

***Director of Communities, Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea***

**Local Government Act 1972 (as amended) – Background papers used in the preparation of this report.**

**Contact officer:** Stuart Priestley, Chief Community Safety Officer

### **Mandatory clearance requirements for all Key and Executive Decision reports**

Cleared by Corporate Finance	(HG)
Cleared by Legal Services	(JG)
Cleared by Communications	(NT)