

## **COUNCIL – 21 JULY 2022**

### **MEMBER QUESTION**

#### **TO COUNCILLOR BAINS FROM COUNCILLOR MUVVALA**

“Following the Council Motion adopted by the Council in January 2022, can Members be provided with a progress update relating to improving the safety of women and girls on our streets?”

#### **Reply**

The summary below provides an overview in relation to the question raised following a council motion passed in January 2022. The motion agreed: “This council believes that more needs to be done to improve the safety of women and girls on our streets. We therefore agree to the following”

An update is provided in respect of the specific points raised within the motion relating to the work of the council and partnership.

#### **Details**

1. Recommend that the SSP (Safer Slough Partnership) expand their work programme to include community engagement, to pro-actively communicate with women and girls to better understand their needs, challenges and fears within their neighbourhoods and create safe spaces where crime is designed out;

*Slough council had formed a multi-agency project team that secured £550k of Home Office funding and delivered across a range of projects that has included.*

- *Co-designing with community partners and charities environmental changes across a number of locations including provision of new pathways and improved lighting.*
- *Co-Design Communications Project: Supporting and enabling young people in Chalvey to develop their own communications project aimed at reducing VAWG.*
- *Development of the Choice Programme to focus on VAWG: Working directly in schools with students, teachers, and parents to enhance collective responsibility and action around violence against women & girls.*
- *Street Guardianship: Recruiting community volunteers, these roles will improve the safety of women and girls through co-ordinating daily street patrols with volunteers and implementing the Safe Shops Scheme*

2. Engage with our partners, council companies and contractors to establish what more can be done to improve the safety of women and girls in Slough;

*Linked with the wider engagement programme above, there has been wide engagement with partners such as schools and charities. Examples include:*

- *Work commissioned to work with young people in the Chalvey area, that has identified risk factors, the opinions of boys and girls that will drive future activity*
- *A six week digital consultation with communities to determine public opinion and identify solutions for the future. In addition to the borough wide survey, Council Officers took to the streets of Chalvey to hear from women and girls about their concerns. This information supported the Chalvey Project aims.*
- *We set up a new Domestic Abuse board – this board will drive forward, not only the council's approach, but also shape our partnership response in Slough.*

3. Write to TVP to ask that they review their community engagement/development policies to ensure that they are responsive and incorporate/reflect “real time” community sentiments and feelings, e.g. resistance to a Slough Women’s Vigil following the tragic murder of Sarah Everard;

- *The council has worked closely with the police to develop robust tasking and responsiveness to crime including VAWG. This ensures that there are open lines of communication at times of crisis and increased community tension. This in effect enables the police and council to have honest dialogue in respect of community feelings, without impeding operational independence of partners. The council are able to link in with the police independent advisory group, police senior management and community and diversity officer without hindrance.*

4. That Slough Borough Council works toward becoming a White Ribbon Accredited Organisation.

- *Whilst this has not been achieved owing to current fiscal constraints, the council is working on the key themes required to achieve accreditation that includes; strategic leadership, engaging with men and boys, changing culture and raising awareness.*

## **Summary**

The Safer Slough Partnership is due to meet at the end of July, where the challenges confronting the partnership will be subject of discussion and prioritisation. The council and partners recognise the challenges of domestic abuse and violence against women and girls, and will make the case for prioritising action to tackle VAWG, within an ambitious strategy to achieve long term change. The council recognises the way to achieve change is via a co-ordinated community response, harnessing community interest, drive and resource.