1. SUMMARY

1.1 The purpose of this report is to inform Committee Members about both domestic violence and homophobic crime.

2. A NATIONAL PICTURE OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

2.1 Domestic violence (DV hereafter) remains highly prevalent in the borough. DV is defined as: "Any incident of threatening behaviour, violence or abuse (psychological, physical, sexual, financial or emotional) between adults who are or have been intimate partners or family members, regardless of gender or sexuality. This includes issues of concern to black and minority ethnic (BME) communities such as so called 'honour based violence', female genital mutilation (FGM) and forced marriage."

2.2 Domestic violence has a staggering financial impact on agencies and services and we know that it has a significant impact on the health and wellbeing of victims and their children. It is a major public health concern and is a priority safeguarding issues for children and adults.

2.3 Domestic violence is the leading cause of ill health for women aged 19 – 44, greater than cancer, war and motor vehicle accidents. Some 30% of domestic violence starts or gets worse during pregnancy. Between 50% and 60% of women mental health service users have experienced domestic violence, and up to 20% will be experiencing current abuse.

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3. A NATIONAL PICTURE OF LGBT HATE CRIME

3.1 In 2008, Stonewall published the Gay British Crime Survey, which canvassed 1721 lesbian, gay and bisexual people in the UK on their experiences of hate crime. They report that 1-in-5 had experienced hate crime within the last three years, and 1-in-8 in the last year. Three quarters of those who had been the victim of crime did not report the incident to the police. Experience of hate crime was significantly more common among those who belong to black and other minority ethnicities.

3.2 Data from the 2005 Gay Men's Sex Survey (GMSS) (Hickson et al. 2007) showed that homosexually active men commonly suffer verbal and physical abuse associated with their sexuality, and experience substantial discrimination in their everyday lives. In the year preceding the survey, 8.3% (1345/16252) reported being physically attacked and 31.7% had been verbally abused because of their sexuality. Only 36% of physical attacks and 8% of verbal abuse was reported to the police. In GMSS 2002 (Hickson et al. 2003) 26% of respondents had experienced homophobic discrimination from strangers in the street in the last year; 13% from work colleagues; 5% on public transport; and 5% while shopping.

3.3 While research suggests men are more likely to be abused or attacked as a consequence of their sexuality (D'Augelli & Grossman 2001) our own work suggests women are more likely to fear attack (Sigma Research, Lesbian & Gay Foundation and National AIDS Trust 2000). In our recent research with Stonewall on the health needs of lesbian and bisexual women (Hunt et al. 2008), 25% of women living in Waltham Forest had ever experienced domestic abuse, including 20% who had experienced it in a relationship with a woman.

3.4 Homophobic abuse and discrimination varies both in its extent and nature depending on a range of demographic and cultural factors (see our own review, Dodds et al. 2005). While school bullying is a particularly pernicious form of homophobia, it also takes on other forms within different ethnic communities. Moreover, all LGBT people are vulnerable to homophobic discrimination at work and in institutional and service settings. The capacity to resist homophobia is likely to be influenced by the relative social capital of the individual (that is, capacity for resistance is influenced by education, social class, age, ethnicity, income, living conditions etc).

3.5 It is likely that the ways in which social exclusion operates among LGBT people will be very different from other equality groups. Moreover, we cannot assume that lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgendered communities are homogeneous in terms of the levels of social exclusion and victimisation they experience. For example, the diverse population of gay and bisexual men is riven with internal social inequalities along the lines of ethnicity, education, migrancy status etc. (see Hickson et al. 2004, Keogh et al. 2004a, 2004b, 2004c).

3.6 The greatest social need amongst LGBT people is probably evident among those LGBT people who are members of already disadvantaged groups. For example, lesbians will have greater need than gay men because in society, men are generally more powerful than women. Likewise black gay men will have
greater need than white gay men because BME groups are on the whole less powerful than the white population and black men are particularly disadvantaged. Research appears to support these assumptions. However, we need to be wary of concluding that all LGBT social need resides in those LGBT people who are members of other disadvantaged groups.

4. A LOCAL PICTURE OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

4.1 In 2010/11 Waltham Forest to have the 5th highest rate of DV crimes reported per 1000 population when compared to other Metropolitan Police Service boroughs. In comparison for 2009/10 Waltham Forest had the 9th highest level.

4.2 The most recent Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA) records that:
   - Nearly eight in ten (79%) of victims were female;
   - About one in three victims were aged between 26 – 35 years (34%) which is disproportionate to their proportion of borough population of 15%;
   - Almost half (47%) of victims were classified as of white ethnic appearance and 28% of African Caribbean appearance in comparison with Census 2001 data this demonstrates that people of African Caribbean appearance are disproportionately more likely to become a victim of domestic violence as they are shown to account for 15% of the population.
   - More than four in ten (43%) of victims of domestic violence were shown to be unemployed (caution should be used when drawing any conclusions about the causal link between unemployment and domestic violence)
   - More than one in three (35%) of domestic violence victims were shown to have been repeat victims, which is significantly greater than for other crimes.
   - A greater proportion of repeat victims were found to be female;
   - More than half (53%) of children subject to child protection plans had significant levels of DV in the family;
   - Almost eight in ten (79%) of suspects were male and of those: almost one in three (32%) were aged between 26 – 35 years; almost four in ten (39%) were of white ethnic appearance which is lower than the borough population; and one in three (33%) were of African Caribbean appearance which, like victims, is greater than the borough demographic.

4.3 The estimated annual cost of domestic violence to the public purse in Waltham Forest is £26 million. The hidden cost to NHS in Waltham Forest in responding to DV (its immediate and the long term impact) is estimated to be £7.8 million a year. This figure includes the cost of visits to GPs and A&E, treatment for injuries, use of ambulances, prescriptions, and referral to services for treatment, mental health and rehabilitation.

5. A LOCAL PICTURE OF HOMOPHOBIC CRIME

5.1 In 2009 Sigma carried out a research project into the needs and experiences of lesbians, gay men, bisexual and trans men and women in Waltham Forest.

5.2 Respondents from both the survey and focus groups perceived crime in Waltham Forest as a significant concern. The majority felt that homophobic or transphobic harassment was a problem in the borough, although not

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4 LGBT Matters, Sigma, 2009
necessarily any more so than in other London boroughs. Many people avoided certain areas, streets, or parks, or avoided using public transport. Fear of homophobic or transphobic harassment was heightened among those who felt less able to deal with a threatening situation should it arise, such as elder persons. It was also exacerbated by homophobic graffiti that many perceived was not removed quickly enough. Fear of harassment, abuse or assault had led many to modify their behaviour when in public so as not to appear obviously lesbian, gay or bisexual.

5.3 Significant numbers of survey respondents had been physically attacked (10%) or verbally abused (39%) because of their LGBT identity in Waltham Forest. However, the majority of incidents were not reported to the police. While those who took part in focus groups believed that the police would act professionally, and in a non-prejudiced manner, they (and the majority of survey respondents) believed that the police were unlikely to take the matter seriously, or be able to do anything about it. Many perceived that the police believed they had more important issues to deal with, and that LGBT harassment fell low on their list of priorities. Prior negative experience of reporting other types of crime had caused many to question the police’s ability to deal effectively with crime should they report it again. However, it was accepted that not reporting of LGBT harassment would do little to raise the profile of the issue with the police.

5.4 In 2011/12 a total of xxx homophobic incidents were reported to the police.

6. LOCAL RESPONSES TO DOMESTIC VIOLENCE AND HOMOPHOBIC CRIME

6.1 An effective response to DV and homophobic crime will comprise the following:
- Increasing survivor safety
- Holding perpetrators accountable for their behaviour
- Challenging the social tolerance of domestic violence.

6.2 Local DV provision should serve the entire community, including any LGBT residents who are victims of DV.

6.3 Survivor safety is most effectively ensured through multi-agency safety planning, which is carried out through a Multi Agency Risk Assessment Conference (MARAC). This is recognised as best practice nationally, and Waltham Forest’s MARAC considers approximately 200 cases per year, which is about half of the recommended number.

6.4 Presently the Council has commissioned 4 different support services with a combined contract value of £230K:
- A contract with Victim Support to provide 1 Independent Domestic Violence Advocate
- A contract with Report IT the East London Community Law Service to provide legal and advocacy support to victims and witnesses of DV and hate crime
- Two contracts for counselling with Ashiana – sexual violence counselling and support groups and DV service

6.5 Work is being undertaken to commission a new more holistic DV service provision for the borough, which will replace these current contracts. The aim is
for a more accessible and coordinated service. This contract is mainly funded through the Voluntary Sector Commissioning Fund and topped up with the Community Safety Budget.

6.6 Domestic Violence is a key priority for Waltham Forest Council and despite reductions across the Voluntary Sector Commissioning budget the funding available for DV remained the same. Of concern is the fact that despite the wealth of evidence demonstrating the impact upon health and children these areas to do not contribute to the commissioning process.

6.7 For the next four years both Victim Support and Waltham Forest Council bid for and will receive £10,000 each organisation (value £80K) towards further IDVA provision, which will result in Waltham Forest now having 2.5 IDVAs, which is the recommended number by CAADA to support a monthly MARAC in Waltham Forest.

6.8 Work is now underway with DV services in the borough to record and report all health referrals on a monthly basis. A review of health engagement with the MARAC has been conducted and issues regarding representation are now being addressed at a strategic level with the support from NHS ONEL.

6.9 Victim Support offers support for all victims of crime, including those from the LGBT community. There are no specific services to support LGBT victims of crime in the borough.

7. **HUMAN RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS**

7.1 There are no specific human resource implications arising from this report.

8. **FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

8.1 The Council is committed to funding DV provision and is the sole local funder of support services. The Council currently receives approximately £500K in funding from the Mayor’s Office for Policing and Crime. However existing arrangements will cease in 2013/14, to be replaced with a competitive bidding process, with no guarantee that the borough will receive any financial support.

8.2 The economic and social cost of one murder is £1.46M, at 2003 rates. There was one domestic homicide in the borough in 2012/13.

9. **LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

11.1 There are no specific legal implications arising from this report.

10. **CLIMATE CHANGE IMPLICATIONS**

12.1 There are no specific climate change implications arising from this report.

11. **CONCLUSION**
13.1 The Council remains committed to supporting domestic violence provision in the face of diminishing resources. That provision will be accessible to all sections of the community.

13.2 There are no specialist LGBT services locally commissioned to support victims of homophobic crime.

12. APPENDICES

A. LGBT Matters