

PUBLIC SAFETY COMMITTEE

TO: *MAYOR AND COUNCILLORS*

**SUBJECT: SU: BURNABY-NEW WESTMINSTER TASK FORCE ON SEXUALLY
EXPLOITED AND AT-RISK YOUTH**

RECOMMENDATION:

THAT the report titled “SU: Burnaby-New Westminster Task Force on Sexually Exploited and At-Risk Youth” dated February 26, 2026, of the Public Safety Committee meeting, be received for information.

REPORT

The Public Safety Committee, at its meeting held on February 26, 2026, received and adopted the attached report providing Council with a status update (SU) on the activities of the Burnaby-New Westminster Task Force on Sexually Exploited and At-Risk Youth.

On behalf of the Public Safety
Committee,

Councillor J. Wang
Chair

Councillor M. Santiago
Vice Chair

TO: PUBLIC SAFETY COMMITTEE (PSC)
FROM: GENERAL MANAGER COMMUNITY SAFETY AND GENERAL
MANAGER PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT
SUBJECT: **SU: BURNABY-NEW WESTMINSTER TASK FORCE ON
SEXUALLY EXPLOITED AND AT-RISK YOUTH (2025)**
PURPOSE: To provide a status update (SU) on the activities of the Burnaby-New
Westminster Task Force on Sexually Exploited and At-Risk Youth.

RECOMMENDATION

THAT the report titled “SU: Burnaby-New Westminster Task Force on Sexually Exploited and At-Risk Youth (2025)” dated February 26, 2026, be received for information.

1.0 POLICY SECTION

The work of the Burnaby-New Westminster Task Force on Sexually Exploited and At-Risk Youth (Task Force) is aligned with the following Council-adopted policies, plans and strategies:

- Social Sustainability Strategy (2011);
- Equity Policy (1994, updated 2020); and
- Community Safety and Well-Being Plan (2025).

2.0 BACKGROUND

Since 1998, the Task Force has been working to address the sexual abuse of children and youth in sex trade. The membership is a multi-sectoral coalition, with staff representation from the City of Burnaby, City of New Westminster, Burnaby and New Westminster School Districts, Burnaby Public Library, Burnaby RCMP, New Westminster Police, Fraser Health Authority, the Ministry of Children and Family Development, and several non-profit agencies who provide services to youth. The Task Force operates as a sub-committee of the Public Safety Committee and is chaired by Councillor Santiago and vice-chaired by Burnaby School Board Trustee Hayes. From New Westminster, Councillor Henderson represents the City of New Westminster and Trustee Smith represents the New Westminster School District.

Over the years, the work of the Task Force has focused on two priorities:

- 1) To ensure provision of adequate support, services and treatment for sexually exploited children and youth; and

2) To prevent the commercial sexual exploitation of children and youth.

3.0 GENERAL INFORMATION

The Committee and Council were last updated on the work of the Task Force in June 2022. This report provides an overview of the Task Force’s key activities since that time and outlines the Task force’s priorities for its work plan. City staff are involved in the Task Force as follows: Social Planning provides in-kind administrative support and Community Safety aligns Task Force work with the Community Safety and Well-Being Plan. The key activities of the Task Force are summarized below.

3.1 Information Sharing and Networking

The Task Force presents an opportunity for service providers to share information and trends (e.g. recruitment activities, age of recruitment, geographic instances of recruitment etc.). These opportunities are crucial to the prevention of sexual exploitation and the identification of intervention methods/activities to support at-risk youth. The Task Force provides a unique, focussed opportunity for the sharing of information across jurisdictions (Burnaby-New Westminster) by a range of social service providers, School Districts, police forces (New Westminster Police, Burnaby RCMP), and local government representatives.

The long-standing nature of the Task Force has also nurtured the establishment of effective working relationships among these same bodies, which has increased membership interest, and the efficiency and timeliness of local response. The Task Force remains an important vehicle for these relationships and for the transmissions of knowledge as new agency representatives/workers are welcomed into the community.

Information sharing and networking was supported by:

- Quarterly meetings (a mix of in-person and online) to share trends, connections and discussion topics on youth exploitation in Burnaby and New Westminster.
- A networking event at Tommy Douglas Library.

3.2 Professional Development and Service Provider Capacity Building

The Task Force have renewed its efforts to curate related professional development opportunities and educational sessions. Over the years, the Task Force received presentations on Building Safer Communities initiatives from the City of Burnaby and New Westminister, as well as an anti-trafficking training session from the Covenant House.

On November 7, 2025, the City, in partnership with Burnaby School District, hosted a professional development day for service providers in Burnaby and New Westminister. The event, “Combatting Online Sexual Exploitation: Tools for Frontline Professionals” had informational sessions provided by speakers from PLEA Community Services and from the Burnaby RCMP Child Abuse Sexual Offences (CASO) Unit as well as participant networking opportunities.

A short survey was collected as feedback for this event, which indicated that attendees found value from the workshop and would welcome future workshops from the Task Force on topics such as the signs of online grooming and tools for working with parents on this topic. See Attachment 1 for more information and survey feedback from the participants.

3.3 Next Steps

The Task Force will continue meeting in 2026 and utilize the feedback from the professional development event to identify potential future workshops for Task Force members. Identifying ways to tie this Task Force to other City-related initiatives, such as implementing actions in the Community Safety and Well-Being Plan, will also be explored.

4.0 COMMUNICATION AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Should Council receive this report for information, a copy of this report will be sent out to the Social Planning Committee, Burnaby Public Library Board, Burnaby School District, City of New Westminster and the New Westminster School District.

5.0 FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS

Historically, a \$2,000 budget for this Task Force had been allocated as part of the Boards, Advisory Bodies, and Commissions Budget. Currently, there is no financial request to this Task Force as part of the 2026-2030 Financial Plan.

Respectfully submitted,

Graham De La Gorgendiere, General Manager Community Safety and
E. W. Kozak, General Manager Planning and Development

ATTACHMENTS

Attachment 1 – Combatting Online Sexual Exploitation Survey Results Summary

REPORT CONTRIBUTORS

This report was prepared by Kai Okazaki, Planner 2 and Dawn Virginillo, Manager, Crime Reduction and Intervention and reviewed by Kyra Lubell, Planner 3 and Lee-Ann Garnett, Deputy General Manager Planning and Development.