

REPORT FOR: **CABINET**

Date of Meeting:	17 June 2015
Subject:	Recommissioning Domestic and Sexual Violence Preventative and Intervention Services
Key Decision:	Yes
Responsible Officer:	Alex Dewsnap, Divisional Director of Strategic Commissioning
Portfolio Holder:	Councillor Anne Whitehead, Portfolio Holder for Adults and Older People
Exempt:	No
Decision subject to Call-in:	Yes
Wards affected:	All Wards
Enclosures:	Service Specification Equalities Impact Assessment

Section 1 – Summary and Recommendations

This report asks for authority to seek tenders for the provision of services to address Domestic and Sexual Violence including management of the Refuge and the provision of Floating Support services.

Recommendation:

Cabinet is requested to authorise seeking tenders as described in this report.

Reason: (For recommendations) So that services to address Domestic and Sexual Violence can be provided as effectively and competitively as possible. A single provider will enable better co-ordination of services and there is a prospect of reducing the management overheads as one management team will be able to cover the whole service.

Section 2 – Report

Introductory paragraph

The Council provides a range of services to address Domestic and Sexual Violence. These include:

- commissioning Independent Domestic Violence Advisers (IDVAs) to advise victims of their options and provide support while they choose a course of action and pursue it;
- co-ordination of the Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conference (MARAC) which brings all relevant agencies together to plan how to keep high risk victims and their children safe,
- A refuge which provides hostel accommodation to women and their children who are escaping domestic violence; and
- Floating support to provide information and practical support to female residents and their children living independently within the Borough or in Council-provided accommodation elsewhere.

These services are currently provided by Victim Support and Hestia funded variously from the Council's mainstream budgets and the Supporting People grant. The mainstream funded services have not been the subject of competitive tenders for some years for a variety of reasons including the existence of a Home Office grant to a specific provider and uncertainty over the continuation of resources. The Supporting People funded services were last tendered in 2012 and are currently being provided by an extension to that contract.

The combination of the expiration of the Home Office grant and the provision of an investment fund for domestic violence work agreed by Cabinet last year make this an ideal time reconfigure these services and seek new tenders. The domestic violence service landscape has changed with the letting of a Pan-London contract by the Mayor to level up provision across the capital and the development of new services in Harrow using the Investment Fund. Seeking tenders for all of these services together also has the potential advantage of obtaining clearer referral pathways and reducing co-ordination and management costs.

The Investment Fund has already been utilised in conjunction with the Mayor's Pan-London provision to establish an IDVA post at Northwick Park Hospital with effect from 1st July 2015 and to provide within the specification for the proposed contract a re-organisation of the IDVA provision to provide more effective support to the Police Community Safety Unit which investigates domestic abuse.

Training materials have been produced to be used to supplement appropriate training so that front line professionals have the knowledge to recognise domestic abuse and the confidence to refer cases to specialists which will enable earlier intervention than is the consistently case at present.

Preparation for the Family Domestic Violence Project, an innovative project based on a scheme working in San Francisco, has progressed with the development of a methodology for identifying appropriate families and methods of working. A number of social work staff has been trained in the necessary techniques but there is currently a difficulty in agreeing exactly how the project can be delivered with the Council's provider of clinical support to families.

Work to support community resilience to oppose Female Genital Mutilation (FGM), Honour-based Violence and Forced Marriage has progressed but is awaiting the development by the Council's new communications provider of some images to provoke community conversations. It is expected that this work stream will be active in the next few weeks.

Options considered

Addressing domestic and sexual violence is one of the administration's priorities and so the options were limited to continuing with the existing arrangements or seeking new tenders. The existing arrangements had not been the subject of competitive tender for, in some cases, more than seven years and so continuing with these arrangements was not recommended. The changes in the range and level of services that can be afforded due to the approved Investment Fund also suggested that new contracts should be sought to reflect the pattern of services that best meets the known Borough need.

The service specification appended to this report includes enhancing existing service levels in line with the intention behind the Investment Fund and takes account of the pan-London contract for similar services recently approved by the Mayor.

Background

Cabinet adopted a new Domestic and Sexual Violence Strategy in September 2014 which included the latest estimate of the level of violence in Harrow and the capacity of the services in place to address this need. The Strategy included, for example, data on calls to the Police, which average between 500 and 600 each quarter and offences, which are running at between 200 and 300 each quarter. The existing caseload of our IDVAs, who support victims at the highest risk of further violence, is running at more than three times the recommended level. In the months since the strategy was adopted, the data shows that, while crime in London, and to a much greater extent, in Harrow continues to fall, reports of Violence with Injury which includes Domestic Abuse has risen. The best analysis is that this does not reflect an increase in the rate of Domestic Abuse but an increase in reporting which is likely to be due to the higher priority given to all form of Domestic Abuse in society generally and in Harrow in particular.

The Strategy sought to increase the capacity of the Council funded services and to devote more attention to preventative measures including education and public awareness to try to address long-term needs. The opportunity to bring the Supporting People funded services into the same contract was felt to

offer the potential to achieve better co-ordination and reduce management costs.

The service specification which has been developed and is attached to this report as Appendix 1 includes the growth both in the cost and number of IDVAs, an increase in the time allowed for co-originating the MARAC and maintains at the existing level the support for residents both at the Refuge and living independently. The Investment Fund has enabled the specification to guarantee the hours of the existing IDVAs against the threat that these would be cut as inflation eroded the value of the old contract and to increase the number of IDVAs, and instead increase IDVA hours by 14%. The contract also allows for an increase of 150% in the time for MARAC Coordination.

The specification envisages that the service will run to 30th October 2017 with the option of extending it for a further year and for a second additional year. Work is now beginning to look at alternative ways of funding the provision of these services including Social Finance and Social Impact Bonds. The duration of the proposed contract has been recommended to allow a change to these alternative forms of finance if the work proves to be fruitful and this might necessitate a new form of contract and/or specification. If innovative funding methods cannot be put in place, the option of extending the proposed contract is available.

Implications of the Recommendation

Considerations

Resources, costs

The existing budgets within the Resources Directorate and the Supporting People grant which is managed from the Housing Directorate, together with an element of the investment fund are sufficient to meet the anticipated costs of the new service. The proposed contract will allow for the caseload and interventions of the provider to flex to reflect future budgets.

Staffing/workforce

There are no staffing implications for Council employed staff. It is probable that TUPE will apply to staff of the current providers should the contracts be won by an alternative provider.

Performance Issues

The Service Specification includes provision for better management information based around the risk level for each IDVA supported case as measured by the DASH Assessment and the use of the Empowerment Outcome Star which measures user perception of their safety and resilience before and after IDVA interventions.

Data on the other existing performance measures will continue to be collected and monitored to show the scale of the issue coming to our attention, a breakdown of victims and perpetrators by their protected characteristics, the outcome of criminal proceedings, the occupancy of the Refuge and the outcomes of Floating Support interventions.

Environmental Implications

There are no Environmental Implications arising from this proposal.

Risk Management Implications

The risks associated with this area of work are that the provision of services are not sufficient to meet the needs even of the violence that is known, let alone the huge amount that is estimated to take place but which is not reported. The way in which this risk is managed is to concentrate support to those assessed to be at the greatest of risk of further and escalating severity of abuse and the provision of better management information about risk and users perception of safety will help to assess the adequacy of the provision in place and the success of the approach adopted.

Risk included on Directorate risk register? Yes

Legal Implications

In order to maintain the Services, the Council is required to run a competitive process to appoint a contractor under a new contract in accordance with the new Public Contracts Regulations 2015. The nature of the services requires that the new "light touch" regime which applies to services listed at Schedule 3 of the 2015 Regulations will need to be used during this tender exercise.

The provision of Domestic and Sexual Violence services falls within the category of health, social and other services. As the overall potential value of the contract exceeds the permitted financial threshold in the sum of £625,000 there must be a 'call for competition' either by way of a contract notice or prior information notice. The selected award procedure must comply with the principles of equal treatment and transparency and fully outline the award procedure which will be used

Financial Implications

There are budgets within the Policy Team and the Housing Service to support the proposed contract, although this is expected to be subject to review again for 2016/17.

The proposed contract includes provision for service level flexibility in the event of budgets being reduced to.

Equalities implications / Public Sector Equality Duty

The EqIA for this proposal is attached.

Council Priorities

The Council's vision:

Working Together to Make a Difference for Harrow

Please identify how the report incorporates the administration's priorities.

- Making a difference for the vulnerable
- Making a difference for communities
- Making a difference for local businesses
- Making a difference for families

Seeking tenders and letting a contract will make a difference to the vulnerable, communities and families.

Section 3 - Statutory Officer Clearance

Name: Steve Tingle	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	on behalf of the Chief Financial Officer
Date: 8 April 2015		
Name: Sarah Inverary	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	on behalf of the Monitoring Officer
Date: 19 April 2015		

Ward Councillors notified:	NO, as it impacts on all Wards
EqIA carried out:	YES
EqIA cleared by:	If ' NO ' state why an EqIA is not required for Cabinet to take a decision

Section 4 - Contact Details and Background Papers

Contact Mike Howes, Senior Policy officer
mike.howes@harrow.gv.uk 020 8420 9637

Background Papers: Domestic and Sexual Violence Strategy
<http://modern.gov:8080/documents/g62355/Public%20reports%20pack%20Thursday%2018-Sep-2014%2018.30%20Cabinet.pdf?T=10>

**Call-In Waived by the
Chairman of Overview
and Scrutiny
Committee**

NOT APPLICABLE

[Call-in applies]