
REPORT FOR: CABINET

Date of Meeting: 15 October 2015

Subject: Progress made on the Administration's Priority of Tackling Domestic and Sexual Violence – Contract Award and update on Strategy

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, except for Appendix B which is exempt under paragraph 3 of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended) in that it contains information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information)

Decision subject to Call-in: Yes

Wards affected: All Wards

Enclosures: Appendix A: Harrow Domestic and Sexual Violence Action Plan 2015 – 2017

Appendix B: Exempt information related to the quality and commercial breakdown of evaluations

Appendix C: EqIA

Section 1 – Summary and Recommendations

This report sets out the outcome of the procurement exercise for the provision of Domestic and Sexual Violence Prevention and Intervention Services and provides an update on the Harrow Domestic and Sexual Violence Strategy.

Recommendations:

Cabinet is requested to:

1. Approve the recommendation to award the Domestic & Sexual Violence Contract to Hestia Housing and Support for a period of two years commencing on the 4th November 2015 with an option to extend (at the sole discretion of the Council) for a further period or periods of up to two years. The value of the contract for the initial two year period is £552,000 and would rise to £1,104,000 if the whole two years permissible by extension were used.
2. Approve the refresh of the Harrow Domestic and Sexual Violence Action Plan.

Reason: (For recommendations) Cabinet is recommended to award a contract to ensure continuation of the provision of preventative services and intervention in high risk cases of domestic and sexual violence to help keep residents safe.

Section 2 – Report

1. Introduction

1.1 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.
- 1.2 These services are currently provided by Victim Support and Hestia Housing and Support, funded from the Council's mainstream budgets and the Supporting People grant.
 - 1.3 The 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.
 - 1.4 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 made this an ideal time to reconfigure the services and invite new tenders.
 - 1.5 The proposed service will make a difference to the vulnerable, communities and families.

2. Options Considered

- 2.1 Addressing domestic and sexual violence is one of the administration's pledges and so other options to consider are limited.
- 2.2 The budget for this service is drawn from a number of sources. The Policy Team holds the base budget for IDVA and MARAC services, the Supporting people budget funds the Refuge and Floating Support, the Children's Services budget funds the IDVA based in the MASH and there is an intention to utilise the Investment Fund to ensure that the service is at least maintained at the current level of provision but, also, to enhance the capacity of services where possible. In setting out to tender for these services the initial view on the cost profile is as follows:

Where budgets sit (£)	Budget
Policy Team	82,000
Supporting People	82,000
Children's Services	35,000
Investment Fund – initial intention	60,000
Total	259,000

- 2.4 However, the proposal which best meets the criteria set out in the tender specification comes in at over this total budget. Therefore the Investment Fund, agreed by Cabinet as part of the Domestic and Sexual Violence Strategy in September 2014 will be used further to support the delivery of what the Council believes is the best proposal to deliver these services.

3. Current situation: The Procurement Process

- 3.1 An OJEU notice was published for this tender on the 11th July 2015. The process that the Council followed for this procurement was an OPEN Procedure which doesn't require a shortlisting stage. The basis of the award as published in the OJEU notice was on the Most Economically Advantageous Tender (MEAT) and not lowest price.
- 3.2 The Council received 25 expressions of interest, with 3 organisations submitting a tender. Tenders were received from Hestia Housing and Support, Victim Support and Solace Womens Aid and these have been evaluated.
- 3.3 The duration of the contract is for two years commencing on the 4th November 2015 and expiring on the 3rd November 2017 with the option to extend for up to a maximum of a further two years.
- 3.4 The "break" in the contract has been included for two reasons. Firstly, the funding available for the Council to deliver the service is fully available for the first two years of the contract, and secondly as there is an ambition to explore social funding to substitute for Council funding for some or the entire contract with effect from November 2017.
- 3.5 Applying social finance might require a different form of contract and so the possibility of a re-procurement has been built into the proposed contract. It may be that the proposed contract that the Council enters into now will be able to accommodate social funding in which case it would be able to continue or that it is not possible to identify a social funding option in which case, the contract could also continue subject to identifying sufficient Council resources.
- 3.6 The evaluation of the tenders was based on a published weighting of 80% quality and 20% commercial/price. Sub criteria under these main heading were also published and it is on the basis of this that the evaluation team scored the respective bids. Please see table in Section 2 for the detail of this stage in the process.
- 3.7 The evaluation of the tenderers quality submissions identified one of the organisations as a clear leader in the scorings at this stage of the process. Following the quality evaluation stage, panel members reviewed the commercial submissions of the 3 bids and found that they were all over the proposed budget for this service.
- 3.8 The Council sought clarification from all 3 providers, where they were asked to provide a full breakdown of their pricing submission. A further related clarification was requested by the Council in which the budget for the service was disclosed to the three tenderers. They were all asked to review their pricing submission in light of the budget information that had been disclosed to them. All bidders reviewed and reduced their costs. (Please see table in Part 2 section)
- 3.9 The evaluation process as detailed above was carried out in accordance with the published criteria. Following the completion of the

scoring for both stages of the tender exercise (the quality and pricing stage) the final scoring based on the MEAT calculation identified a winner.

4. Update on Harrow Domestic and Sexual Violence Strategy and Action Plan

4.1 The Harrow Domestic and Sexual Violence Action Plan has now been in place for one year. Much progress has been made, and officers, partners and members of the Harrow Domestic and Sexual Violence Forum have worked tirelessly to improve domestic and sexual violence services in the Borough.

4.2 However, both the Harrow Domestic and Sexual Violence Strategy Group and Forum, in monitoring the Action Plan over the past year, noted that there was little progress being made against a number of the objectives. It was felt consistently across these Groups that certain objectives within the Plan contained unachievable aims.

4.3 Officers in the Policy Team, in Service areas and partner organisations have liaised over the past few months to produce a “refresh” of the Action Plan, which it is hoped is achievable yet still aspirational. The Action Plan has also been reformatted slightly, to make clear the lines of responsibility and to tighten up the actual deliverables that are required.

4.4 The refreshed Action Plan is appended to this report, and Members will note that updates on progress have been highlighted throughout the document. Particular highlights to note are:

- the communications plan will be launched by the end of this calendar year
- almost 5,500 children have been involved in the Harrow Shield Project with 94% of 2076 teenagers reporting an improved understanding of what constitutes rape, sexual assault and consent and how to stay safe; 79% of 1869 teenagers reported a change in positive attitudes towards non violent, healthy relationships; and 100% of 40 teenage perpetrators and victims reported an increased understanding and change in attitude towards healthy, non violent or exploitative relationships
- 32 young people were referred to the Young Person’s Advocacy Programme (30 girls and 2 boys) although 2 of the girls refused the referral and 10 of the cases have now been closed; the establishment of this role has had a positive impact on the young people of Harrow as they have received a service where they have had the time they require to explore their personal safety in a safe, non judgemental way, which has increased their safety and knowledge of healthy relationships, grooming and early warning signs
- the Independent Sexual Violence Advisor (ISVA), hosted by WISH, has supported 221 young people who were victims of child sexual exploitation, internet grooming, rape and sexual assault; 89% had increased safety from sexual exploitation/ abuse; 88% increased

their emotional resilience and positive coping mechanisms; 72% ceased trauma reactions; 90% of 38 young people who were self harming as a way of coping with the impact of abuse stopped self harming

- the Harrow Housing Domestic Abuse Policy has been completed and is being implemented
- preventative work (training/awareness) is ongoing around child sexual exploitation (CSE) which covers identifying signs and indicators, and how to make appropriate referrals; this is being completed through the LSCB and the Children and Families Team where there is a need identified in a service/organisation; CSE Champions Training will commence in September, and representatives across statutory and voluntary agencies in the Borough will take part in training to become a CSE Champion and act as a conduit to feed into the LSCB CSE Sub Committee with any developments and trends they identify in their organisation
- the Council is implementing a Family Domestic Violence Project as a pilot, and officers are in advanced discussions with TCCR to move forward this aspirational project as an early date.

4.5 An outline of the main amendments to the Action Plan are as follows (numbering relates to the action plan agreed by Cabinet in September 2014):

1. Community Champions/ community conversations

unfortunately it was felt by the Forum and Strategy Group that this was not achievable and that there was no resource to deliver and manage a network of Community Champions.

3 & 4. **Staff training** – In addition to the updates provided in the Action Plan, it should be noted that part of the work of the TCCR will be to embed their psychological theory in staff that they work with.

7. Specialist service provision relating to prostitution and sexual exploitation – There is no resource available to deliver a bespoke Harrow service, but there is work being undertaken at a pan London level and so it is proposed to take forward this workstream through the relevant pan London groups.

9. ISVA – The funding for the ISVA has ceased and the service will terminate on 31 March 2016.

12. Housing Team – An additional objective has been included as (d) to reflect work ongoing in the housing team to raise awareness of domestic and sexual violence.

13. DSV Forum – The Policy Lead is now in post and so this objective has been deleted as complete. Work has also been undertaken to ensure that the Steering Group has reporting links with the LSCB, ASB and HWBB and so this action has been deleted as complete. In terms of (d), the Chair of the Harrow DSV Forum has stated that the Forum has a focus on best practice, development and lobbying and that within the existing

level of resource, the Forum will be able to maintain its current level of membership and activity but will not be in a position to develop a more substantial role without further investment and resources being provided.

16. **CSE Protocol** – The actions under (b) and (f) have been reworded in liaison and with the advice of the LSCB and the Police in order to ensure these objectives are meaningful and less vague.

17 – 21. **Perpetrators** – the Chair of the Forum would wish a perpetrator programme to be developed for Harrow; members may wish to consider the inclusion of this as an objective, even as an aspiration for future years.

19. **Fathers as Offenders** – Action (b) has been reworded as the Caring Dad's Programme is not being progressed, but the new objective to deliver the Families Project will be delivered and will be commencing at an early date.

21. **Perpetrators** – Action (b) (body worn video evidencing) has been deleted on the advice of the Police who stated that the measurement should be detection rates, rather than relying on how often video evidence is used. Body Worn Video is used in the majority of cases to inform the decision as to whether a prosecution will take place.

5. Legal Implications

- 5.1 The process that the Council has followed for this procurement was an OPEN Procedure which doesn't require a shortlisting stage. The basis of the award as published in the OJEU notice was on the Most Economically Advantageous Tender (MEAT) and not lowest price.
- 5.2 The Council can award the contract to the tenderer that scored highest under the published evaluation criteria.
- 5.3 These services are social services under Schedule 3 of the Public Contracts Regulations and so the Council was entitled to ask all tenderers to submit revised financial bids within the Council's financial envelope and to accept the MEAT tender from the Council's viewpoint with reference to the specificities of the services in question.

6. Financial Implications

- 6.1 The Investment Fund approved by Cabinet in September 2014 provided £200,000 to be spent over the life of the administration on domestic and sexual violence services. The Fund was originally provided to meet the aims set out the Domestic and Violence Strategy, which included investing in the services brought together under this tender. Given that the best price identified for the services is higher than the sum of the service budgets available and the initial sum of £60,000 being made available from the investment fund, agreement

has been sought from Portfolio Holders to reallocate some of the investment fund resources in order to support an additional £17,000 per annum investment in these services for the two years of the initial tender period. This has been agreed and the contract can be funded without seeking any addition to the Investment Fund. There is no requirement for any other financial resources in order to deliver the services in the first two years of the contract. However, to provide the services in any of the extension period, new resources would be necessary, and the Council would work both with other potential providers of funding, such as the London Mayor and the Home Office to identify new forms of investment for November 2017 onwards.

6.2 Additionally, the Council is also exploring the opportunity for social financing options from November 2017.

7. Equalities implications / Public Sector Equality Duty

7.1 Victims of domestic and/or sexual violence by the nature of the abuse suffered are vulnerable people. From an Equalities perspective, the Council must have due regard to the protected characteristics of those victims that Council Services support. However, the nature of the services being provided is that support will be offered on the basis of coming into contact with the services themselves.

8. Council Priorities

8.1 Enhancing the Council's services for Domestic and Sexual Violence services will support the following Council Priorities:

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

Section 3 - Statutory Officer Clearance

Name: Dawn Calvert



Chief Financial Officer

Date: 5 October 2015

Name: Stephen Dorian



on behalf of the
Monitoring Officer

Date: 5 October 2015

Ward Councillors notified:	NO, as it impacts on all Wards .
EqIA carried out:	YES .
EqIA cleared by:	Alex Dewsnap, Chair of Equality Task Group – Resources & Commercial

Section 4 - Contact Details and Background Papers

Contact: Mike Howes, Senior Policy Officer, 020 8420 9637
mike.howes@harrow.gov.uk

Background Papers: Domestic 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 <i>(Call-in applies)</i>
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