

 <p>Brent</p>	<p align="center">Cabinet 19 June 2017</p> <p align="center">Report from Strategic Director of Regeneration and Environment</p>
For Action	Wards affected: ALL
<p align="center">Brent Domestic Abuse Advocacy and MARAC Coordination Review</p>	

1.0 Summary

- 1.1 Brent Council has commissioned advocacy support for domestic abuse victims since 2010. Domestic abuse incidents have increased over the years, in line with the wider pan London incident profile; however support provision has increased as a response.
- 1.2 Brent council currently commission a London charity, Hestia, to deliver Independent Domestic Violence Advocacy (IDVA), Family Support and Multi Agency Risk Assessment Conference (MARAC) coordination services. Hestia are in their final year of service delivery which commenced 03 Dec 2014, ending 02 Dec 2017. The contract is due to be reviewed and upon agreement will need to be re-tendered in June 2017 to ensure deadlines are met for a smooth service transition.

2.0 Recommendations

- 2.1 That Cabinet agree the proposed option, Option 1 detailed in 3.14, to commission IDVA, Family Support and MARAC coordinator services and for the contract spend to continue to deliver high level support services.
- 2.2 That Cabinet agree for the proposed Option 1 contract to be let for a term of three years, with a break option and the option to extend for a two year period after the initial term of three years.
- 2.3 That Cabinet delegate authority to the Strategic Director of Regeneration and Environment in consultation with the lead member and the Strategic Director of Children and Young People, to approve the award of the contract to the successful tenderer; following the procurement process to ensure timely service implementation.

3.0 Detail

- 3.1 It is UK best practice to fund Independent Domestic Violence Advisors (IDVAs) and MARAC co-ordination services. Such services exist in most towns and all cities across the UK. IDVAs are specialist advocacy case workers who focus on working predominantly with high risk victims, those most at risk of homicide or serious harm. Their main goal is to ensure safety. They work from the point of crisis and have a well-defined role underpinned by experience and specialist accredited training. They offer intensive short to medium term support. They also mobilise multiple resources on behalf of victims by coordinating the response from multiple agencies who might be involved in a case, including those working with perpetrators and children. Thus, they

work in partnership with a range of statutory and voluntary agencies but are independent of any single agency.

- 3.2 An IDVA acts as the victims' voice at the MARAC and is a key contributor at the MARAC. The MARAC is a meeting where information is shared on the highest risk domestic abuse cases between representatives of local police, health, child and adult safeguarding, housing practitioners, IDVAs and other specialists from the statutory and voluntary sectors. The main focus of the MARAC is on managing the risk to the victim/survivor, and in doing so it also consider other family members including any children involved and managing the behaviour of the perpetrator. Information shared at the MARAC is confidential and is only used for the purpose of reducing the risk of harm to those at risk.

Service Delivery

- 3.3 IDVA services and MARAC coordination in Brent is a shared contract between Community Protection (60%) and Children and Young People's department (40%). Previous commissions (prior to 2013) were awarded to contractors only working with men and High Risk victims or Police crimes. A large proportion of men, medium/standard and non-crime domestic abuse victims have previously not been supported in Brent until new operational processes were introduced by the Community Protection service January 2015 (2014 HMIC inspection report example of partnership best practice).
- 3.4 From Jan 2015 – Dec 2015 a total of 3200 victims were offered support and intervention from the IDVA service. An additional 178 referrals were also made for the Children and Young People's Support Worker, including 32 children under 4 years of age. Within this period, the new operational processes resulted in an average of 650 additional victims being offered support per quarter, at no extra cost to the council. The process responds to all Police incidents (not just offences) by screening all incidents to ensure victim demand is effectively responded to. This is completed by ensuring more victims at an earlier point of risk and harm are identified before the point of escalation. It is expected that this will help to reduce resource costs for the future by reducing risk of further incidents to such victims. A higher reporting rate is then anticipated, as more victims become aware of the support options, and thus there is not an immediate corresponding reduction in the level of reported crime.
- 3.5 The screening is managed through the three CORE IDVAs based at Wembley Police station as well as other Police high risk cases, whilst more intensive support packages for victims and their families are managed by the two IDVAs embedded within Children and Young People's department at the Civic Centre. The screening involves the IDVAs making contact with lower level risk victims who have contacted the Police 24hrs previously, to work towards reducing their risk earlier, rather than waiting for heightened risk due to IDVAs normally only intervening with medium-high risk victims. The council intends to retain this best practice processes implemented in 2015 as this will help manage service demand as an increased number of victims can be supported at an earlier stage of intervention due to the difference in support level required. This partnership working process is essential to best practice and such positive working partnerships were noted at the council's recent Scrutiny committee meeting in May 2017. Following the councils' Outcome Based Review on Domestic Abuse for 2017, we hope further advanced partnership working will also result as the review will bring partnerships together even closer.

Current Contract Specification

- 3.6 The contract covers two sites with the 'CORE' team based at Wembley Police station and the other team at the Civic Centre across 'Family Solutions' and 'Localities' teams.
- 3.7 In 2014 organisations were invited to bid for the contract to the value of £0.3m. The current contract value for the above contract specification costs the council £0.3m per year, 60% of which is funded by Community Protection and 40% by Children and Young People's Department. A recent contract extension review led to a saving of 6%. Refreshed costings for the contract specification were agreed for the last twelve months of the contract (ending 02 Dec 2017), as set out in Table 1.

Table 1:

Contract Breakdown*	Cost £m
Salaries, NI and pension (including additional complementary 16 hours IDVA and additional 7.8 hours Coordinator)	0.24
Infrastructure	0.01
Central costs	£0.03
Total	0.28
Contract Savings	0.02

*Further Contract Breakdown costs can be seen in appendix 1

- 3.8 The current contract also includes delivery of training on general domestic abuse awareness as well as MARAC and risk assessment. The training was delivered to more than 250 front line practitioners and professionals and over 80 GPs in 2016/17. The council will include such training within the new contract specification, and as this was an added extra for no additional cost to current contract, no charge is levied for this service. The added value has been very beneficial as it is expected that the more professional and front line practitioners trained, the earlier the identification of risk, resulting in fewer victims in the future.
- 3.9 The outcomes for the services are monitored each quarter through agreed reporting. For future commissioning the contract will be carefully monitored to evaluate value for money and levels of customer service, with regular reports to demonstrate the key advocacy outcomes. Current key performance indicator outcomes are to be taken forward in the new commission and can be seen in Appendix 2. Outcomes over the past 12 months illustrate that 99% of all referrals received an independent safety support plan which is a 3% increase compared to the previous 12 months outcomes. Further outcomes highlight that 96% of all engaging victims had a reduction in risk following intervention, which is a 35% increase compared to the previous 12 months outcomes. This evidences positive changes following continual operational reviews.

Future Contract Specification Options

- 3.10 There is a body of evidence that supports early intervention and the longer-term financial benefits to the public fund. Safelives also highlights that for every £1 spent on an IDVA and MARAC intervention, £6 of public money is saved.

"Safelives analysis shows that IDVAs and MARAC interventions save on average of at least £6,100 of these costs per high risk victim. MARACs and related IDVA intervention would only have to be successful in 16% of cases to pay for themselves".

¹ Safelives (2010), Saving Lives, Saving Money: MARACs and high risk domestic abuse, http://www.safelives.org.uk/sites/default/files/resources/Saving_lives_saving_money_FINAL_REFERENCED_VERSION.pdf

- 3.11 As identified through the referral data, there is a real need for this service to continue as domestic abuse victimisation is not declining but there is strong evidence that the council achieved value for money through the increased number of victims supported as a result of earlier intervention since 2015, at no extra cost.
- 3.12 Following the council's procurement agenda, we have reviewed costings as part of procurement strategy and it resulted that for a similar contract specification that we currently deliver we can reduce non-frontline service costs by a further 4%. This would not impact on the number of victims being supported, rather reduce central costs which is a 10% reduction when compared to the original contract. This served as a starting point to compare financial value factors against social impact and outcomes when developing contract specification options for the future commission.
- 3.13 Table 2 summarises the forecast financial impact of the three contract specification options reviewed for future commissioning.

Table 2:

	Current contract (Dec 16 – Dec 17) £	Option 1 £	Option 2 £	Option 3 £
Staff Costs				
IDVA	30,443	30,443	30,443	30,443
Senior IDVA	32,496	32,496	32,496	32,496
Family Support Worker	26,338	26,338	26,338	26,338
Service Manager	42,063	42,063	42,063	42,063
MARAC Coordination	34,347	34,347	34,347	34,347
IDVA	5	5	5	4.5
Senior IDVA	1	0.75	0.75	0.75
Family Support Worker	1	1	2	1
Service Manager	0.6	0.5	0.5	0.5
MARAC Coordination	0.2	0.4	0.5	0.4
Total FTE	7.8	7.65	8.75	7.15
Total Cost of Staff				
IDVA	152,215	152,215	152,215	136,993
Senior IDVA	32,496	24,372	24,372	24,372
Family Support Worker	26,338	26,338	52,676	26,338
Service Manager	25,237	21,031	21,031	21,031
MARAC Coordination	6,869	13,738	17,173	13,738
Central Costs	37,927	32,532	32,532	32,532
TOTAL COST	281,082	270,226	300,000	255,004

- 3.14 Option 1 is recommended. This would predominantly retain the current contract specification at a reduced cost, as through a recent contract review the council was able to reduce any non-essential costs which did not impact on service delivery or the number of victims being supported. This option would not increase service delivery but would enable the council to continue supporting an increased number of victims through effective process management, a result of the last two years' operational service review changes. Option 1 would provide the same for less.

- 3.15 Option 2 would entail increasing expenditure. This option considers the potential to increase the service specification of option 1, and resultantly to include an extra Family Support Worker for children. This would increase provision, however not respond to required contract reviews to reduce costs for all non-essential spend.
- 3.16 Option 3 would reduce costs by 15% compared to the original contract value based on the current service specification which would provide a best practice option against the council's procurement. In terms of the impact on the community however, there is a reduced benefit, as based on the current average number of victims supported per year, this option would mean supporting 200-300 less victims per year. This is not accounting for a potential increase in domestic abuse figures or an increase in reporting which is anticipated with earlier intervention methods. Please also note that one high risk victim who does not receive intervention resulting in murder costs the public sector purse £1.2m. Option 3 would mean reducing the number of IDVAs and therefore victim support on the borough.

Contract Considerations

- 3.17 It is proposed to re-tender the service for a three-year period using a revised service specification, with the option to extend for a further two year period if funding is available. This would therefore value the three year contract at a proposed £0.8m or £1.4m should it be extended.
- 3.18 Considerations have also been made to include a break clause in the three year contract to ensure that the council is able to respond to the outcomes of the Domestic Abuse Outcome Based Review being progressed throughout 2017. A break clause within the contract will also allow for the service specification to be reviewed within the contract period as a response to any change to service demand.
- 3.19 Joint commissioning has been considered, however neighbouring boroughs do not have comparative levels of domestic abuse with completely different problem profiles. Both Harrow and Ealing were considered and approached in the first instance but this was not an option at the time due to deferring contract review periods.
- 3.20 An in-house provision was not considered as it is not a feasible option. Firstly, costing analysis indicates that this would be more expensive. And secondly, best practice guidance (as detailed in the national Safelives 'Safety in Numbers', 2009) evaluation report states IDVAs should be 'independent' to statutory organisations to ensure true 'independence' – therefore not a feasible option for the council.
- 3.21 The contract will be robustly monitored to ensure that KPIs are met and to monitor value for money and customer satisfaction, with regular reports to demonstrate the key advocacy outcomes. Quality customer service and service delivery is very important for this agenda, therefore tendering weighting regarding quality delivery will be reflected.
- 3.22 The recommendation for Cabinet to delegate authority to the Strategic Director Regeneration & Environment, in consultation with the lead member and the Strategic Director of Children and Young People, is being requested to ensure that enough time is given for service mobilisation. The period between completion of evaluation of tenders and contract commencement will not be adequate to enable effective service mobilisation should officers return to Cabinet to seek approval to award the contract following the procurement process.

4.0 Financial Implications

- 4.1 Procurement savings are an important part of the Council's medium term plan. Average savings of 10% should be found across all contracts for this to be achieved, option 1 and option 3 achieve this when measured against the former contract.
- 4.3 External funding to help enhance the support service has been identified through the Home Office Transformation Fund. This fund was only available for new innovative additional services therefore cannot fund current provision. A bid for this fund (£0.1m per year for three years) was submitted to the Home Office on 24 February 2017 to fund additional intervention. A decision on bids is due to be released following the election in June 2017.

5.0 Legal Implications

- 5.1 Under the Public Contracts Regulations 2015, contract for domestic violence advocacy, family support and MARAC coordination is a Schedule 3 service contract and in procuring such services, where the value is above the EU threshold for Schedule 3 services (currently 750,000 Euros), contracting authorities are required to publish a contract notice or PIN as a call for competition in the Official Journal of the European Union (OJEU) and a contract award notice once the contract has been awarded. The procurement procedure can be determined by the contracting authority and they must comply with the EU Treaty principles of equal treatment, non-discrimination, fairness and transparency and provide reasonable and proportionate timescales and award of the contract.
- 5.2 The value of the contract over its lifetime as mentioned in this reports is in excess of £500,000. It is therefore deemed a High Value contract for the purposes of the Council's Contract Standing Orders ("CSO") and Financial Regulations and under the CSO, Cabinet approval to invite tenders must be obtained for High Value Contracts and CSO 89 provides that Cabinet approval of pre-tender considerations should also be obtained before the contract is tendered.
- 5.3 Some of the current providers' staff are based at the Civic Centre and occupy under a licence. It is likely that a similar arrangement would apply following any procurement.

6.0 Equalities Implications

- 6.1 The public sector duty is set out at Section 149 of the Equality Act 2010. It requires the Council, when exercising its functions, to have due regard to the need to eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct under the Act, and to advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations between those who share a protected characteristic and those who do not share that protected characteristic. There are no negative equality implications resulting from the proposals in this report.
- 6.2 A protected characteristic is defined in the Act as: Age, Disability, Gender reassignment, Pregnancy and maternity, Race (including ethnic or national origins, colour or nationality), Religion or belief, Sex and Sexual orientation. Marriage and Civil partnership are also a protected characteristic for the purposes of the duty to eliminate discrimination. The previous public sector equalities duties only covered race, disability and gender.
- 6.3 Previous contracts indicated services may only work with women but this new contract specification includes the need to work with men, women, and transgender as anyone can be a victim of domestic abuse and it is expected that anyone in Brent who requires the support will be supported. Information gathered and statistics indicate that there is a need for a non-women only support service.

- 6.4 IDVA and MARAC monitoring will collate data relating to equality as part of the contract including gender, disability, sexuality, ethnicity, and age (with particular interest in young victims and perpetrators). The advocacy service will be monitored on their ability to deliver effective services to specialist BME victims, and to link in with other local specialist partners to facilitate this. An Equalities Impact Assessment has been completed whereby no negative impact was evident to any protected groups therefore no further action required.

7.0 Staffing/Accommodation Implications

- 7.1 The current provision of IDVAs, family support and MARAC coordination to the Council is delivered by Hestia and as such there are no implications for Council staff.
- 7.2 However, in re-tender of the services, if a provider other than the current provider (Hestia) is successful, the provisions of the Transfer of Employment (Protection of Employment) Regulations 2006, ("TUPE") will apply in that the current staff of Hestia providing the service will transfer to the new provider on the existing terms of their employment contracts and the new provider will inherit all rights, liabilities and obligations in relation to the staff. TUPE implications will be considered by Officers as part of the procurement exercise and TUPE information will be made available to bidders if appropriate to enable tender process to be compiled.
- 7.3 The Police provide accommodation for the CORE IDVA community protection funded IDVAs and manager within the police station. Brent Children and Young People department's staff are accommodated within Brent Civic Centre and will continue to be located there as integrated working is essential to risk identification and positive outcomes for victims and children. No changes to accommodation will therefore result.

8.0 Public Services (Social Value) Act 2012

- 8.1 The Council has a duty pursuant to the Public Services (Social Value) Act 2012 to consider how the service being procured might improve the economic, social and environmental well-being of Brent and how it might act with a view to securing that improvement during the procurement.
- 8.2 The service being procured is clearly aimed at improving, in particular, the social well-being of residents in Brent. In procuring the service, officers will also explore introducing specific measures to improve the economic, social and environmental well-being of the Brent area and social value will be one of the evaluation criteria used to encourage bids to address such issues.

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