



EXECUTIVE BOARD DECISION

REPORT OF:	Executive Member for Housing & Public Health
LEAD OFFICERS:	Strategic Director of Environment & Communities
DATE:	Thursday, 8 August 2024

PORTFOLIO/S AFFECTED:	Housing & Public Health
WARD/S AFFECTED:	(All Wards);
KEY DECISION:	Y

SUBJECT: Report is to update on Domestic Abuse provision and seek approval for commencement of a procurement process

1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The purpose of this report is to inform the Executive Board that the current Domestic Abuse Service commission is due to end on 31st March 2025 with no option to extend the commission beyond this date. There is a need to commence the procurement and commissioning process to meet required deadlines to enable new contracts to be in place from 1st April 2025. An independently commissioned Domestic Abuse Needs Assessment was completed July 2024 which will help inform the detail and direction for any future provision.

The existing overall contract value is approximately £404,000 per annum. It is anticipated that the future service value will be at a similar level, however, the contract value will be determined by the funding available to the council.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

That the Executive Board:

- 1) approve the commencement of a procurement process comprising an Invitation To Tender (ITT) exercise to be undertaken via the e-procurement portal The Chest.
- 2) give delegated authority to the Strategic Director of Environment and Communities, in consultation with the Executive Member for Housing and Public Health, to award the contract to the most appropriate provider, following the completion of the procurement process

3. BACKGROUND

Funding for the Domestic Abuse Service is currently made up from a combination of Local Authority, Police and Crime Commissioner, Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) and Public Health.

Blackburn with Darwen Borough Council's Community Safety Team provides policy and operational support for Domestic Abuse Service provision and supports the governance of the Domestic Abuse Strategic Board.

The Blackburn with Darwen Domestic Abuse Strategy outlines four main priorities for Domestic Abuse:

- Prevention and early intervention
- Protecting those at greatest risk of harm
- Partnership working
- Pursuing perpetrators

The existing Domestic Abuse Service provision can be summarised into the three categories below.

1. Community Provision: services provided such as Independent Domestic Violence Advisers (IDVA's), counselling, Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conference (MARAC) support and victim, young person and perpetrator programmes.
2. Accommodation Based Services: Safe accommodation e.g. Refuge provision hosts Young Person Domestic Violence Advisor (YPDVA), Independent Domestic Violence Advisor (IDVA) support, counselling and therapies.
3. Floating Support Services: help support victims and children; this can be in the form of case workers.

Any new service provision will be required to:

- Protect vulnerable people and support victims of crime in line with our statutory duties.
- Provide a holistic domestic abuse service which meets the need of the people of Blackburn with Darwen
- Provide the best value, highest quality service for the residents of Blackburn with Darwen.
- Provide a service model that ensures safe, compliant, quality services which are effective and efficient and meet critical needs within this borough as required and inspected by Ofsted and Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services.

4. KEY ISSUES & RISKS

It is important to commence the procurement process in a timely manner to ensure all required deadlines are achieved to ensure a safe and effective new service is in place by 1st April 2025. As an area of work which supports vulnerable people, a timely transition of providers must be considered and managed appropriately.

The Independent Domestic Abuse Needs Analysis will be considered alongside intelligence and insight gathered from key stakeholders to ensure any new service provision meets need and provides sufficient support to those residents who require it.

The Strategic Commissioning Team and Community Safety Team will work together with the appointed provider/s to mobilise the contracts and ensure that service delivery is not disrupted. The mobilisation plan will be further developed with the provider following formal contract award.

5. POLICY IMPLICATIONS

This contract is aligned to the corporate priorities across all Council Departments and conforms with the relevant national guidelines and statutory requirements, namely:

- Domestic Abuse Act 2021
- Domestic Violence, Crime and Victims Act 2004
- The Protection from Harassment Act 1997
- The Female Genital Mutilation Act 2003
- The Serious Crime Act 2015
- The Homelessness Act 2002
- Home Office: Ending Violence Against Women and Girls Strategy 2016-2020
- Home Office: Violence Against Women and Girls National Statement of Expectations
- Violence Against Women and Girls Ready Reckoner Tool
- NICE Guidance: Domestic Violence and Abuse – Multi Agency Working
- Department for Education: Keeping Children Safe in Education
- Blackburn with Darwen Domestic Abuse Strategy 2018-23
- Blackburn with Darwen Review into ACE – Adverse childhood Experiences
- Independent evaluation of Multi-Agency Risk Reduction Assessment Conference (MARRAC) – Dr Teresa Young 2016
 - Care Act 2014
 - SafeLives Insights IDVA National Data Set

6. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

It is anticipated that the future service costs will be at a similar level to current provision, however, the contract value will be determined by the funding available to the council. Service provision and contract values will be contained within budgets available.

The Domestic Abuse Service will continue to be funded from a combination of sources, primarily the Police and Crime Commissioner, the Local Authority, MHCLG and Blackburn with Darwen Public Health

It is expected that the new contract will be awarded for a three year duration with an option to extend for a further two years (+1,+1) subject to funding still being available and satisfactory performance being evidenced. It is also expected there will be a 6-month variation and or cancellation clause incorporated into the contract to allow for unexpected changes in budgets given the complexities of government, departmental and partnership grants which will fund this programme.

7. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

The procurement process will be conducted in accordance with the procurement regulations and the Council's Contracts and Procurement Procedure Rules. TUPE transfer information will be gathered and shared with all providers as requested as this is part of the Chest tender process.

Both legal and procurement services will be consulted in respect of implementation plans as part of the new contract's mobilisation.

Statutory responsibilities need to be met; therefore, Community Safety will work closely with colleagues in legal and commissioning so that any contractual implications as part of process are managed efficiently and effectively.

8. RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

The management and implementation of the contract will be actioned within existing resources including but not limited to the Public Protection, Communities and Wellbeing service area, with direct support from Strategic Commissioning and input from Legal, Procurement and Finance.

9. EQUALITY AND HEALTH IMPLICATIONS

Please select one of the options below. Where appropriate please include the hyperlink to the EIA.

Option 1 Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) not required – the EIA checklist has been completed.

Option 2 In determining this matter the Executive Member needs to consider the EIA associated with this item in advance of making the decision. *(insert EIA link here)*

Option 3 In determining this matter the Executive Board Members need to consider the EIA associated with this item in advance of making the decision. *(insert EIA attachment)*

10. CONSULTATIONS

Blackburn with Darwen Borough Council commissioned an independent Domestic Abuse Needs Assessment to inform the procurement and commissioning process. This involved significant consultation with service users, partners and stakeholders.

Consultations with key stakeholders have taken place within and prior to the procurement process being undertaken and will form a key part of the mobilisation plan in the period between this report and 1st April 2025.

11. STATEMENT OF COMPLIANCE

The recommendations are made further to advice from the Monitoring Officer and the Section 151 Officer has confirmed that they do not incur unlawful expenditure. They are also compliant with equality legislation and an equality analysis and impact assessment has been considered. The recommendations reflect the core principles of good governance set out in the Council's Code of Corporate Governance.

12. DECLARATION OF INTEREST

All Declarations of Interest of any Executive Member consulted and note of any dispensation granted by the Chief Executive will be recorded in the Summary of Decisions published on the day following the meeting.

VERSION: 1

CONTACT OFFICER:	Hasan Jasat, Melissa McConnell, Andrea Rigby
DATE:	23/7/2024
BACKGROUND PAPER:	