

Report for: Cabinet Member for Housing, Regeneration and Planning

Item number: 5

Title: Award of Housing Related Support Contracts (HRS) - Domestic Violence Refuge Provision and Floating Support Services

Report authorised by : Lyn Garner, Director for Regeneration, Planning and Development

Lead Officer: Alan Benson, Head of Housing Strategy & Commissioning

Ward(s) affected: All

**Report for Key/
Non Key Decision:** Key Decision

1. Describe the issue under consideration

- 1.1 This report details the outcome of an open tender process for the award of contracts to provide Domestic Violence Refuge Provision and Floating Support Services to women and their children who are fleeing from or are at risk of domestic abuse and seeks approval for the recommendation on contact award as detailed in Part B of this report.
- 1.2 New contracts will be awarded in 2 lots as detailed in 8.6 of this report in accordance with Contract Procedure Rule (CPR) 16.02 following a robust tendering process. The annual contract price for Lot 2, Haringey Domestic Violence Refuge Provision will be £85,912 and £138,499 for Lot 3, Haringey Domestic Violence Floating Support Service.

2. Cabinet Member Introduction

- 2.1 Housing Related Support (HRS) services play a vital role in the prevention of homelessness within the Borough, by helping people to sustain independent living.
- 2.2 I am pleased to recommend the award of contracts to provide services to women and their children who are fleeing or at risk of domestic and sexual violence.

3. Recommendations

- 3.1 For the Cabinet Member for Housing, Regeneration and Planning in accordance with Contract Procedure Rule 16.02 to:
- 3.1.1 Approve the award of the contract for Lot 2, Haringey Domestic Violence Refuge Provision Service to Solace Women's Aid for an initial three year period with a value of £257,736 with the option to extend for two further periods of one year each up to a maximum value of £429,560 for 5 years;
- 3.1.2 Approve the award of contract for Lot 3, Haringey Domestic Violence Floating Support Service to Solace Women's Aid for an initial three year period with a value of £415,497 with the option to extend for two further periods of one year each up to a maximum value of £692,495 for 5 years.

4. Reasons for decision

- 4.1 As a result of a joint procurement exercise with Islington and Enfield Councils, carried out in accordance with the Lead Council's Contract Standing Orders and the Public Contract Regulations 2015 it is proposed to award contracts to the successful tenderer as outlined in 3.1 and 3.2 in line with CPR 16.02.

5. Alternative options considered

- 5.1 The extension of the existing refuge and floating support DV contracts from 1 August 2016 are due to expire and there is no further facility to extend beyond 31 July 2017. It was therefore necessary to tender to continue to provide services to women at risk of domestic and sexual violence.
- 5.2 De-commissioning the services was considered, but despite financial pressures on the Council this option has been ruled out as it would result in worse outcomes for victims of domestic violence. The refuge and floating support services address the Council's Violence Against Women and Girls Strategy 2016-2026 requirements for specialist services for women victims and survivors of domestic violence.
- 5.3 A procurement exercise by Haringey was also considered. The joint borough approach was adopted in order to increase transparency of provision, share resources and best practice across the three boroughs and establish a basis for future collaboration.

6. Background information

- 6.1 The HRS programme funds support services for vulnerable people in Haringey. There are currently over 60 contracts delivering support to a wide range of client groups including: older people; people with mental health problems; learning and physical disabilities; young people; women fleeing domestic violence;

people with substance misuse issues; those at risk of re-offending and those at risk of homelessness.

- 6.2 HRS services provide tenancy support and connections to health and wellbeing, care, employment and training services. These services enable individuals and families to live independently in the community, preventing the need for higher end support and residential care. They also assist in avoiding tenancy failure and preventing homelessness, as well as having beneficial impacts on crime and health.
- 6.3 HRS services provide tenancy support and connections to health and wellbeing, care, employment and training services which enable individuals and families to live independently in the community; preventing higher end needs and reducing by two thirds costs in homelessness, tenancy failure, crime, health and residential care packages.
- 6.4 Domestic abuse is a crime that affects a large number of people from all backgrounds. The Crime Survey of England and Wales 2016 estimated that 8.2% of women and 4.0% of men reported experiencing any type of domestic abuse in the last year. This is equivalent to 1.3million female victims and 600,000 male victims. The Home Office defines domestic violence as ‘any incident or pattern of incidents of controlling, coercive or threatening behaviour, violence or abuse between those aged 16 or over, who are or have been intimate partners or family members regardless of gender or sexuality’. This encompasses but is not limited to psychological, physical, sexual, financial and emotional abuse.
- 6.5 Legislatively, the Care Act 2014 specifies that freedom from abuse and neglect is a key aspect of a person’s wellbeing and local authorities have a duty to provide advice and support to prevent the care and support needs arising from the domestic abuse. In addition the Housing Act (1996) and Homelessness Act (2002) specify that local authorities have a duty to provide housing advice to anyone who is homeless or threatened with homelessness, including placing people in a refuge. Refuges provide a safe and supportive environment for households fleeing domestic violence with short term and intensive support.
- 6.6 Haringey provides a safe haven for individuals seeking refuge from other parts of the country, just as other refuges outside Haringey would provide refuge for Haringey residents. This reciprocal arrangement enables 70% of referrals in England to be housed outside the area they were originated from. Haringey refuges continue to be 100% utilised with demand outstripping supply.
- 6.7 Haringey has a high prevalence of recorded domestic violence. In 2015/16 Haringey had the fifth highest rate of recorded domestic violence in London (22 recorded incidents per 1,000 population). There were 2,787 reported domestic abuse incidents, a 21% increase on the previous 12 months as well as an increase in sexual offences, 592 recorded, which relates to a 10% increase during the last year. In addition between 70%-80% of all Children and Young People contacts in Haringey involve domestic abuse. It is estimated that 3,500

women and girls are affected by female genital mutilation and 115 survivors/victims were reported in 2015/16.

- 6.8 The increased rate of reported domestic violence cases in Haringey is reflected in a correspondingly increased rate of referrals to the Multi Agency Risk Assessment Conference (MARAC) from 53 cases per quarter in Q1 2013/2014 to 90 cases in Q3 2016/2017. The MARAC panel assesses and manages high risk cases. In addition, domestic violence is the most cited risk factor in Haringey's Children social care risk assessment and is a leading cause of child protection proceedings and children being taken into care.
- 6.9 The HRS programme of DV services in Haringey supports survivors, victims of domestic abuse over 16 with or without children, preventing homelessness and risk of harm, and providing advocacy and advice to enable women to sustain independent living in the community, working closely with other statutory and community services.
- 6.10 The HRS programme currently commissions 15 units of refuge provision and 60 units of floating support services with one provider. Support is delivered through accommodation based refuge services of between 9-12 months, or by floating support services of between 6-9 months depending on need.
- 6.11 The floating support service prevents a higher tenancy failure rate in women who have moved on from refuge provision, and has helped to reduce the number of women presenting as homeless within the borough; preventing higher costs to health and care services.

7. Tender approach and objectives

- 7.1 Haringey, Islington and Enfield agreed a joint borough procurement led by Enfield in order to increase transparency within the limited, specialist DV provider marketplace. Joint-working enables the local authorities to share resources and information on needs and market place trends, and contract monitoring and service review of the tri-borough contract; and may lead to opportunities for further shared investment and savings in future.
- 7.2 The tri-borough contract has a common specification for refuge provision, with separate lots which identify individual borough service requirements. The Haringey element contains 2 lots, one for refuge and the other for floating support.
- 7.3 The boroughs identified three overarching aims for these services;
- **Delivering independence and preventing homelessness:** through the provision of housing with support, giving people the opportunity to stabilise their lives and move on
 - **Creating opportunities:** offering vulnerable and socially excluded people the chance to improve their quality of life and increase their independence;

- **Providing efficiently managed services and value for money;** through the delivery of high quality, strategically planned and personalised services which are well managed, reliable, and cost effective and work well with other support and care services, placing service users at the heart of the service development and delivery.
- 7.4** The contract has an initial term of three years with the ability to extend the contract by a further two occasions of one year each. This will allow for a degree of flexibility in the future if required.
- 7.5** Whilst Enfield conducted the joint tender process, each borough will award a separate block contract with the successful Provider. This is to simplify contractual arrangements and administration and to maintain a level of control over the service without adversely affecting the services of the other boroughs.
- 7.6** Information is provided on the current arrangements and any sensitive financial and contractual information appear in the accompanying Part B report.

8. Tender Process

- 8.1** There were 4 lots in the tender and providers were invited to bid for one or more lots. Identical quality and pricing award criterion were developed together with a common over-arching service specification to facilitate bid submissions from providers for multiple lots.
- 8.2** The overall contract value of this procurement is above OJEU thresholds. Therefore an OJEU notice was published prior to going out to tender. This procurement is also subject to the light touch procurement regime.
- 8.3** The opportunity was advertised widely, using all appropriate communication mechanisms, including the London Tenders Portal and the OJEU. Invitations were also sent directly to all providers that attended Enfield's market engagement event in April 2016 or otherwise expressed an interest.
- 8.4** An Open Procurement Procedure was utilised. The tender was launched in November 2016 and responses were due on the 12th January 2017. At the close of the tender process three bids were received. Upon receipt of tenders all minimum standards and compliance checks were conducted.
- 8.5** The overall evaluation was based on a ratio of: quality 60%; and price 40%. The quality evaluation assessed key areas of the service specification and included case study scenarios. In addition two questions were developed and evaluated by a panel of previous service users

- 8.6 The table below details the total scores for each tenderer and identifies the successful tenderer for the respective lots.

Lot 2 – Haringey Domestic Violence Refuge Provision

Tenderers	Total Quality Score (%)	Total Pricing Score (%)	Total Score Quality & Price (Max 100%)	Contract price for 5 years (£)
Solace Women's Aid	46.25	40	86.25	429,560
Tenderer B	32.50	28	60.88	434,905

Lot 3 – Haringey Domestic Violence Floating Support Service

Tenderers	Total Quality Score (%)	Total Pricing Score (%)	Total Score Quality & Price (Max 100%)	Contract price for 5 years (£)
Solace Women's Aid	52.5	32.76	85.26	692,495
Tenderer B	32.50	38.41	60.88	720,170

- 8.7 If these awards are agreed, this will bring the total budget for the Refuge Accommodation and Floating Support contracts to £224,411 per annum, an increase of £1,128 on our current contracts.
- 8.8 The detailed evaluation outcomes and recommendations are contained within the Part B report.
- 8.9 It is anticipated that should this award be approved the Contract will be effective from 1 August 2017 therefore providing sufficient time for an appropriate transition and mobilisation period.
- 8.10 The procurement process was fully compliant with the Lead Council's Contract Procedure Rules and the Public Contract Regulations 2015.
- 8.11 There is clear direction provided in the detailed specification with regards to the performance management and regular monitoring of the service to ensure both timely delivery and quality.

9. Contribution to strategic outcomes

9.1 HRS Domestic Violence Services support the following Council Priorities:

- Priority 3, A clean and safe borough where people are proud to live.
- Objective 4, We will prevent and reduce violence against women and girls.
- Priority 5, Creating homes and communities where people choose to live and are able to thrive.
- Objective 2, Prevent homelessness and support residents to lead fulfilling lives.

10. Statutory Officers comments (Chief Finance Officer (including procurement), Assistant Director of Corporate Governance, Equalities)

10.1 Finance

10.1.1 The annual contract price for Lot 2, Haringey Domestic Violence Refuge Provision will be £85,912 on a 5 year contract and £138,499 for Lot 3, Haringey Floating Support Service. This totals £224,411 per annum and the cost in 2017/18 will be £168,308 as the contract starts in August 2017. Both contracts this financial year will be funded from the AHO5 Housing Related Support Programme within the General Fund revenue budget.

10.1.2 Future years spend against these contracts will be committed against this budget.

10.1.3 The contracts were evaluated on 60% quality and 40% price.

10.2 Procurement

10.2.1 The procurement was carried out in line with requirements of the Public Contracts Regulation 2015, under the Light Touch Regime. As required the contract opportunity was advertised in the Official Journal of the European Union, the tender process was transparent and non discriminatory.

10.2.2 The joint procurement involved Haringey, Islington and Enfield Councils and was led by the latter. Such procurements enable Councils to obtain best value by aggregating demand thus providing best value in the current market, as well as, efficiencies in service delivery and resources in undertaking a formal tender process.

10.2.3 The contract contains key performance indicators with regular monitoring requirements to ensure the service delivers targets and meets the need of service users. Regular contract monitoring will mitigate the risk of poor performance, and provide the opportunity to share best practice and feedback.

10.3 Legal

10.03.1 The Assistant Director of Corporate Governance notes the contents of the report.

10.03.2 This is a key decision and the Business Unit has confirmed it has been included on the Forward Plan in accordance with Contract Procedure Rule 9.07.1(e)

10.3.3 The Assistant Director of Corporate Governance sees no legal reasons preventing the Cabinet Member for Housing, Regeneration and Planning from approving the recommendations in the report.

10.4 Equality

10.4.1 The Council has a public sector equality duty under the Equalities Act (2010) to have due regard to the need to:

- a) Tackle discrimination and victimisation of persons that share the characteristics protected under S4 of the Act. These include the characteristics of age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex (formerly gender) and sexual orientation;
- b) Advance equality of opportunity between people who share those protected characteristics and people who do not;
- c) Foster good relations between people who share those characteristics and people who do not.

10.4.2 The services by their nature provide support to vulnerable people, including those with the protected characteristics. The services provided under the contracts for both services remain the same as currently provided and are effective in tackling equalities.

10.4.3 The refuge and floating support services fulfil the requirement identified in the Violence Against Women and Girls Strategy 2016-26 consultation for services to support the needs of: older women; victims and survivors facing multiple disadvantages including homelessness, mental health, complex drugs and alcohol use and prostitution; as well as survivors with no recourse to public funds.

10.4.4 The contract specifications clearly sets out the supplier's responsibilities under equalities legislation, including a requirement to have in place up to date equalities policies and to ensure that the services are accessible to all sections of the community.

10.4.5 The contractor's compliance with equalities legislation is quality assured through regular contract monitoring and service reviews. There is evidence to demonstrate that the contractor meets the needs of different service users and ensures the service provided is accessible to all sections of the community.

11. Use of Appendices

11.1 Part B, Exempt Information

12. Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985

- 12.1. This report contains exempt and non exempt information. Exempt information is contained in Part B and is not for publication. The exempt information is under the following category: (identified in the amended schedule 12 A of the Local Government Act 1972 (3)) information in relation to financial or the business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information).