

	ACTION TAKEN UNDER DELEGATED POWERS BY OFFICER
Title	Barnet Domestic Abuse services Violence Against Women and Girls Prevention Services: Lot 1 Domestic Abuse Advocacy and Support Service & Lot 2 Domestic Abuse Refuge and Support Service
Report of	Chris Munday - Executive Director Children and Family Services
Wards	All
Status	Public
Enclosures	None
Officer Contact Details	Clare Slater-Robins – Senior CYP Commissioner Clare.slater-robins@barnet.gov.uk

Summary

1. The original term of these contracts was for a three-year period from 1 April 2016 to 31 March 2019 followed by a 12-month extension period, specified in the original procurement and contracts, from 1 April 2019 to 31 March 2020. The contracts were then extended further via a single tender action authorised by Full (Chief Officer in consultation with Theme Committee Chairman) DPR up to 31 August 2021.
2. The contract was further extended for seven months to 31 March 2022 due to the essential nature of the services, the need to continue services during the Coronavirus pandemic and the need to plan the procurement.
3. Following market engagement, the Invitation to Tender (ITT) was published on 5 August and closed on 6 September 2021.
4. One bid was received for Lot 1 and 2 from Solace Women’s Aid, the incumbent provider. This bid was evaluated and moderated in accordance with the Council’s

Contract Procedure Rules and legal processes.

5. The re- procurement of the service will be delivered within the planned 2022 budget. The successful bidding organisation submitted a bid for both Lots at £501,713 per annum.
6. This DPR is requesting an award agreement following the procurement process

Decisions

- 1. The Domestic Abuse Lot 1 Advocacy and Support Service contract should be awarded to Solace Women’s Aid with a start date of 1 April 2022 for a period of 4 years with a break clause after 3 years, at an annual budget of £298,097 and a total budget of £1,192,388.**
- 2. The Domestic Abuse Lot 2 Refuge and Support Service contract should be awarded to Solace Women’s Aid with a start date of 1 April 2022 for a period of 4 years with a break clause after 1 year, at an annual budget of £202,616 and a total budget of £810,464.**

1. WHY THIS REPORT IS NEEDED

- 1.1 Following due council procurement and legal process, the award decision requires sign off before the winning bidder can be informed.

2. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 Following extensions to the domestic abuse services contracts until 31 March 2022, the services were put out to tender as Lot 1 Advocacy and support, 2 refuges and 3 perpetrator services and assessments in August 2021.
- 2.2 On closure of the tender writing period 1 bid was received for each Lot 1 and 2 from the incumbent provider, Solace Women’s Aid.
- 2.3 These bids were evaluated and moderated according to procurement regulations and the councils contract procedure rules.
- 2.4 Following the moderation board where the independent panels evaluations scores were added and calculated together a recommendation to award the 2 contracts to Solace Women’s Aid has been made.

3. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED AND NOT RECOMMENDED

- 3.1 To do nothing was considered but this would have meant that the service would have ceased. This is not an acceptable option considering the service provision is

essential and their disruption could result in an increased risk of harm to victims of Domestic Violence and Abuse.

4. POST DECISION IMPLEMENTATION

- 4.1 Following approval, the contract will be awarded to Solace Women's Aid and the mobilisation phase will begin to align the services to the new service specification and performance metrics.
- 4.2 Barnet council will work with the Legal representative and Solace Women's Aid to issue the new contracts for the services.

5. IMPLICATIONS OF DECISION

5.1 Corporate Priorities and Performance

5.1.1 The Council's Barnet Plan 2021-25 sets out four main priorities:

1. Clean, Safe and well run;
2. Family friendly;
3. Healthy;
4. Thriving.

5.1.2 Six key priorities have been set to support the delivery of the third outcome, Healthy.

- We aim to be the healthiest borough in London with fantastic facilities
- for all ages, enabling people to live happy & healthy lives by bringing health care together
- Supporting residents to maintain their strengths and independence
- Great facilities and opportunities to be physically active
- Focusing on mental health and wellbeing
- Tackling domestic abuse and gender based violence
- Addressing homelessness and the longer-term impacts of COVID-19

5.1.3 The services delivered by this contract supports the delivery of the Barnet Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG) Strategy 2017-2020. This strategy sets out how the Barnet Safer Communities Partnership works to prevent and respond Domestic Abuse and underlines the partnership's commitment to working together to prevent all forms of violence against women and girls (VAWG). It also acknowledges the draft 2021 – 2024 strategy which is currently in development and consultation.

5.1.4 The Strategy was endorsed by the Community and Leadership Committee (CLC) on the 21st June 2017.

5.1.5 The effective implementation of the Violence Against Women and Girls Strategy supports Barnet in achieving the outcomes and priorities set out in the corporate plan by helping to keep residents of Barnet safe and protecting the most vulnerable.

5.2 Resources (Finance & Value for Money, Procurement, Staffing, IT, Property,

Sustainability)

- 5.2.1 The cost of the Lot 1 Advocacy and Support Service contract for the 4-year maximum term (without enacting the break clause) is £1,192,388 (£298,097 per annum).
- 5.2.2 The cost of the Lot 2 Refuge and Support Service contract for the 4-year maximum term (without enacting the break clause) is £810,464 (£202,464 per annum).
- 5.2.3 The total cost of both contracts for 4 years will be £2,002,852 (£500,561 per annum) which is within the budget set for the period. Awarding the contract to the incumbent provider ensures value for money as no transitional costs will be incurred and they are already set up to deliver the services.

5.3 Legal and Constitutional References

- 5.3.1 Only one compliant tender was received (Solace Women's Aid), The Council seeks to rely on Rule 6.2 (Single Tender Action) of the Council's Contract Procedure Rules (CPRs), which states "*Where a competition has been undertaken and only a single bid has been received, the Director of Resources (S151 Officer) and Director Commercial & Customer Services can approve the award of a Contract, subject to an appropriate review being undertaken and an audit trail being available for inspection*". The Commercial Director and 151 Officer have been consulted as required.
- 5.3.2 Provided that the decision is within budget, in accordance with Table B of the Council's Constitution Contract Procedure Rules, the bid acceptance authorisation document is via an Officer Delegated Powers Report in line with the service designated Scheme of Delegation.

5.4 Insight

- 5.4.1 This report is written within the context of the Council's Barnet plan 2021 – 2025 and with knowledge of the draft Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG) strategy 2021 – 24 which underlines the partnership's commitment to working together to prevent all forms of violence against women and girls (VAWG).

5.5 Social Value

- 5.5.1 The Public Services (Social Value) Act 2012 requires people who commission certain public services to think about how they can also secure wider social, economic and environmental benefits.
- 5.5.2 Services working together derive social capital from each other and this in turn supports a collaborative approach towards sustainability within an ever-changing economy.

5.6 Risk Management

- 5.6.1 Risk management varies according to the different initiatives. The partnership and appropriate agencies are made aware of risks and actions to mitigate the risk are agreed and put in place. There is always risk that the partnership may not achieve the targets set due to factors outside its direct control – however there is strong partnership working in place enabling agencies to identify and highlight risk and be open to addressing the risk collectively.
- 5.6.2 Agreeing the two contract awards mitigates the risks to the Council of ceasing the contract and not providing the services.

5.7 Equalities and Diversity

- 5.7.1 Section 149 of the Equality Act 2010 sets out the public-sector equality duty to which the authority must have due regard. The Council's public-sector equality duty is set out in s149 of the Equality Act 2010:
- 5.7.2 A public authority must, in the exercise of its functions, have due regard to the need to:
- a) Eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under this Act;
 - b) Advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it;
 - c) Foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.
- 5.7.3 The relevant protected characteristics are age; disability; gender reassignment; pregnancy and maternity; race; religion or belief; sex and sexual orientation. The Barnet Safer Communities Strategy and the services delivered as part of this contract take into account the protected characteristics to ensure services are accessible and fair to all sections of the community.

5.8 Corporate Parenting

- 5.8.1 There are no implications for the London Borough of Barnet's corporate parenting responsibilities with this contract.
- 5.8.2 The domestic abuse VAWG services have responsibility to children in care who either are victims of domestic violence or enter care due to parental domestic abuse.
- 5.8.3 These services deliver preventative messages and support which benefit children in care.

5.9 Consultation and Engagement

5.9.1. The services detailed in this report support the delivery of the Barnet Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG) Strategy. Extensive consultation was carried out during 2017 to support the development of the Barnet VAWG Strategy. Feedback from these consultations highlighted that service users wanted the process for accessing help, which can often involve multiple agencies, to be as straightforward and clear as possible with strong co-ordination between the agencies involved.

5.9.2. The quarterly VAWG Forum provides ongoing feedback from partner agencies and organisations on the implementation of the VAWG strategy.

5.10 Environmental Impact

There are no direct environmental implications from noting the recommendations. Implementing the recommendations in the report will lead to a positive impact on the Council's carbon and ecology impact, or at least it is neutral.

6. BACKGROUND PAPERS

6.1 Community Leadership Committee, 21 June 2017, item 7, London Borough of Barnet Violence against Women and Girls (VAWG) Strategy 2017-2020
<https://barnet.moderngov.co.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=694&MId=8722&Ver=4>

6.2 Chief Officer Decision to extend the DA Advocacy and support contract for 7 months and reprocurement April 2021
[Decision - Authorisation to Extend the Existing Domestic Abuse Solace - Advocacy Contract for a Period of Seven Months Beyond the Existing Contract Term. \(moderngov.co.uk\)](#)

6.3 Chief Officer decision to extend the DA Refuge contract for 7 months and reprocurement April 2021
[Decision - Authorisation to Extend the Existing Domestic Abuse Solace - Refuge Contract for a Period of Seven Months Beyond the Existing Contract Term. \(moderngov.co.uk\)](#)

7. DECISION TAKER'S STATEMENT

7.1 *I have the required powers to make the decision documented in this report. I am responsible for the report's content and am satisfied that all relevant advice has been sought in the preparation of this report and that it is compliant with the decision-making framework of the organisation which includes Constitution, Scheme of Delegation, Budget and Policy Framework and Legal issues including Equalities obligations. The decision is compliant with the principles of decision making in Article 10 of the constitution.*

Chief Officer: Chris Munday, Executive Director Children and Family Services

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'C. Friday'.

Signed:

Dated: 26 October 2021