

REPORT TO: Executive Board Sub-Committee
DATE: 12th January 2012
REPORTING OFFICER: Strategic Director for Communities
PORTFOLIO HOLDER: Health and Adults
SUBJECT: Domestic Abuse Service Tender

1.0 PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To inform Executive Board Sub Committee of the outcome of the tender process carried out to secure the provision of a domestic abuse service in Halton.
- 1.2 To seek authority to extend the Halton & District Women's Aid Refuge Accommodation Contract until 31st March 2013. Current contracting arrangements expire on 31st March 2012.

2.0 RECOMMENDED: That

- 1) **in the exceptional circumstances set out below (namely the termination of the Domestic Abuse tender) for the purpose of Procurement Standing Order 1.8.2, procurement Standing Orders 3.1 to 3.7 be waived on this occasion because compliance with these Standing Orders is not practicable following the termination of the tender process due to lack of competition. It is requested the existing Supporting People contract be extended to March 2013 subject to variation as agreed by the Operational Director Commissioning & Complex Care at an estimated price of £231,542; and**
- 2) **the Strategic Director, Communities, in conjunction with the portfolio holder for Health, be authorised to take such action as necessary to implement the above recommendation.**

3.0 SUPPORTING INFORMATION

- 3.1 In September 2011 Executive Board Sub-Committee granted authority to the Strategic Director, Communities to carry out all necessary steps in relation to the open tender process for provision of a Domestic Abuse service. This tender opportunity would rationalise the services currently delivered under the Refuge Accommodation and Domestic Abuse contracts.
- 3.2 The tender opportunity was advertised via Halton's e-procurement system, Due North (The Chest) on 17th October 2011, with a closing date of 10th November 2011.
- 3.3 33 organisations registered an interest online for the Domestic Abuse tender

opportunity, but only 2 submissions were received at 10th November 2011.

- 3.4 Of the 2 submissions received, only one organisation had submitted a tender and one organisation was declining to tender. The completed tender was received from the existing support provider, Halton & District Women's Aid.
- 3.5 The Pre Qualification Questionnaire (PQQ) was evaluated, and Halton & District Women's Aid passed the PQQ evaluation and proceeded to tender evaluation stage.
- 3.6 However, it was agreed to terminate the tender process due to lack of competition. A number of actions were agreed to be completed prior to the re-tender of this service, and include:
 - Benchmarking of costs to ensure a competitive indicative budget has been set for the service
 - Options paper to be prepared to identify alternative funding which may be secured from partner agencies
 - Consideration to be given to alternative service delivery models, and proposals for the development and implementation within Halton, including cost implications
 - Feedback to be obtained from the organisations who registered an interest but did not tender
- 3.7 The current Domestic Abuse Support Service contract has the option to extend for a further 12 months.
- 3.8 To align the existing Refuge Accommodation service with the Domestic Abuse Support Service, a further extension is sought ensure continuity of service provision and to give the opportunity to explore alternative models of service delivery prior to commencement of a further procurement exercise.
- 3.9 It is proposed to extend the existing service arrangements until 31st March 2013 to enable service commissioners to review service delivery and give consideration to alternative methods of service delivery.

It is also proposed that the contract extension is offered at the reduced contract price proposed within the recent tender.

4.0 Business case Supporting the Proposal to Waive

4.1 Value for Money & Competition

During 2010/11 90 service users were supported in the Women's Aid Refuge, and it is important to ensure there is continuity of supported accommodation provision available for victims of Domestic Abuse within Halton.

By extending the Refuge Accommodation contract in line with the extension available within the Domestic Abuse service will align the two services prior to the rationalisation within a holistic Domestic Abuse service as this will ensure a

value for money service is commissioned during the re-tender exercise.

The Refuge Accommodation and Domestic Abuse Support services are delivered by the same support provider. The Domestic Abuse Support service office base is within the Refuge and therefore there would be an impact on the delivery of that service if the Refuge provision is not available.

4.2 Transparency

In order to ensure transparency, the service will continue to be closely monitored by Halton Borough Council against set standards within the existing contract specification.

4.3 Propriety & Security

The contract complies with Halton Borough Council's Standing Orders in relation to procurement. The contract is liable to termination if any instances of corruption by this organisation or its staff members occur ensuring compliance with anti corruption practices.

Additionally if the service fails to meet the performance standards and targets set to the satisfaction of the Council, then the Council will have the option to terminate the contract, giving 3 months notice.

4.4 Accountability

The Operational Director for Commissioning & Complex Care has responsibility for this contract.

All Domestic Abuse services in Halton are currently subject to scrutiny by the Safer Halton Policy and Performance Board and the Local Safeguarding Children Board.

In common with other contracts this process will be open to both internal and external audit.

4.5 Position of the contract under the Public Contracts Regulations 2006

Under the Public Contracts Regulations 2006 Health and Social Services are a part-exempt service. It is in any event subject to fundamental transparency and non-distortion of competition requirements and the award of any contract must be advertised in the Official Journal within 42 days of the award of the contract.

5.0 POLICY IMPLICATIONS

5.1 The Refuge Accommodation and Domestic Abuse Support service supports Halton's Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence Strategy 2011-14.

6.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 The following table gives details of the financial implications of continuing to deliver the services to 31st March 2013:

Scheme	Current Annual Cost	Indicative Tender Budget	Tenderer	Tender Price	Difference to Current Cost
Refuge	£141,998	£249,500	Halton & District Women's Aid	£231,542	-£38,037
Domestic Abuse Service	£127,581				

- 6.2 As Halton & District Women's Aid have submitted a reduced price in their tender submission, it is recommended that the contract extension is offered the reduced contract price set out above.

7.0 IMPLICATIONS FOR THE COUNCIL'S PRIORITIES

7.1 Children & Young People in Halton

The Domestic Abuse services provide a safe environment for children and young people where they are supported and protected from abuse and neglect. The Domestic Abuse Support service also enables children and young people to remain in their home and continue to access and maintain existing schools, health services and support networks.

7.2 Employment, Learning & Skills in Halton

None identified.

7.3 A Healthy Halton

The Domestic Abuse services reduce the risks of harm for service users and improve their physical and mental health and well being.

7.4 A Safer Halton

The Domestic Abuse services support victims to minimise the risk of harm from perpetrators. The Sanctuary element of the Domestic Abuse Support service provides target hardening of properties to enable service users to remain safely within their own homes.

7.5 Halton's Urban Renewal

None identified.

8.0 RISK ANALYSIS

- 8.1 Financial risk is minimised as the service will be delivered within existing

budgets.

- 8.2 As part of the procurement process, Halton Borough Council has carried out a financial assessment on Halton & District Women's Aid, and have confirmed that they are a financially viable organisation

9.0 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY ISSUES

- 9.1 Halton & District Women's Aid will be required to demonstrate that they embrace and comply with the Equality Act, and their services will be monitored to ensure this is the case.

10.0 LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS UNDER SECTION 100D OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972

- 10.1 None.