

REPORT TO: Executive Board

DATE: 11th September 2025

REPORTING OFFICER: Executive Director Environment and Regeneration

PORTFOLIO: Community Safety

SUBJECT: Domestic Abuse Accommodation

WARD(S) Borough wide

1.0 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1.1** Request for Waiver of Standing Orders:
A request for a waiver in compliance with Procurement Standing Order 1.14.4 iv of part 3.1 and 3.2 of Procurement Standing Orders is sought to allow the continuation of a contract with SHAP (St Helens Accommodation Project) to deliver on behalf of the Council, the Domestic Abuse Supported Accommodation Service, for a period of one year from 11th January 2026 to 10th January 2027.

2.0 RECOMMENDATION: That

- 1) The contents of this report are noted; and**
- 2) The Board approves the contract with SHAP that expires on 10th January 2026 to be extended for twelve months without going through the procurement process, in pursuance of Procurement Standing Order 1.14.4 (non-emergency procedures – exceeding a value threshold of £100,000), seeking to waive part 3.1 and 3.2 of Procurement Standing Orders.**

3.0 SUPPORTING INFORMATION

- 3.1** The Domestic Abuse Act 2021 places a statutory duty on tier one local authorities relating to the provision of support to victims of domestic abuse and their children residing within refuges and other safe accommodation hence, Halton has a duty to provide accommodation for victims and their families fleeing violence. This may be for both local residents as well as victims from outside the borough where fleeing from the location of perpetrators is appropriate.
- 3.2** Halton currently has a refuge contractual arrangement with SHAP who were commissioned in 2023 to deliver Halton Domestic Abuse Refuge accommodation at the current refuge building in Widnes; the

building is owned by Riverside. Services are provided to victims of domestic abuse aged 18 and over, and also supports 16/17 year-olds who are referred into the service through MARAC (multi-agency risk assessment conference). Following the remodelling of the refuge in 2014 into self-contained units, the service also supports male victims fleeing or at risk of domestic abuse.

3.3 The existing contract ends on 10th January 2026. The request for authorisation of a waiver rather than implementing a tender process is due to the following:

- The current service is well known and performing well and meeting all required expectations. In the current situation it would be difficult for a new provider to become established as it a specialist provision.
- This contract delivers on a statutory duty to provide refuge accommodation so there can be no gap in service provision.

3.4 The value of a contract extension for one year from 11th January 2026 to 10th January 2027 is £200,769 and will be met from existing service budget.

3.5 There is a wider programme of work around accommodation which will be progressed within the timescale of the waiver.

4.0 POLICY IMPLICATIONS

4.1 The method of procurement complies with both the Procurement Act 2023 and the Council's Procurement Standing Orders.

4.2 The Domestic Abuse Act 2021 places a statutory duty on tier one local authorities relating to the provision of support to victims of domestic abuse and their children residing within refuges and other safe accommodation hence, Halton has a duty to provide accommodation for victims and their families fleeing violence. This may be for both local residents as well as victims from outside the borough where fleeing from the location of perpetrators is appropriate.

5.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

5.1 The value of the contract extension for one year to 10th January 2027 is £200,769 and is within Halton's budget.

6.0 IMPLICATIONS FOR THE COUNCIL'S PRIORITIES

6.1 Improving Health, Promoting Wellbeing and Supporting Greater Independence

To remove barriers in accessing crisis accommodation by working across partnership to address the wider determinants of health.

6.2 Building a Strong, Sustainable Local Economy

Domestic abuse affects 1 in 3 women and 1 in 5 men. With UK employment rate hovering at around 75%, that means that as many as 1.5 million employees will have experienced domestic abuse within the past 12 months. This is estimated to cost the UK economy close to £2bn annually, with output lost due to reduced productivity; unplanned time off; lost wages; sick pay. The accommodation offer along with the support provided will ease pressure for victims at a time of crisis and support them to maintain or return to employment.

6.3 Supporting Children, Young People and Families

The accommodation offer supports families and children at a distressing time in their lives often through traumatic experience. The service provides accommodation and support whilst linking to the wider service offer to empower victims and children in re-establishing their lives in a safe, supportive environment.

6.4 Tackling Inequality and Helping Those Who Are Most In Need

Part of the service offer includes raising awareness, understanding domestic abuse, and tackling it in all its forms. Taking positive action to protect victims and children from further harm and providing access to supportive measures to reduce the number of domestic incidents, reducing the risk of further abuse.

6.5 Working Towards a Greener Future

None to report.

6.6 Valuing and Appreciating Halton and Our Community

This area of work supports people at a time when they are most in need. It is not only a statutory duty, but there is also recognition the support provided will impact on the trajectory of victims and children in having fulfilling life experiences.

7.0 RISK ANALYSIS

7.1 The current contract for these services will end on 10th January 2026; should the above not be agreed, the services will cease delivery of the provision and there will be a detrimental effect on victims that require emergency accommodation when fleeing domestic abuse.

7.2 If contracts for Domestic Abuse Accommodation are not in place, this may lead to the Council being unable to fulfil its statutory duty.

8.0 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY ISSUES

8.1 The current proposal would not impact upon any equality and diversity issues as all relevant protected characteristics would be

unaffected by the proposal.

9.0 CLIMATE CHANGE IMPLICATIONS

9.1 None to report.

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

‘None under the meaning of the Act.’