
Subject: FUTURE FUNDING FOR DOMESTIC ABUSE SERVICE PROVISION

Meeting and Date: Cabinet – 5 September 2016

Report of: Roger Walton, Director of Environment and Corporate Assets

Portfolio Holder: Councillor Keith Morris, Portfolio Holder for Skills, Training, Tourism, Voluntary Services and Community Safety

Decision Type: Executive Key Decision

Classification: Unrestricted

Purpose of the report: To obtain Cabinet's approval for the recommendation relating to contributing towards funding a countywide domestic abuse service as set out in the report.

Recommendation: To agree to a joint request from Kent Police and Kent County Council to contribute towards a future domestic abuse service provision.

1. Summary

Domestic Abuse service provision across Kent is being redesigned with a view to commissioning an innovative solution to address the increasing demand currently being experienced by the county's domestic abuse services. Clearly there is a cost implication, and Kent Police and Kent County Council are seeking additional funding from a range of partners, including Local Authorities.

2. Introduction and Background

2.1 Whilst the Police investigate allegations of domestic abuse from a criminal perspective, there can be no doubt that ongoing support for victims of such crimes is the responsibility of many agencies. In particular, for district and borough authorities much of that responsibility falls to the housing services. The total cost of domestic abuse to Kent and Medway public services has been put at £370 million per year.

2.2 In the financial year 2013-2014, Independent Domestic Violence Advisers (IDVA) were introduced across the county, to provide specialist advice and support to the most serious domestic abuse cases. Local Authorities were requested to contribute to this service, which Dover District Council initially declined. However, in the two subsequent financial years (2014-2015 and 2015-2016) DDC agreed to contribute £11,900 per year.

2.3 For the financial year 2016-2017, Local Authorities were asked to only contribute funding for Quarter 1 (for DDC this amounted to £2,975) whilst research was undertaken into commissioning a broader domestic abuse service across the county. This request later became for a full year's funding (£11,900) to enable the commissioning process to progress with a view to the new integrated service commencing in April 2017. DDC agreed to this request for further funding, and so by the end of this financial year will have contributed to a domestic abuse service for three years.

- 2.4 The DDC contribution has been paid from the Housing Revenue Account, given the likely benefits to that Service area, and it is suggested that if further funding is agreed it should continue to come from that account.
- 2.5 The Dover District Community Safety Partnership plan has tackling Domestic Abuse as its major priority for the planning year 2016-2017.
- 2.6 Kent Police and KCC have now compiled a service specification for a jointly commissioned integrated domestic abuse service which will reduce the impact of domestic abuse on families and communities. The overall aim of a commissioned service will be to not only support victims of domestic abuse and their families, but also to reduce the risk of harm. A copy of the draft Service Specification is attached.
- 2.7 Kent Police held a meeting on 10th June 2016 to present the service proposals to Kent Local Authorities and other partners. Most were represented; whilst the invitation had been sent to Chief Executives, only one attended, with the remainder being represented by Community Safety professionals. Medway had declined to attend as they had stated that they wish to commission their own service. No representatives from health or the CCGs were present despite the obvious implications for them of domestic abuse.
- 2.8 The purpose of this meeting was to start the formal consultation process and explain the reasons for exploring the potential for a commissioned service. The timetable for this process is:
 - i. Completion of consultation: 5th July 2016
 - ii. Commitment of funding from commissioning partners, including Local Authorities, together with indicative amounts of how much funding each partner is prepared to contribute for one year, by 1st August 2016
 - iii. Service put out to tender on 1st September 2016
 - iv. 5 year contract awarded 31st December 2016
 - v. New service operational from 1st April 2017.
- 2.9 It was made very clear by the Kent Police and KCC representatives that funding was being sought from Local Authorities to support the proposed service. However, when asked, they did not know how much funding was being sought and agreed to look into this. They agreed to provide this information by 1st July 2016. They were also questioned about service provision to those who do not contribute. They stated that Local Authorities who do not contribute funding would still receive a service but they could not elaborate on what type of service this might be, nor the difference in service between those who do and those who do not contribute.
- 2.10 KCC have now stated the amount of funding they are seeking from Dover District Council based on recognised research and a funding formula is £14,051 per year for a 5 year period. This amounts to an annual increase of £2,151 on previous years; over the five year period of the contract, DDC's contribution will amount to £70,255.
- 2.11 Based on analysis of domestic abuse data, Dover district can expect to have a little under 4,000 victims (female and male) of domestic abuse annually.
- 2.12 A draft Service Specification is attached to this report illustrating the expected service the successful provider will give across the county.
- 2.13 KCC has stated that it will not be possible to deliver the full scope of the model in the event of districts and borough councils electing not to contribute. They have decided

that it would not be fair in this instance to those who do contribute to deliver a reduced offer county wide. As a result, any district who does not contribute to the integrated model will receive a reduced offer from the service. Whilst the full details of this cannot be finalised until KCC has clarity on the funding envelope, their expectation is that for non-contributing areas, safe accommodation and a central referral and assessment service would continue to be delivered, alongside a minimal community support offer (probably to be delivered to those at most risk of harm). The integrated service would then refer out to whatever local solution the particular locality has in place.

- 2.14 It should also be noted that whilst the proposed service looks to aftercare for victims of domestic abuse and seeks to reduce repeat victimisation, we will continue to work with our partners on addressing the root causes of domestic abuse.

3 Identification of Options

- 3.1 Not to agree to funding; or
- 3.2. To agree to the requested funding.

4. Evaluation of Options

- 4.1.1 It is easy to argue that tackling domestic abuse and supporting the victims is not a matter for Local Authorities as statutory agencies whose responsibilities these issues are exist. Also, Local Authorities have other statutory responsibilities that we receive no additional funding from our partners for. However, if funding were to be contributed, this would directly support extremely vulnerable members of our communities and is likely to lead, in the long run, to a reduced demand for Council services, particularly in the housing service area.
- 4.2 None of the representatives present at this meeting committed to any funding, nor intimated whether or not they would be willing to contribute. However, it is highly likely that the majority of Local Authorities will agree to provide additional funding as requested. In the case of IDVA funding, disquiet was initially expressed at a request for funding but ultimately the vast majority of Local Authorities agreed to the request.
- 4.3 I would also be concerned that in the event of a death or serious injury where the victim had not received a service due to a Council not providing funding, there would be adverse criticism of that Council
- 4.4 It is recommended that DDC agrees to contribute the requested funding towards the proposed domestic abuse service for a five year period.

5. Resource Implications

- 5.1.1 Funding of £14,051 per year for a 5 year period has been requested. This amounts to £70,255 over the five year period of the proposed contract.

6. Corporate Implications

- 6.1.1 Comment from the Section 151 Officer: Accountancy have no further comments to make. (BW)
- 6.2 Comment from the Solicitor to the Council: The Solicitor to the Council has been consulted in the preparation of this report and has no further comments to make.
- 6.3 Comment from the Equalities Officer: This report does not specifically highlight any equalities implications however, in discharging their responsibilities members are required to comply with the public sector duty as set out in section 149 of the Equality Act 2010 <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2010/15>

7. Appendices

Appendix 1 - Letter dated 16th May 2016 from Kent Police to DDC Chief Executive re: proposed meeting

Appendix 2 - Letter dated 21st June 2016 from KCC to DDC Chief Executive requesting funding

Appendix 3 - Draft Service Specification v5

8. Background Papers

None.

Contact Officer: Christopher Allen, Head of Community Safety, CCTV and Parking