

Extension of contract for a three year period with Leeds Women's Aid for the Leeds Domestic Violence Service (DN194503) in accordance with Contracts Procedure Rule 21.2 (contract extensions)

Date: 5th January 2022

Report of: Head of Commissioning (Housing & Public Health)

Report to: Director of Communities, Housing & Environment

Will the decision be open for call in? Yes No

Does the report contain confidential or exempt information? Yes No

What is this report about?

Including how it contributes to the city's and council's ambitions

- This report is about extending the contract for the Leeds Domestic Violence Service (LDVS) - a support service for victims-survivors of domestic abuse.
- After a competitive procurement exercise, the contract was awarded to a consortium led by Leeds Women's Aid (in partnership with Behind Closed Doors and Women's Health Matters) for a period of five years with the option to extend for up to 36 months in any combination. The contract was awarded in 2 lots – Community-Based Support and Emergency Accommodation. The annual contract value is £885,898 (£636,976 for Lot 1 and £248,922 for Lot 2) £833,842 of which is funded by Communities, Housing & Environment and £52,056 of which is funded by Public Health. The service began on 1st April 2017 and the initial contract period will therefore expire on 31st March 2022.
- An exercise has been undertaken to inform the decision-making process around extending the contract (see Appendix 1). This has concluded that the service is performing well, is of high quality and represents value for money. It continues to meet the original contract aims and objectives to provide a strategically important service that meets the Council's ambitions.
- The extension of the contract will support the priorities within the Best Council Plan:
 - Keeping people safe from harm, protecting the most vulnerable
 - Being responsive to local needs, building thriving, resilient communities
 - Supporting families to give children the best start in life
 - Improving social, emotional and mental health and wellbeing

Recommendations

- a) The Director of Communities, Housing & Environment is recommended to approve an extension of three years to the existing contract with Leeds Women's Aid for the Leeds Domestic Violence Service, with effect from 1st April 2022 and to the value of £885,898 per annum; a total of £2,657,694 over the three year extension period.

Why is the proposal being put forward?

- 1 The current contract entered the final year of delivery in April 2021, and it is necessary to take a decision now regarding extending the contract to avoid uncertainty and disruption to service delivery.
- 2 A comprehensive domestic violence and abuse strategy (building on the Support in Safe Accommodation Strategy published on the LCC website on 25th October 2021) will be co-produced with victims-survivors and other key stakeholders during 2022/23. Approving this extension will mean that the Strategy can be used to inform the development and procurement of a new service to be in place from 1st April 2025.
- 3 Supporting victims-survivors of domestic abuse remains a priority for Leeds City Council
- 4 An exercise to evaluate service delivery has taken place to inform this decision (see Appendix 1). The findings of this were:
 - LDVS is a high quality and well performing service that addresses need. It is well led and has a committed staff team.
 - It has and continues to deliver a service in line with the Council's initial ambitions.
 - The service is a key partner in other strategic pieces of work, for example developing the Support in Safe Accommodation Strategy and supporting the new Daily Risk Assessment Meeting (DRAM) and MARAC arrangements.
 - The service is very busy and facing a rise in demand.
- 5 As a result of these findings, the recommendation is to invoke the full 36 month extension period that is available for this contract. This will importantly provide surety to the consortium as it approaches the final months of the contract. The extension will avoid disruption for clients.
- 6 A procurement exercise would not be feasible due to the time constraints of a new contract being procured, awarded and mobilised by April 2022.

What impact will this proposal have?

Wards affected: All

Have ward members been consulted?

Yes

No

- 7 Victims-survivors of domestic violence and abuse in Leeds will continue to be supported by a high quality service which provides a range of support options to best suit individual needs.
- 8 The service will be able to continue supporting the DRAM/MARAC arrangements – these are partnership arrangements to support the highest risk victims-survivors.
- 9 The extension will allow time for a comprehensive service review and the development of a new Domestic Abuse Strategy prior to a procurement exercise for a new service from 1st April 2025.
- 10 An Equality, Diversity, Cohesion & Integration screening has been completed in relation to this decision and is attached for information as a background document. There are no issues to be addressed.

What consultation and engagement has taken place?

- 11 This contract has been in place since 1st April 2017 and was commissioned following an extensive period of stakeholder consultation and review.

- 12 Colleagues in Safer Stronger Communities – who are leading on the development of the new Domestic Abuse Strategy – are in agreement that this extension will allow time for the Strategy to be developed in a timely manner and to be completed in time to inform future commissioning.
- 13 The Executive Member for Resources and the Executive Member for Environment and Housing have been consulted and support invoking the extension.

What are the resource implications?

- 14 The cost of the contract extension is £2,657,694 and is met by both Resources and Housing (£2,501,526) and Public Health revenue funding (£156,158), and there is provision within both budgets for the extension.
- 15 In light of the current financial situation, officers in Adults and Health commissioning have undertaken a review of all upcoming contract decisions and have concluded that this extension should go ahead at the current value, because:
 - the original financial modelling ensured that the contract was procured at the minimum cost possible to meet its specific requirements
 - the contract has been the same price since contract award and inflationary cost pressures are being met from within the existing budget
 - the service has been consistently operating at full capacity and demand has grown over the contract period. The service has been successful in bidding for additional funding from other sources (e.g. from the Ministry of Justice) to help support this increased demand, but the additional funding is dependent on the core service being in place
 - the three delivering partners are already contributing resources to allow the service to run at the current levels
 - having reviewed the contract terms and specification, any budget reduction would directly impact on frontline delivery and lead to fewer victims-survivors being supported
 - this service reduces demand on the wider health and care and criminal justice systems in Leeds
 - the service meets the key council priorities of reducing health inequalities and responding to Covid-19
 - opportunities will continue to be sought to secure additional, external, funding in order to increase impact.

What are the legal implications?

- 16 The extension of the contract is a key decision and is therefore subject to Call In (ref: 119644)
- 17 This report does not contain any exempt or confidential information under the Access to Information Rules.
- 18 The recommendation relating to the extension is in accordance with Contracts Procedure Rule 21.2 as it is in accordance with its original terms and has been demonstrated to continue to deliver Best Value.
- 19 Although there is no overriding legal obstacle preventing the extension of this contract the contents of this report should be noted. In making their final decision, the Director of Communities, Housing and Environment should be satisfied that the course of action chosen represents best value for the Council.

What are the key risks and how are they being managed?

- 20 The approval of a 3 year contract extension will enable continuity of service provision and increased surety for the providers. This will help to retain staff and enable continued innovation.
- 21 Appropriate governance arrangements are in place to identify and mitigate identified risks including regular contract management meetings which include performance and quality monitoring, overview of contract risk and updating the Domestic Abuse Local Partnership Board.

Does this proposal support the council's three Key Pillars?

- Inclusive Growth Health and Wellbeing Climate Emergency

22 This service will contribute to the following Best Council Plan priorities:

- Keeping people safe from harm, protecting the most vulnerable
- Being responsive to local needs, building thriving, resilient communities
- Supporting families to give children the best start in life
- Improving social, emotional and mental health and wellbeing

Options, timescales and measuring success

What other options were considered?

- 23 Implementing the full extension period will mean that from 1st April 2022 there will be three further years of service delivery under the current contractual arrangements. This will importantly provide the time for in depth discussions and consultation to take place about what the long-term future needs of the city are with regards to support for victims-survivors of domestic abuse and to implement any recommendations. Contract terms and conditions still enable changes or termination if required should circumstances change.
- 24 A second option would be to let the contract lapse at the end of 2021/22. Should this course of action be undertaken it would require a re-procurement exercise to be undertaken, however there are no grounds for doing this as the current contract is in line with what is needed, performing well, is of good quality and provides value for money.
- 25 A third option would be to extend for 12 months and review again at the end of each year. However, choosing this option would create annual disruption and uncertainty for the service and clients.

How will success be measured?

- 26 Performance and quality monitoring will continue via existing contract management arrangements
- 27 The service regularly collects feedback from people receiving support in order to be able to demonstrate the positive impact they are having on people's lives.

What is the timetable for implementation?

- 28 If approval to extend the contract is given, the service will be notified immediately.
- 29 The extension period will be 1st April 2022 to 31st March 2025.

Appendices

- 30 Appendix 1: Summary of LDVS service delivery

Background papers

31 Equality Diversity Cohesion Integration Impact Screening