

Decision Pathway – Report



PURPOSE: For reference

MEETING: Cabinet

DATE: 14 September 2021

TITLE	Domestic Abuse Contract Extension		
Ward(s)	All		
Author: Carol Slater	Job title: Health Equity Lead-Public Health		
Cabinet lead: Cllr Asher Craig	Executive Director lead: Hugh Evans, Executive Director, People		
Proposal origin: BCC Staff			
Decision maker: Cabinet Member			
Decision forum: Cabinet			
Purpose of Report:			
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> To inform Cabinet of the Officer Executive Decision taken as an emergency key decision, the extension of the Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence service contracts by six months until 30 September 2022. 			
Evidence Base:			
<p>The paper is to inform cabinet of an emergency key decision taken in accordance with the Council's constitutional requirements) to extend the Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence services contracts by six months. The overall value of the contracts is £1,475,720 and a six-month extension will cost £737,861. The contract value is made up of 13 separate contracts. These are listed in Appendix A.</p> <p>These contracts were due to come to an end on the 31 July 2021, however due to COVID-19 an extension of eight months was granted in June 2020 until 31 March 2022. The emergency key decision taken on (date) extended these contracts further until 30 September 2022.</p> <p>Two major changes in national policy and local guidance have emerged that have necessitated this request. The Domestic Abuse Bill received Royal Assent and became Law on the 29 April 2021. The Mayoral Commission on Domestic Abuse was convened in the summer of 2020 and published its report in March 2021.</p> <p>The DA Act required substantial programmes of work to successfully deliver as required by law over the last year, including new governance processes and spending plans. In addition, a raft of new waves of Ministry of Justice and MHLG funding grants have also been published over Spring and Summer 2021 which have given Bristol the opportunity to increase investment in domestic abuse and grow services collaboratively with local providers.</p> <p>The team worked hard to ensure that policy change implications and programme outcomes were appropriately reflected in the consultation process and commissioning intentions to ensure the new model takes account of this and provides sustainable benefit to citizens and service users. However, the timescale required going out to consultation by the end of July which was not possible and therefore the 6-month extension to the contract was requested.</p> <p>The Domestic Abuse Bill received Royal Assent and became Law on the 29 April 2021. Its purpose is to: Raise awareness and understanding about impact of domestic abuse; Improve the effectiveness of the justice system and to strengthen the support for victims of abuse by statutory agencies. This leads to duties for local authorities which need implementation: specifically, to appoint a multi-agency Domestic Abuse Local Partnership Board which it will consult as it performs certain specified functions. These are to:</p>			

- Assess the need for accommodation-based domestic abuse support for all victims in their area, including those who require cross-border support.
- Develop and publish a strategy for the provision of such support to cover their locality, having regard to the Needs Assessment (by October 2021)
- Give effect to the strategy (through commissioning / de-commissioning decisions).
- Monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of the strategy
- Report back to central government (annually)
- Require local authorities to have regard to statutory guidance in exercising their functions (Note: this is currently available in draft form)

The Mayoral Commission on Domestic Abuse was convened in the summer of 2020 and published its report in March 2021. Several of the recommendations in this report can be met through the implementation of the DA Act requirements.

It has been established that COVID-19 and the associated lockdowns have led to an escalation in relation to domestic abuse and this has resulted an increase of over 30% in referrals to our commissioned services. There also has been some learning in relation to remote service provision. A delay in the procurement will enable the following.

- Engage the newly formed Survivor’s Forum in the pre-engagement process
- Ensure that we have fully engaged with wider domestic abuse community and not just the most well-established providers as part of the pre-commissioning process market readiness
- Take account of the cross LA Joint Needs Assessment (due Sept 2021)
- Utilise the newly established Domestic Abuse Partnership Board, Delivery Group and Commissioning Group governance arrangements
- Take advantage of the very recently established increased capacity and new leadership in the public health DA team
- Critically, ensure a strategic approach to the inclusion of the DA Act duties and mayoral commission recommendations, and shaping of the model and approach by members, providers, and communities.

Cabinet Member / Officer Recommendations:

That Cabinet

1. Notes the emergency key decision taken to extend the Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence services contracts as set out in Appendix A by 6 months until 30 September 2022 at a total cost of £737,861.

Corporate Strategy alignment:

1. **Empowering and Caring** – Prioritise community development and enable people to support their community. The commission emphasises that domestic abuse and sexual violence are everybody’s business and includes commitments to empower communities and local businesses to take steps to prevent and respond to abuse – this includes commissioning programmes.
2. **The One City Plan** contains the goal that by 2049, “Bristol will be a city free from domestic abuse and gender inequality.”

City Benefits:

This will ensure:

1. A strategic approach to the inclusion of the DA Act duties and mayoral commission recommendations, and shaping of the model and approach by members, providers, and communities
2. That we have fully engaged with wider domestic abuse community and not just the most well-established providers as part of the pre-commissioning process market readiness

Consultation Details:

One of the reasons for the proposed extension is to engage the newly formed survivor's forum in the pre-engagement process. The proposal will be considered by partners and providers via the recently established governance structure in advance of the formal consultation process.

Background Documents:

[Domestic Abuse Act 2019-21](#)

[ModernGov - bristol.gov.uk](#) – previous cabinet decision

[www.bristol.gov.uk/DomesticAbuseReport](#) Mayoral commission recommendations

Revenue Cost	£737,861	Source of Revenue Funding	
Capital Cost	£	Source of Capital Funding	
One off cost <input type="checkbox"/>	Ongoing cost <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Saving Proposal <input type="checkbox"/>	Income generation proposal <input type="checkbox"/>

Required information to be completed by Financial/Legal/ICT/ HR partners:

1. Finance Advice:

This report advises Cabinet of the OED taken to approve the extension of the timetable for the recommissioning of Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence services contracts by six months until 30 September 2022. The cost of extending the service for six months is £737,861. This continuation is fully funded and can be met from within existing resources.

Finance Business Partner: Denise Hunt 30 July 2021

2. Legal Advice: It is recognised that the further extension of the contracts places the Council in a situation where it may breach the procurement regulations. The fact that the extension is required to allow time for the Council to undertake consultation and follow a fully compliant procurement process, will help mitigate the risk of challenge. Legal services will advise and assist officers with regard to the conduct of the proposed procurement process and the resulting contractual arrangements.

Legal Team Leader: Husinara Jones, Team Leader/Solicitor 23 August 2021

3. Implications on IT: No anticipated impact on IT/Digital Services.

IT Team Leader: Simon Oliver 28/07/21

4. HR Advice: There are no significant HR issues arising from this report

HR Partner: Lorna Laing 30/07/21

EDM Sign-off	Hugh Evans	28/07/21
Cabinet Member sign-off	Cllr Asher Craig	29/07/21
For Key Decisions - Mayor's Office sign-off	Mayor's Office	16/08/21

Appendix A – Further essential background / detail on the proposal A summary of the contract and financial details is attached.	YES
Appendix B – Details of consultation carried out - internal and external	NO

Appendix C – Summary of any engagement with scrutiny	NO
Appendix D – Risk assessment	NO
Appendix E – Equalities screening / impact assessment of proposal	YES
Appendix F – Eco-impact screening/ impact assessment of proposal	NO
Appendix G – Financial Advice	NO
Appendix H – Legal Advice	NO
Appendix I – Exempt Information	NO
Appendix J – HR advice	NO
Appendix K – ICT	NO
Appendix L – Procurement	NO