

RECORD OF EXECUTIVE DECISION

Tuesday, 17 February 2015

Decision No: (CAB 14/15 14227)

DECISION-MAKER:	CABINET
PORTFOLIO AREA:	COMMUNITIES
SUBJECT:	DOMESTIC ABUSE AND SEXUAL VIOLENCE SERVICES IN SOUTHAMPTON
AUTHOR:	Sandra Jerrim

THE DECISION

- (i) To authorise a single procurement exercise for a framework that covers a new domestic abuse and sexual violence (DASV) prevention and early intervention service, refuge provision and some perpetrator services for a period of three years. The new services contribute to a number of strategic priorities in the Council Strategy 2014-17 and Safe City Strategy 2014-17;
- (ii) To delegate authority to the Director, People, following consultation with the Head of Legal and Democratic Services to do anything necessary to give effect to the above, including, contract award; and
- (iii) To ensure that monitoring of the outcomes detailed in the Southampton Against Domestic Violence and Abuse Plan is integrated into the performance monitoring arrangements for the Council Strategy 2014-17 and the Safe City Strategy 2014—17 and reported on a quarterly basis.

REASONS FOR THE DECISION

1. Southampton, through the Local Safeguarding Children's Board (LSCB) and Safe City Partnership, has developed an ambitious but essential multiagency plan to tackle domestic violence and abuse. The stated aim is:
For Southampton to be a city united in speaking out against Domestic Violence and Abuse. The ambition is to be a leading city in preventing and responding to this issue, with a strong focus on early intervention. Through this Plan, Southampton City Council will build on its strengths and take a step-change to an even more integrated approach that will bring the widest range of services, agencies and communities together to act now to prevent, reduce and end violence and abuse in the city.

2. There is a strong case for change. Southampton needs to make changes to address the volume of DASV, which is substantially above national average; Southampton has more than twice the national average high-risk cases (going to Multi Agency Risk Assessment Committee, MARAC); above national average reporting rates - locally 5.2% of the female population report Domestic Violence and Abuse (DVA) to the police compared to 3.6% nationally. There were 4,702 DVA calls to police last year. In Southampton there are twice as many children of high-risk victims than national average; 606 in 2012/13, 878 in 2013/14 (ONS National violence Against Women and Girls Strategy) – compared to national average of 289 for the same period. There were 217 victims reporting sexual violence to the police in 2012/13 and 236 in 2013/14. There were 1,605 calls to Rape Crisis Helpline in 2012/13 and 2,611 in 2013/14.
3. The impact of violence and abuse on public services is very high. In Southampton (Children and Families Services in 2012/13) 28% of safeguarding referrals had DVA as a factor; Child Protection Conferences include DVA in 80% of cases – this is around 10% higher than similar national case profiles. DVA accounts for around 20% of violent crime in Southampton (Strategic Assessment 2012), which is higher than national average and this is reflected in Southampton's poor comparative position for violent crime against other most similar cities.
4. Services in Southampton are currently focused predominantly on higher level need across 8 different contracts and 3 different funding sources. The assessment of current service provision has highlighted the following issues:
 - High volume of demand– especially at highest risk-level - impacts on service capacity;
 - services and investment are concentrated at higher risk levels;
 - there is a lack of early intervention and prevention activities;
 - MARAC – multi agency risk assessments struggle with the high number of cases; there is a need to focus on a wider range of risks including self-harm and strengthen perpetrator responses;
 - There are gaps and duplication across services – for example, insufficient mental health expertise in DV;
 - Services are disparate and fragmented and rely on short term funding;
 - There is an adult victim focus – as opposed to whole family responses, including assessing risks and relating to children and perpetrators;
 - The impact (including long term) of DV on children and young people is not always addressed and needs to involve more services including schools; and,
 - There is little or no evidence-based perpetrators' responses in place (locally or nationally) focused on changing behaviours.

Challenging tolerance and promoting healthy relationships is not seen as a whole city issue.

5. The future approach must prioritise helping the victim to remain in their familiar home environments. Southampton City Council's key principle will be to remove the perpetrator from the situation, allowing families, children and individuals to move forward with the least amount of disruption to their life, school environment and familiar networks, especially as they go through the emotional journey of addressing DASV in their lives.

6. This will require the redeployment of some funding from refuge provision to community based services. Redeployment of funds will be managed to ensure Southampton retains some refuge provision (circa 10-13 refuge spaces). The allocation of the remaining refuge spaces will be guided to prioritise local residents while still participating in the wider national network of resources. This is likely to see a reduction from 69% to a lower proportion of refuge provision provided to those from other areas, but will improve access for local residents.
7. These challenges require a new way of working. The Southampton Against Violence and Abuse Plan (Appendix 1) sets out a new approach through an integrated service model focused on zero tolerance of DASV and holding perpetrators to account. This report and its recommendations support the development of this model through commissioning prevention and early intervention and refuge services through a single DVA framework, pooling and shifting resources to focus on the priorities for Southampton.

DETAILS OF ANY ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS

Doing nothing is not an option. Southampton City Council needs to improve the way it works with children and families while also preventing situations from deteriorating through earlier intervention and holding perpetrators to account. This cannot be achieved if the Council does not re-commission new services as part of the new service model.

OTHER RELEVANT MATTERS CONCERNING THE DECISION

None.

CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

None.

CONFIRMED AS A TRUE RECORD

We certify that the decision this document records was made in accordance with the Local Authorities (Executive Arrangements) (Access to Information) (England) Regulations 2000 and is a true and accurate record of that decision.

Date: 17th February 2015

Decision Maker: The Cabinet

Proper Officer: Judy Cordell

SCRUTINY

Note: This decision will come in to force at the expiry of 5 working days from the date of publication subject to any review under the Council's Scrutiny "Call-In" provisions.

Call-In Period expires on

Date of Call-in *(if applicable) (this suspends implementation)*

Call-in Procedure completed *(if applicable)*

Call-in heard by *(if applicable)*

Results of Call-in *(if applicable)*