

Health and Adult Services
Meeting of the Corporate Director and Executive Members (HASEX)

North Yorkshire County Council and City of York Council - Joint commissioning of Domestic Abuse Refuge and Accommodation based support services across North Yorkshire and York

14th June 2019

1	Key purpose of the report or briefing note	
1.1	Approval required to proceed with joint commissioning the Domestic Abuse Refuge provision across North Yorkshire and York. NYCC would be lead commissioner on behalf of NYCC and City of York Council for the joint commissioning and procurement exercise.	
2	What type of report is this?	
	Information/briefing item	N
	Decision required	Y
3	Recommendations	
3.1	It is recommended that approval is granted for NYCC to proceed with the joint commissioning with City of York Council for the Domestic Abuse refuge support service across North Yorkshire and York using the existing commissioning budgets: NYCC annual contract value - £533,074 City of York annual contract value - £114,993	
4	Report details	
4.1	North Yorkshire County Council (NYCC) and City of York Council (CYC) currently, separately, commission Domestic Abuse Refuge and accommodation based services with support across North Yorkshire and York.	
4.2	These are specialist services providing accommodation and housing related support to enable victims/survivors and their families experiencing or at risk of domestic abuse to make informed choices about their safety, health, housing and any other identified outcome needs.	
4.3	The Refuge service provides short-term accommodation with support to females (16+ years old) fleeing domestic abuse who may be single women or women with dependent children. Dependent male children up to the age of sixteen can be accommodated with their families. Due to the current dispersed nature of the provision in Scarborough/Ryedale it is also possible for male victims to be supported.	
4.4	The current contracts with NYCC and CYC expire on 31 st May 2020 and there are no permitted extensions remaining within the contracts.	

4.5	Domestic abuse is an issue that cuts across local authorities, policing and health agendas, and the multi- faceted and complex nature of domestic abuse means that it cannot be addressed by one agency alone so to tackle it effectively we need a true multi-agency approach. A partnership that is overseen by strong local leadership and underpinned by effective commissioning will allow victims to access the right services at the right time.
4.6	The York and North Yorkshire Domestic Abuse Joint Coordinating Group (DAJCG) leads on coordinating a multi-agency approach to domestic abuse arrangements across North Yorkshire and York. The group reports directly to North Yorkshire Community Safety Partnership and Safer York Partnership and there is effective connectivity and reporting to all four Safeguarding Boards.
4.7	The DAJCG includes representation from key agencies and sectors who, through this group, deliver their commitment to continue to reduce the impact and effects of Domestic Abuse. The group drives forward the principles and objectives of the North Yorkshire & City of York Domestic Abuse Strategy 2018-2022.
4.8	Work has already been undertaken to provide a clearer picture of the current provision of commissioned domestic abuse services and interventions. This has shown that there is a significant investment by the Commissioners but also highlighted some areas of overlap and gaps in current service provision. It has also become apparent that due to different referral criteria and routes, and performance monitoring arrangements it is difficult to try to compare the effectiveness of services.
4.9	Commissioners have also highlighted the need to use similar levels of funding whilst still effectively providing support to increasing numbers of those who report domestic abuse.
4.10	The Joint Commissioning Sub-group of the DAJCG was established to explore options to facilitate the joint future commissioning of all victims and perpetrator services (using existing commissioning budgets and funding streams) to create a more sustainable, multi-agency approach through pooled budgets.
4.11	It was agreed through the Joint Commissioning Sub-Group that NYCC would be the lead commissioner for the commissioning and procurement of the Domestic Abuse Refuge Service across North Yorkshire and York.
4.12	It is proposed that the contract length for the jointly commissioned domestic abuse refuge and accommodation based support service would be for an initial contract term of 2 years 10 months to 31.03.2023 with the potential to extend for a further year to 31.03.2024.
4.13	This would ensure that the contracts for all jointly commissioned domestic abuse services for victims and perpetrators across North Yorkshire and York are aligned for considering future commissioning intentions.
5	Significant risks and mitigation
5.1	A risk log is in place which will be regularly reviewed through the Project Group. The current key risks and mitigations are as follows:

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Length of contract may deter providers from tendering for the service –This is considered a necessary risk in order to align with wider commissioning of domestic abuse services in 2023 and the potential market were asked for their views on this through the market engagement exercise. Responses to this suggest that although it is acknowledged this is a short initial contract term, the market understands the reasoning for this and does not appear it will necessarily deter them from bidding. Availability of properties to deliver the service – engagement is taking place with the current landlords to confirm availability for the full contract term.
6	Consultation
6.1	No formal consultation is being undertaken however engagement exercises are taking place with the potential market, stakeholders and landlords of the refuge buildings.
6.2	Discussions have taken place with the current provider to determine the most appropriate way to undertake service user engagement. The provider has agreed to help facilitate service user group sessions at each of the refuges and dates for these are in the process of being arranged. Commissioners will attend the sessions and also develop a briefing note and questionnaire for service users unable to attend, those accommodated in the dispersed provision in Scarborough and ex-service users who also may want to input to the process.
6.3	The feedback from the engagement activity will help inform the development of the future service specification for the domestic abuse refuge provision.
7	Resource and financial implications/benefits
7.1	Internal resources to implement the decision will consist of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Project management from HAS Housing Market Development Team Procurement support from Corporate Procurement Legal support with regards contract terms and conditions Quality and monitoring support from Quality and Improvement team around contract monitoring and service development. Project support from Public Health around development of service specification
7.2	There are no HR implications as there are no NYCC staff employed in delivering the service.
7.3	The services are currently funded by NYCC and CYC and it is intended that the new jointly commissioned service will be funded through existing commissioning budgets.
7.4	The total annual commissioning budget would be £648,067 based on the following current annual contract values: NYCC - £533,074 CYC - £114,993
7.5	The funding for domestic abuse support services was originally part of a ring fenced grant from government re Supporting People (SP) funding.

7.6	CYC have confirmed their funding contribution for the full proposed contract term.
7.7	NYCC funding – the current budget is confirmed for the full proposed contract term. There have already been significant savings made from the SP programme and it was agreed through Cabinet in 2016 and subsequently through 2020 Programme Board in July 2017 to protect the investment in domestic abuse support services.
7.8	Although there are no specific savings identified for this service there are likely to be efficiencies by having one lot across North Yorkshire and York and tender submissions may come in below budget as potential providers will be challenged on service costs by going through a competitive process.
8	Legal
8.1	Although provision of this service is not a statutory requirement, the domestic abuse refuge and accommodation based support service does meet the Local Authorities responsibilities for prevention under the Care Act 2014 (Section 2.3): “The local authority’s responsibilities for prevention apply to all adults, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • people who do not have any current needs for care and support; • adults with needs for care and support, whether their needs are eligible and/ or met by the local authority or not”
8.2	The Care Act (section 2.23) also states: “A Local Authority must provide or arrange for services, facilities or resources which would prevent, delay or reduce individuals’ needs for care and support”
8.3	In January 2019 the Home Office published “Transforming the Response to Domestic Abuse. Consultation Response and Draft Bill”, section 2.2.2 focuses on accommodation based services and refuges and states: “We know how important it is that victims of domestic abuse have access to safe accommodation. We believe that the best way to assess need and provide safe accommodation is through local authorities working in partnership with other agencies.”
8.4	In addition a consultation from Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) was launched May 2019 on the ‘Future Delivery of Support to Victims and their Children in Accommodation Based Domestic Abuse Services’ and this will run until 2 nd August 2019.
8.5	MHCLG are seeking views on a new approach to delivering support to victims of domestic abuse and their children in accommodation-based services. One of the proposals being considered is placing a statutory duty on Tier 1 Local Authorities for commissioning and decommissioning domestic abuse support services in partnership with Tier 2 Local Authorities.
9	Impact on other services/organisations
9.1	The decision will not impact on other directorates or services and there will be no impact on the Customer Resolution Centre.

<p>10</p> <p>10.1</p> <p>10.2</p>	<p>Equalities Implications</p> <p>As the services are currently being delivered it is not envisaged that there will be any adverse impact on people with protected characteristics as a result of this proposal to jointly commission the service.</p> <p>The proposal will not change service delivery significantly, however a full EIA will be completed to consider available demographic information particularly in relation to male, BAME, LGBT and disabled victims to ensure that the needs of all victims/survivors of domestic abuse are being appropriately met.</p>
<p>11</p> <p>11.1</p> <p>11.2</p> <p>11.3</p> <p>11.4</p>	<p>Next steps</p> <p>The next steps to implement decision would be to gain further approval to proceed with joint commissioning / procurement through the procurement gateway process with contract award by 30th November 2019.</p> <p>Key milestones are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gateway 1 approval by 29th July 2019 • Gateway 2 approval by 6th September 2019 • Invitation to tender published from 9th September to 18th October 2019 • Gateway 3 approval by 15th November <p>This would allow for a 6 month implementation period for the new contract.</p> <p>A project group has been set up to manage this process and consists of representation from the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NYCC HAS Housing Market Development Team • NYCC Head of Safer Communities • NYCC HAS Commissioning • NYCC HAS Quality & Monitoring • NYCC Procurement • CYC Commissioning • CYC Head of Community Safety • NYCC CYPS • NYCC Public Health • North Yorkshire Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner • District / Borough Housing <p>The project plan will be closely monitored through the project group to ensure key milestones are met.</p>