

## London Borough of Hammersmith and Fulham Record of Cabinet Member Decision

**The call-in period has expired and the decision below can be implemented.**

- ❖ Draft Decision List published on: 19/10/2022
- ❖ Confirmed Decision List published on: 24/10/2022

1. **TITLE: Procurement Strategy for Specialist Co-located Independent Domestic Violence Advocacy (IDVA) Service**

2. **DECISION MADE BY:** Cabinet Member for Social Inclusion and Community Safety

3. **DECISION:**

To approve the procurement strategy to recommission a specialist co-located Independent Domestic Violence Advocacy (IDVA) service and Case Progression Service from 1 April 2023.

4. **REASON FOR DECISION:**

To comply with the statutory duty to provide appropriate Independent Domestic Violence Advocacy (IDVA) services as outlined by the Domestic Abuse Act 2021.

5. **ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED:**

Lot 1:

Option 1 – Let provision for the co-located IDVA services end in March 2023. This would present a risk to those who may require support as these services are well utilised, receiving 251 referrals for 21/22. Domestic abuse is a significant issue in the Borough and has increased year-on-year since 2016 when the co-located pilot started, with 1,870 reported domestic abuse incidents in 2021. Statistics have shown an increase in domestic abuse related offences during lockdown and highlight the need for support services for victims/survivors and their children. There is no justification for a further waiver, having sought one for the Housing IDVA and Children's Social Care in 2022. Ending IDVA services would not align with the council's commitment to ending VAWG in line with the VAWG strategy and H&F's manifesto commitments.

This is not the recommended option.

Option 2 – Let the current services continue under current arrangements and recommission separately as standalone contracts. There has been an issue with recruitment across the VAWG sector resulting in prolonged vacancies in the existing contracts and keeping the contracts separate makes it more difficult to provide cover across the services. The contract management of these projects is inefficient, as each Directorate independently undertakes contract management, which can be a barrier to information sharing. Running multiple individual tenders simultaneously would not also present good use of staff resource or value for money.

This is not the recommended option.

Option 3 – To combine the current IDVA provision across Community Safety, Housing and Children’s Services into a single contract, offering the contract via a competitive tender under an open process to deliver services for a maximum period of four years. The contract will be for two years initially, with an option to extend for up to 12 months on two further occasions. A break clause will be written into the terms and conditions of the contract. Combining the provision within one contract will ensure a more resilient and robust service, greater join-up between different service areas, as well as presenting a more efficient use of staff resource (through a joint tender exercise and shared contract management) and better value for money.

This is the recommended option.

Lot 2:

Option 1- Let provision for the Case Progression Service for the Criminal Justice Domestic Abuse Service (Impact Project) end in March 2023. Collectively, the Impact Project enables Hammersmith & Fulham to outperform the London average in DVA Convictions, Guilty Pleas and Sanctioned Detections, as well as increasing the rate of engagement with survivors of Domestic Abuse going through the criminal justice system. Ending this service would not be in line with our recently published Ending VAWG Strategy and Manifesto Commitments.

This is not the recommended option.

Option 2 - To continue the current service through direct award. Whilst officers and MOPAC consider the incumbent service provider to be high performing, in the interests of transparency, and fairness to other providers in the marketplace, the Council should hold a competitive tendering exercise.

This is not the recommended option.

Option 3 – To competitively tender the Case Progression Service as a second lot within the Specialist Co-Located IDVA Service. This will allow all providers in the marketplace to bid to provide the services and allow officers to ensure they can achieve the highest quality service for survivors of DVA in Hammersmith & Fulham. Considering the Public Contracts Regulations 2015 requirement for Councils to consider sub-dividing contracts into a number of “lots” to enable and encourage Small and Medium-Sized Enterprises (SMEs) to bid, the services will be tendered as two separate lots. This marketplace for the delivery of the services is likely to be the third sector, where there is a proliferation of SMEs.

This is the recommended option.

**6. CONFLICTS OF INTEREST DECLARED AND DISPENSATIONS GRANTED:**

None.

<b>Date of Decision</b>
19 October 2022