

CABINET MEMBER DELEGATED DECISION

31 MARCH 2021

Report title: Lambeth Safer Communities services – contract variations to value and length of contract

Wards: All

Portfolio: Cabinet Member for Jobs, Skills and Community Safety: Councillor Jacqui Dyer

Report Authorised by: Merlin Joseph: Strategic Director for Children’s Services

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REPORT SUMMARY

All current contracts for Lambeth’s commissioned violence against women and girls (VAWG) and adult offending support services (known collectively as Safer Communities) end on 31 March 2021. It is proposed to vary the contracts for these services with an extension to the existing contracts, with the same terms and conditions and specifications, from 1 April 2021 – 31 March 2022, plus the option to extend for one further year. Services are funded largely through grants and partnership agreements (89%) and funding decisions have been delayed due to Covid-19. The development and publication of the new VAWG Strategy has also been delayed due to the coronavirus pandemic and this will inform funding decisions for 2022/23. Funding has now been confirmed for one year only and holding a competitive procurement process for a single year of funded service delivery is not feasible in the time frame. Alongside this, it is proposed that two contract values are varied to reflect increased costs and pooled budgets from partnership contributions.

FINANCE SUMMARY

The total value of the Safer Communities contracts, which will run from 1 April 2021 – 31 March 2022, is £2,227,771. This will be financed through grants and partnership agreements totalling £1,982,453 and a general fund budget of £150,000, with the remaining £95,318 financed through brought forward reserves held in the service.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. To waive Section 8.2 of the Lambeth Contract Standing Orders to extend the eight contracts for Lambeth’s Safer Communities commissioned services with: Solace Women’s Aid, Refuge (for refuge provision), Refuge (for the Gaia Centre), Africa Advocacy Foundation, Women in Prison, AIR Network, the Metropolitan Police and the Community Rehabilitation Company for one year, from 1 April 2021 – 31 March 2022, at a total contract value of £2,227,771:
 - £206,453 to Solace Women’s Aid for 37 refuge beds.
 - £70,947 to Refuge for 15 refuge beds.

- £648,846 to Refuge for the Gaia Centre.
- £30,000 to Africa Advocacy Foundation for Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) provision.
- £302,640 to AIR Network for support service for priority offenders to prevent and reduce re-offending.
- £65,654 to London Community Rehabilitation Company for coordination of Integrated Offender Management (IOM) arrangements.
- £5,000 to Metropolitan Police for police hire vehicle to support IOM.
- £898,231 to Women In Prison for South London Alliance service across six boroughs supporting women in contact with the criminal justice system.

1. CONTEXT

- 1.1 All current contracts for Lambeth's commissioned violence against women and girls (VAWG) and adult offending support services (known collectively as Safer Communities) end on 31 March 2021. These include:
- A community-based gender-based violence support centre (the Gaia Centre delivered by Refuge).
 - 52 emergency accommodation spaces for women and children fleeing domestic abuse (delivered by Refuge and Solace Women's Aid with sub-contractor Asha).
 - Female genital mutilation community support service (delivered by Africa Advocacy Foundation).
 - Coordination of Lambeth's integrated offender management (IOM) arrangements for prolific offenders (delivered by the Community Rehabilitation Company and the Metropolitan Police).
 - Support service for priority adult and young offenders (delivered by AIR Network with sub-contractor St Giles Trust).
 - Support service for women in contact or at risk of contact with the criminal justice system across six south London boroughs (the South London Alliance delivered by Women in Prison).
- 1.2 Commissioned VAWG services (the Gaia Centre and emergency accommodation provision) were commissioned on three-year contracts in 2017 followed by a contract variation of a one-year extension for 2020/21 (ending 31 March 2021). The female genital mutilation community support service has been procured and extended on an annual basis since 2017.
- 1.3 Coordination of IOM arrangements and the support service for priority adult and young offenders were commissioned on 1 July 2018 for nine months (ending 31 March 2019) with the option for two, one-year extensions (up to 31 March 2021) which have been utilised.
- 1.4 The support service for women in contact with the criminal justice system was commissioned through a co-commissioning arrangement with the Mayor's Office for Policing and Crime (MOPAC) in July 2018 for 2.75 years (ending 31 March 2021).
- 1.5 This report relates to the procurement of all commissioned Safer Communities services listed in paragraph 1.1.
- 1.6 These services are largely funded through grants and partnership agreements (89%). The delay in re-procurement is due to grant funders having been delayed in confirming available funding as a result of Covid-19.

2. PROPOSAL AND REASONS

- 2.1 The proposal is to extend the contracts of providers currently delivering Lambeth's Safer Communities commissioned services. The contracts will be awarded for one year, from 1 April 2021 – 31 March 2022, with the option to extend for a further year.
- 2.2 The total value of the contract extensions is £2,227,771. This includes variations to two contract values; the Solace Women's Aid contract to increase by a nominal amount of £22,293 to reflect increased costs and increase to the Gaia Centre contract to reflect pooled budgets from partnership contributions.

2.3 A range of sourcing options in relation to Lambeth's Safer Communities commissioned services were considered. These included:

- Do nothing – This option was not considered viable as the current contracts end on 31 March and if the Council do nothing, there will be no commissioned service provision for victims of gender-based violence or adult offenders in Lambeth.
- Running the service “in house” – The Safer Lambeth VAWG Strategy sets out that frontline VAWG provision will be delivered independent of the Council, via specialist providers. Both the VAWG and adult offending services require extensive and specially trained staff resource, which does not currently exist in-house. It would further not be possible to mobilise an in-house service in the time available before the end of the existing contract terms. This option was therefore not viable.
- Tendering services through individual contracts – An open tender leading to a change in provider for a one-year contract would have a destabilising impact on current service provision and undermine existing partnerships that have been established. Due to delayed decisions on funding values and the development of the new VAWG Strategy this year due to Covid-19, performing a competitive process in the current timeline would be challenging. It would further be unfeasible for new providers to take over the services during a global pandemic and national lockdown(s). There is also a limited market of potential providers delivering these services.
- Extend contracts via a waiver to Council's Standing Order 8.2 – This approach would allow continuation with an excellent service provision for a period of one year, until future funding and service delivery arrangements are finalised and the new VAWG Strategy is completed.

Reasons for direct award of contract extension to existing commissioned providers

2.4 The rationale to waive procurement regulations and extend current contracts for one year is that it is in the demonstrable best interest of the Council for the following reasons:

- 89% of the budget for these commissioned services is grant funded. All grant funders have been delayed in confirming available funding due to Covid-19 and have now confirmed funding for one year only. Holding a competitive procurement process for one year of funding, and in the timeframe available, would be challenging and pose risk to Lambeth Council. Longer-term funding award periods are expected from 2022/23.
- Current services demonstrate excellent performance with all key performance outcomes being achieved and high levels of satisfaction from service users and stakeholders. There would be potential for negative and significant impact to service users by recommissioning new provision for only one year.
- Current services demonstrate good value for money.
- Commissioning decisions for VAWG services are informed by a Safer Lambeth VAWG strategy, which includes an in-depth consultation with stakeholders, practitioners and residents – the new strategy was originally anticipated to be published summer 2020 but was delayed due to Covid-19 and so will now be published later in 2021. This strategy informs our commissioning needs and arrangements and we would be better served in using this completed strategy to inform future decision making.
- There are opportunities for additional responsible procurement measures (see paragraph 10).

- The Gaia Centre contract value can be increased to incorporate an existing partnership contribution from the Clinical Commissioning Group that has been awarded separately up to this point. This does not represent any additional Council spend.
- Solace Women's Aid has requested an uplift to their contract value due to increased staffing and on-costs of £22,293; this would maintain the same split of costs (LBL 77%/Provider 23%).
- All Safer Communities commissioned services contribute to the four ambitions set out in Lambeth's Borough Plan:
 - A growing economy that everyone benefits from.
 - Communities that are thriving and connected.
 - People have support to live as well and independently as they can.
 - Lambeth is a place people want to live, work and invest.

Contract Management

2.5 The contracts are held and managed by the Council's Safer Communities Team. The current providers are monitored through a range of outcome measures and KPIs on a quarterly basis (with the exception of Africa Advocacy Foundation who are monitored bi-annually) and this will continue in the proposed future contract periods. Refuge provision is also subject to audits, spot-checks and dip sampling.

3. FINANCE

3.1 The budget for the Safer Communities commissioned services in 2021/22 is £2,227,771; this includes grant funding and partnership agreement of £1,982,453, a general fund budget of £150,000, with the remaining £95,318 financed through brought forward reserves held in the service.

3.2 Finance can confirm that savings for the financial year 2021/22 are not envisaged for this service area.

4. LEGAL AND DEMOCRACY

4.1 The Council has delegated the authority to award the contracts to the Cabinet Member for Jobs, Skills and Community Safety.

4.2 The services are deemed Schedule 3 health and social services and as such are subject to the light touch regime as defined in the Public Contracts Regulations 2015. In this instance, and with the funding that these providers will receive, it is considered that no other providers would be able to adequately meet the Council's requirements. Thus, and given the urgency, it is proposed to make these direct awards.

4.3 This proposed key decision was entered in the Forward Plan on 22 February 2021 and the necessary 28 clear days' notice has been given. In addition, the Council's Constitution requires the report to be published on the website for five clear days before the proposed decision is approved by the Cabinet Member. Any representations received during this period must be considered by the decision-maker before the decision is taken. A further period of five clear days – the call-in period – must then elapse before the decision is enacted. If the decision is called-in during this period, it cannot be enacted until the call-in has been considered and resolved.

5. CONSULTATION AND CO-PRODUCTION

Violence against women and girls

- 5.1 The current model of VAWG services was created in 2012, with AAF FGM provision added in 2017, and was informed by extensive independent evaluation of our services and service user and stakeholder consultation in 2011 and 2016.
- 5.2 Extensive co-production and consultation was undertaken during 2020 in the development of the new Lambeth Made Safer VAWG Strategy, due to be published later this year. These services were found to be in line with identified needs through this process.

Support services for priority offenders and women in contact with the criminal justice system

- 5.3 The service model for priority offenders was approved at the Safer Lambeth Executive in 2017. The service specification was designed in consultation with the London Community Rehabilitation Company, Metropolitan Police, Community Safety and service-users.
- 5.4 The South London Alliance (SLA) support service for women in contact with the criminal justice system was developed with partner boroughs and the voluntary and community sector, who are all now members of the SLA Delivery Group which oversees delivery of the service.
- 5.5 Consultation and engagement on the proposed extension of the current contracts for one year has been undertaken with all commissioned providers.

6. RISK MANAGEMENT

- 6.1 The table below sets out the key risks identified, an assessment of their impact and mitigating actions:

Table 1 – Risk Register

Item	Risk	Likelihood	Impact	Score	Control Measures
1	Failure of current providers in service delivery.	Very unlikely (1)	Major (4)	4	<p>The commissioners have an established and good working relationship with all providers. They consistently provide a high-quality service.</p> <p>Due diligence checks, including Dunn and Bradstreet, have been completed for all commissioned providers (undertaken January 2021).</p> <p>Regular contract monitoring will continue to take place.</p>
2	Challenge to the direct award by the market.	Unlikely (2)	Serious (4)	8	<p>As these services are specialised provision with limited market interest, a challenge is unlikely.</p> <p>It is unlikely that a one-year extension of the existing services would be challenged.</p> <p>However, if there is a challenge after the decision on-line publication an interim tender exercise can be undertaken.</p>

					It is anticipated that a full tender process will be undertaken for procuring provision once grant funding is able to resume longer-term award periods following Covid-19 delays.
3	Unforeseen changes to funding in-year.	Unlikely (2)	Significant (2)	4	Funding is secured for FY 2021-22 from all relevant funding streams.
4	Providers unable to deliver service specification within proposed budget.	Very unlikely (1)	Significant (2)	2	Providers are aware of proposal to extend contracts for one year for 2021-22 and have agreed they can deliver the service, as is, for a further year.
5	Covid-19 pandemic.	Likely (3)	Significant (2)	6	Service delivery may be affected by the Covid-19 pandemic and/or related social restrictions. Services have been adapted and worked closely alongside commissioners to continue to deliver an appropriate service throughout. Business continuity plans for services are regularly updated by providers and reviewed by commissioners. The MOPAC co-commissioning fund and London Crime Prevention fund may be impacted/delayed if the Mayoral elections are further delayed due to Covid-19.

Key

Likelihood	Very Likely	4	Likely	3	Unlikely	2	Very Unlikely	1
Impact	Major	8	Serious	4	Significant	2	Minor	1

7. EQUALITIES IMPACT ASSESSMENT

- 7.1 An Equalities Impact Assessment for the one-year extension of these services has been undertaken and was approved by the Director of Children's Commissioning and Community Safety on 19 February 2021.
- 7.2 The EIA analysed the equalities data provided through contract monitoring arrangements and found that these existing services are providing specialist support to Lambeth residents, including those with protected characteristics. The current services demonstrate good value for money and excellent performance with all key performance outcomes being achieved and high levels of satisfaction from service users and stakeholders.
- 7.3 Equalities data is monitored and reviewed as part of the contract management process to ensure that the services are accessible and serve Lambeth's diverse populations.
- 7.4 The one-year contract extension will ensure consistency in service provision and information on additional protected characteristics will be considered in a new Equalities Impact Assessment to be

undertaken as part of the anticipated competitive tender process for procuring provision once longer-term funding is secured.

8. COMMUNITY SAFETY

- 8.1 These services sit under the under the Safer Lambeth Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership (CDRP) and support the Council's duty under the Crime and Disorder Act 1998.
- 8.2 The key outcomes of the VAWG services are to safeguard victims and their children and to protect them from further harm. If these services were not available, we would be unable to provide a specialist service to victims of gender-based violence and this would be at a time that police reporting rates are continuing to increase.
- 8.3 The support service for women in contact or at risk of contact with the criminal justice system (delivered by Women in Prison) aims to reduce and prevent reoffending thereby reducing crime in the borough but also to provide a range of gender-informed support to vulnerable women with complex needs. The service also supports women who may be or have been victims of violence and works closely with the Gaia Centre and other specialist provision to reduce risk and victimisation.
- 8.4 The support service for priority offenders, which is provided alongside Lambeth's IOM arrangements, aims to support vulnerable residents who are involved or at risk of involvement with the criminal justice system to prevent, reduce or stop reoffending, thereby resulting in fewer victims and safer communities.

9. ORGANISATIONAL IMPLICATIONS

Environmental

- 9.1 No current implications, however, assurances have been sought from providers on reducing emissions as part of the Responsible Procurement implications (see 9.8 below)

Health

- 9.2 These contracts will contribute to improving the health and wellbeing of those of any gender who have experienced VAWG and that of their children, as well as adults and young people in contact with the criminal justice system. All contract specifications include specific outcomes that relate directly to health and wellbeing.

Corporate Parenting

- 9.3 The Gaia Centre provides an Early Intervention Service that supports young people (aged 11-17) who have witnessed, experienced or are at risk of gender-based violence, including Looked After Children and Care Leavers. Alongside this, the Gaia Centre, our refuges and Africa Advocacy Foundation support victims with children, including working with those known to, engaged with and on the perimeters of social care interventions. In the last year the Gaia Centre supported victims of gender-based violence with 695 associated children; by keeping these families safe, this contributes to a reduction in risk to children and decreases the likelihood of care proceedings.

Staffing and accommodation

- 9.4 None.

Responsible Procurement

9.5 Commissioners have worked with providers to identify how contracts would support the Council's Responsible Procurement Policy. See table below:

Lambeth's Responsible Procurement Policy	
Good quality jobs with fair pay and decent working conditions	All providers with contracts above £100,000 pay the Living Wage to directly employed and sub-contracted staff with respect to the proposed contracts, in line with Lambeth Council's accreditation with the Living-Wage Foundation.
Modern Slavery Act (2015)	The providers covered in this procurement do not have a contract above £36 million per annum and as such do not need to comply with the Modern Slavery Act (2015) however, all providers are dedicated to identifying and preventing modern slavery and to providing expert, long-term support to survivors of this serious crime.
Quality apprenticeships accessed by Lambeth residents particularly those from Lambeth priority groups	<p>Due to the nature of the work of these services and levels of sensitivity and confidentiality for our residents, apprenticeships are not suitable in this case. However, the Gaia Centre has a volunteering and peer support scheme for those who have engaged with the service, to train to become peer supporters to future service users, and in turn develop their employment skills.</p> <p>The South London Alliance support service includes a peer mentoring and volunteering scheme which enables women with lived experience to offer peer-to-peer support to current service-users and provides opportunities to gain work experience and a peer mentoring qualification.</p> <p>The priority offender service also includes a Peer Hub, which enables service-users to train for a National Vocational Qualification in Information, Advice and Guidance. In addition, the service providers, AIR Network and St. Giles Trust, have a policy of using ex-offenders as volunteers and paid staff.</p>
Quality and range of targeted employment opportunities for residents from Lambeth priority groups	Providers included in this procurement provide a range of targeted employment opportunities for residents from Lambeth priority groups, from high-value inclusive volunteering opportunities which can provide a stepping-stone to employment, to a commitment to advertising future vacancies using Opportunity Lambeth. Further detail available on request.
Reduce emissions with a focus on cutting our carbon footprint and improving air quality.	The Police are directly funded for the use of a hire vehicle to support the Lambeth Integrated Offender Management scheme and we are seeking assurance from the Metropolitan Police Authority regarding carbon neutrality.
Single Use Plastics, Reducing Packaging and Plastics	This procurement does not relate to works and goods. However, all providers have measures in

	place to reduce reliance on any form of waste including single-use plastics and packaging, such as use of more sustainable products.
Maximise positive health and wellbeing – focus on supporting a healthy workforce and on provision of healthier, affordable and more sustainable food and drinks offer.	The providers covered in this procurement have a range of health and wellbeing initiatives in place to support employees (detail available on request).
Other Offer (Innovation)	<p>Other innovative practices offered by providers represented in this procurement include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attendance at community events to raise awareness of domestic abuse (Refuge) • Provision of skilled community champions to encourage others to participate in civic activities (AAF) • Offer to provide career talks in local schools, and share insights into campaigning and working in the criminal justice sector (Women in Prison) • Food need support to Lambeth residents through food bank distribution scheme (AIR Network) • Accredited training programme for parents/ carers in Lambeth to create Community Champions in high crime areas of the borough. St Giles staff are available to deliver sessions in schools and colleges as well as key-note speakers at events on youth violence and exploitation (St Giles Trust sub-contracted by AIR Network) • Three student placements per year and local volunteering programme for women (Asha sub-contracted by Solace Women’s Aid)

10. TIMETABLE FOR IMPLEMENTATION

Activity	Proposed Date
Date published on Forward Plan	22 February 2021
Publication on Decisions online	23 March 2021
Cabinet Member Decision Date	31 March 2021
Execution of Contract	26 March 2021
Mobilisation Period for Contract	March 2021
Commencement of Contract	1 April 2021

Audit Trail				
Name and Position/Title	Lambeth Directorate	Date Sent	Date Received	Comments in paragraph:
Councillor Jacqui Dyer	Cabinet Member for Jobs, Skills and Community Safety	24.02.21	25.02.21	
Councillor Jack Hopkins	Leader of the Council	16.03.21	22.03.21	
Merlin Joseph, Strategic Director	Children's Services	03.02.21	10.03.21	
Abi Onaboye, Director, Children's Commissioning & Community Safety	Children's Services	25.02.21	02.03.21	
Dan Stoten, Assistant Director, Integrated Children's Commissioning	Children's Services	18.02.21	18.02.21	Throughout
Rachel Harrison, Finance	Finance and Property	25.02.21	01.03.21	3
Michael O'Hora, Legal Services	Legal and Governance	25.02.21	25.02.21	4
Nazyer Choudhury, Democratic Services	Legal and Governance	25.02.21	3.3.21	
Sasa Glisic, Procurement Category Manager	Finance and Property	25.02.21	10.03.21	
Leena Khatri, Sustainability Technical Officer	Sustainable Growth and Opportunity	25.02.21	26.02.2021	

Report History	
Original discussion with Cabinet Member	25.02.20
Report deadline	N/A
Date final report sent	N/A
Part II Exempt from Disclosure/confidential accompanying report?	No
Key decision report	Yes
Date first appeared on forward plan	22.02.21
Key decision reasons	Expenditure, income or savings in excess of £500,000.
Background information	Cabinet Member Delegated Decision report (7 February 2020) Violence Against Women And Girls (VAWG) Service Provision – Contract Award Cabinet Member Delegated Decision report (18 June 2018) Female Offender Support Service – South London Alliance Cabinet Member Delegated Decision report (28 March 2018) Service to Prevent and Reduce Offending
Appendices	<i>Equalities Analysis: Safer Communities Commissioned Services Contract Variation</i>

APPROVAL BY CABINET MEMBER OR OFFICER IN ACCORDANCE WITH SCHEME OF DELEGATION

I confirm I have consulted Finance, Legal, Democratic Services and the Procurement Board, and taken account of their advice and comments in completing the report for approval:

Signature: _____ **Date:** _____

Post: Sophie Taylor
Head of Commissioning, Safer Communities

I confirm I have consulted the relevant Cabinet Members, including the Leader of the Council (if required), and approve the above recommendations:

Signature: _____ **Date:** _____

Post: Councillor Jacqui Dyer
Cabinet Member for Jobs, Skills and Community Safety

Any declarations of interest (or exemptions granted):

Any conflicts of interest:

Any dispensations: