LONDON BOROUGH OF WALTHAM FOREST

| Meeting / Date | 17 March 2015 |
| Report Title   | DOMESTIC VIOLENCE SUPPORT SERVICES – PERMISSION TO TENDER |
| Cabinet Portfolio | Portfolio Lead Member Community Safety and Cohesion, Cllr Liaquat Ali |
| Report Author/ Contact details | Darren Newman, Head of Service Design and Contract Management (Darren.Newman@walthamforest.gov.uk) Alastair Macorkindale, Group Manager (Strategy, Early Help Division) (alastair.macorkindale@walthamforest.gov.uk) |
| Wards affected | ALL |
| Public Access | OPEN |

1. SUMMARY
1.1 This report seeks permission to conduct a tender exercise to commission support services for people affected by domestic violence and abuse (DV), and in doing so deliver a key part of the Council’s Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG) Strategy.

1.2 The proposals set out in this paper have been developed through a pilot of the Council’s new approach to commissioning services which is led by the new Service Design Hub function.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS
2.1 For the reasons set out in this report, Cabinet is recommended to agree the tender exercise to commission services to support victims, children and perpetrators of domestic violence with delegated authority for award of contract to the Deputy Chief Executive Families.
2.2 The proposed contract period is 3 years with an option to extend for 2 years but is subject to available funding and contracts awarded will have break clauses subject to funding.

3. PROPOSALS

3.1 Domestic violence is a crime that affects a large number of people from all backgrounds nationally and locally. The 2013 Crime Survey of England and Wales (CSEW) estimated that 30% of women and 16% of men will experience domestic violence in their lifetime, although it remains a widely under-reported crime.

3.2 Waltham Forest had the 5th highest rate of DV crimes reported per 1,000 population when compared to other Metropolitan Police Service boroughs in 2010/11. In addition, domestic violence is the most cited risk factor in Waltham Forest’s Children Social Care risk assessments and is a leading cause of child protection proceedings and children being taken into care.

3.3 Alongside other statutory and community services, DV Support Services play an important role in improving the safety and wellbeing of victims of DV and their children, along with reducing the damage caused by perpetrators. In 2014, the Council reiterated its commitment to end violence against women and girls in its VAWG Strategy, a key component of which is the re-commissioning and continued provision of DV Support Services.

3.4 The Council currently commissions an Independent Domestic Violence Advocate (IDVA) service to provide advocacy and support to adults and children affected by DV and separate services to provide professional therapeutic support for victims of DV and sexual violence. In addition, the Council also commissions a separate programme of therapeutic provision for perpetrators of DV in the borough which supports them to change their behaviour. Further details about current provision are provided in Appendix 1.

3.5 The contracts for the current provision are due to expire on 30 September 2015. There is therefore an opportunity to redesign these services to deliver the VAWG Strategy. The proposed contracts would be for 3 years with an option to extend for 2 years but would be subject to available funding. New contracts would commence in December 2015 requiring an extension of the current contracts by 2 months.

3.6 Development of proposals through new commissioning process

Led by officers from the Service Design Hub working with Community Safety service leads, the project to re-commission DV services was one of three pilots to test and refine the Council’s new approach to commissioning. The other two pilots were the projects to re-commission sexual health and substance misuse services. These pilots have informed the development of the Council’s Commissioning Framework which was received by Cabinet in January.
3.7 The new approach to commissioning places an emphasis on an outcomes focused approach, with a structured and evidenced based process for designing and appraising options for service delivery. This emerging approach was followed by the project team in the development of these proposals. The key steps taken in developing and appraising options for service delivery are summarised below:

3.7.1 **Needs Assessment (Appendix 2)** – The Needs Assessment conducted by the Resident Insight unit utilise existing national and local data to assess the level and characteristics of future demand for DV Support Services in the borough. This analysis concluded that increased capacity is required to support victims from a wide variety of ethnic and cultural backgrounds, and that specialist support for children should be provided.

3.7.2 **Defining the outcomes (Appendix 1)** – The Council’s new approach to commissioning has a focus on outcomes at its heart. The new DV Support Services will be focused on improving the safety and wellbeing of victims and their children, reducing future offending in perpetrators and providing a sustainable platform for the Council to deliver the VAWG Strategy in the context of significantly reduced resources. The outcomes are set out in detail in Appendix 1.

3.7.3 **Analysis of good practice and innovation (Appendix 3)** – Officers conducted extensive research, including visiting other Councils and reviewing international literature on DV, to inform the design of the service. This suggested that the Council pilot a move towards an innovative “whole family approach” to improving outcomes for families affected by domestic violence where this is safe to do so.

3.7.4 **Market engagement and analysis (Appendix 4)** – This included a market engagement event in June 2014, in which a wide range of service providers were consulted on the Council’s emerging proposals. The market engagement and analysis concluded that providers are not currently willing or able to provide services integrated around the whole family and this has informed the development of the preferred option.

3.7.5 **Options appraisal** – The final stage involved using information from the previous stages to develop and appraise a range of options for providing DV support services in the future.

3.8 **New Model for Domestic Violence Support Services**

It is proposed to commission DV support services based consisting of three separate but linked elements (set out in detail in Appendix 1):

3.8.1 **DV support, advocacy and brokerage service**;

3.8.2 **Therapeutic support to victims of DV and their children based around the individual’s specific needs and taking into account their preferences, religion, ethnicity, gender and sexuality**;

3.8.3 **A programme of support and therapy for perpetrators of domestic violence to enable positive behaviour change**.
This model of service delivery is recommended because it will provide a personalised service for victims of DV and their children, enabling them to receive support based on their needs and cultural background. In addition, it will introduce a clear professional link between the IDVA service and the perpetrator programme whilst building on specialist cultural support that is available in the local and regional market.

4. OPTIONS & ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED

4.1 Decommission services – Despite the financial pressures on the Council, this option was ruled out because it would result in worse outcomes for victims of domestic violence and their children, in contravention of the Council’s agreed priorities and VAWG Strategy.

4.2 Collaboration with another London borough – Officers explored the potential for joint procurement of DV Support Services with neighbouring boroughs. Despite the potential financial benefits, this option was ruled out because it would cause a significant delay to the timescale for putting new services in place.

4.3 Commission a fully integrated service that supports the “whole family approach” – The option to commission an integrated service consisting of an IDVA service, therapeutic provision for victims, children and perpetrators which worked on a “whole family” basis was explored. However, this option was ruled out because the evidence from market engagement suggested market capacity and willingness to deliver this option was very low. Furthermore, having one provider would not allow sufficient personalisation and choice for victims.

4.4 Commission a fully integrated service that does not support the whole family approach – As described above, but without the adoption of a “whole family” approach across the provision. This option was ruled out because the evidence from market engagement suggested that the market is not currently willing or able to deliver support for perpetrators through the same organisation as support for victims. This has contributed to previous attempts to procure services based on this model being unsuccessful. Furthermore, having one provider would not allow sufficient personalisation and choice for victims.

4.5 Commission an integrated victim service and separate perpetrator programme – This option would deliver clearer pathways for victims and efficiencies through integrating three currently separate services into one. However, this option was ruled out because having one provider for victims’ services would not allow sufficient personalisation and choice for victims.

5. SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITY STRATEGY PRIORITIES (AND OTHER NATIONAL OR LOCAL POLICIES OR STRATEGIES)

5.1 The recommendation in this report will enable the Council to deliver its core duty to protect vulnerable children and adults. The
recommendation will meet the strategic requirements in the Council’s VAWG Strategy to protect and provide support for victims of DV.

6. CONSULTATION

6.1 Officers consulted and involved a wide range of stakeholders, including statutory partners, local and regional voluntary sector groups and community representatives, when developing and launching the VAWG Strategy.

6.2 Furthermore, officers consulted very widely on the proposed objectives of the new service and the outcomes to be achieved. This involved consultation with major specialist stakeholders in the DV field.

7. IMPLICATIONS

7.1 Finance, Value for Money and Risk

7.1.1 The available funding for implementation of the VAWG strategy in Stronger Families Safer Communities (not including refuge services) is £421,500, (45% of this is grant related £182,500 relating to MOPAC and Troubled Families grant). The MOPAC funding of £144,000 will be ending in 2016/17. Therefore the available funding from 2017/18 reduces to £267,500.

7.1.2 Expenditure will be used to support: Therapy for Perpetrators £50,000: Therapy for Victims £111,500: IDVA £210,000 and Early Intervention in Domestic Abuse (EIDA) £50,000 match funding. Changes in funding will see reductions in expenditure for Victim Support and IDVA

7.1.3 The Council is consulting with partners in health and other services as to the possibility of drawing in additional funding to support the re-commissioning of improved services and address anticipated reduction in funding. The additional forecast of £86,000 is from Public Health Therapy for Children, Clinical Commissioning Group and MOPAC Payment by Results. These income streams are subject to bid confirmation and annual performance.

7.1.4 The Council will look to add sufficient break-clauses into the contracts with providers to account for any potential reductions in grant income in the event that a successor to the current MOPAC funding is not put in place from 2017/18 onwards.

7.1.5 In 2013 Domestic Violence was a significant factor in the house holds of Children’s social care cases. It is difficult to determine a cost benefit of specialist DV services due to entrenched nature of domestic abuse. There is anecdotal evidence that intervention by IDVAs suggest support offered for the lower risk cases will support families at the early stages and prevent escalation into Social Care. Where IDVAs support is provided alongside Children In need and Child Protection Plans intervention assists in reducing the risk and aids safety planning for families.
7.2 **Legal**

7.2.1 The Council has a range of specific powers and duties in relation to reducing domestic violence and supporting both the victims and perpetrators of such violence, including powers and duties under the Crime and Disorder Act 1998, the Domestic Violence, Crime and Victims Act 2004 and the Anti-Social Behaviour Crime and Policing Act 2014. In addition to these specific powers and duties the Council has a power of general competence under Section 1 of the Localism Act 2011. These powers and duties enable the Council to commission and provide the services outlined in this report.

7.2.2 The proposed procurement route suggested in the recommendations will ensure compliance with the Council’s Contract Procedure Rules and those provisions of Public Contracts Regulations 2006 and EU Procurement Directives, which are relevant to domestic violence support and services.

7.3 **Equality and diversity**

7.3.1 An Equality Analysis based on the latest available data has been completed. This describes implications of the proposed service model on different groups as well as suggested mitigation action where relevant (see Appendix 5).

7.4 **Sustainability (including climate change, health, crime and disorder)**

7.4.1 The proposal will support improvements in the health of victims of domestic violence and their children by improving their physical safety and mental health through a range of interventions.

7.4.2 The proposal aims to reduce crime through supporting perpetrators of domestic violence to reduce harmful behaviour.

7.5 **Council Infrastructure (e.g. Human Resources, Accommodation or IT issues)**

7.5.1 This report has no direct effect on Council Infrastructure.

**BACKGROUND INFORMATION (as defined by Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985)**

There are no background documents.