

29 May 2012**Agenda Item:11****REPORT OF GROUP MANAGER, SAFER AND ENGAGED COMMUNITIES,
POLICY, PLANNING AND CORPORATE SERVICES****DOMESTIC VIOLENCE FUNDING 2012-15****Purpose of the Report**

- 1 To seek approval to:
 - Allocate £120,000 from the Community Safety budget for 2012-13 and each of the following two years to the Nottinghamshire Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conferences (MARACs) that support those victims of domestic violence who are at the highest risk of serious harm
 - Allocate £20,000 from the Community Safety budget for 2012-13 and each of the following two years for domestic violence awareness training.

Information and Advice

- 2 Domestic violence has been identified as a priority area by the County Council. This is evidenced in:
 - The County Council's Strategic Plan, highlighting the importance of services for vulnerable victims
 - The Safer Nottinghamshire Board Domestic Violence Framework
 - The plans of the Safeguarding Children Board and the Safeguarding Vulnerable Adults Board
 - The report from the Overview and Scrutiny Committee on Domestic Violence
- 3 As reported to Cabinet in July and September 2011, the key domestic violence services that are funded by the County Council have recently been subject to a comprehensive joint commissioning process. Existing separate funding arrangements with six providers from four different funding streams will soon be replaced by two new contracts with services divided geographically into North and South Nottinghamshire. The new contracts include the following domestic violence services:
 - Women's Refuges and Women's Outreach funded through the Supporting People Budget in Adult Social Care Health and Public Protection
 - Children's Outreach and Domestic Abuse Link Workers funded by Children, Families and Cultural Services

- Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conferences (MARACs) funded by the County Council Community Safety budget, Police, Probation, NHS Nottinghamshire and the Home Office.

Contracts are due to commence on August 6th 2012 for two years initially, with an option to extend contracts for a further year in both August 2014 and August 2015 if the outcome targets have been achieved and funds remain available.

- 4 The Supporting People funds for domestic violence have already been approved until March 2015. This recommendation brings the Community Safety funding arrangements in line with those for women's refuges and domestic violence women's outreach funded by Adult Social Care, Health and Public Protection.

MARACs

- 5 MARACs have been introduced across the country to reduce levels of serious domestic abuse and violence. MARACs are multi-agency meetings. Cases are selected using a multi-agency risk identification tool designed by the Police. Agencies come to the MARAC meetings to share information about victims, perpetrators and children including recent contacts, possible risk factors, criminal justice proceedings and future action plans. MARAC discussions focus on risk reduction and safety planning including child safety. Prior to the MARAC, victims are informed of the meeting and encouraged to send information about their safeguarding and support needs and any plans they have regarding separation, relocation, child contact etc. Governance rests with the Safer Nottinghamshire Board through its Domestic Violence Performance and Strategy Group. All MARAC partners are invited to attend this partnership group.
- 6 Evidence of the impact in Nottinghamshire includes:
 - Nottinghamshire Police recorded a 3% reduction in repeat victimisation over the 12 months of 2011
 - Detection and successful prosecution of domestic violence offenders increased when MARACs were introduced because of the improved intelligence the MARAC provides
 - Improved partnership working and specifically the engagement of victims with specialist support workers has made a measurable difference. For example: women presenting at Kings Mill Accident and Emergency when referred to the MARAC show a significant fall in re-presentations to hospital indicating that the multi-agency approach has prevented further injury.
- 7 Nottinghamshire Safeguarding Children's Board has identified domestic violence as the single most frequent element present in families where a safeguarding intervention is required and the MARACs have an essential role in safeguarding children. In Nottinghamshire, from January to December 2011, 800 serious domestic violence cases were discussed at MARAC. These cases involved 1055 children and represent the highest 10%, in relation to risk of harm, of all domestic violence cases in the county.

- 8 The £120,000 funding from Nottinghamshire County Council Community Safety budget for MARACs forms part of a joint funding package with contributions from Community Safety Partnerships, Police, Probation, Health, and the Home Office, totalling £275,500 per year.
- 9 The funding for MARACs is commissioned to provide:
- Independent Domestic Violence Advocates, (IDVAs), who are support workers for high risk victims and their families. They also work with the Police and other statutory partners to reduce the risk of further harm and help convict perpetrators
 - MARAC administrators who co-ordinate MARAC information, circulate the MARAC case logs, and keep vital records of decisions and outcomes that result.
- 10 The table below indicates partner contributions to the MARACs.

ANNUAL MARAC BUDGET FROM 2012	
Nottinghamshire County Council	£120,000
NHS Nottinghamshire County	£28,500
Safer Nottinghamshire Board	£42,000
Nottinghamshire Police	£45,000
Nottinghamshire Probation	£5,000
Home Office – Interpersonal Violence	£35,000
TOTAL BUDGET	£275,500

Domestic Violence Awareness Training

- 11 The Community Safety Budget has been used in recent years to pay Nottinghamshire Domestic Violence Forum to deliver domestic violence awareness training at venues around the county. These courses are provided to a range of front-line practitioners from local partner agencies, and supported by the 7 District Councils with “in kind funding” including free venues and refreshments. The Nottinghamshire Domestic Violence Forum has developed expertise in this area of training over 20 years and is recognised as the local expert in this field. Domestic violence training is identified as a key priority in the Safer Nottinghamshire Board Domestic Violence Framework. Each year a Service Level Agreement is written outlining the courses required and numbers to be trained. At the year end, Nottinghamshire Domestic Violence Forum produces a report outlining the outcomes, achievements and participant evaluations for all the courses they deliver.
- 12 However, it is now considered that this service should be formally commissioned to create the opportunity for other providers to bid for this funding. In order to ensure that vital training continues to support front-line services it is recommended that:

- A payment of £10,000 is made to Nottinghamshire Domestic Violence Forum for the first six months of 2012-13 under a new Service Level Agreement
- In the period June to August 2012 a commissioning process is designed and implemented to give other providers an opportunity to bid for this funding for up to 2.5 years, should they wish to do so. The process would ensure the best training provider is commissioned in the future and would give the programme stability going forward
- The budget allocation for this work is £20,000 per year which covers 25 full day courses.

13 The Committee is asked to note that these proposals were brought before the Grant Aid Member Reference Group on 30th April 2012 in order to ensure that Members have an overall picture of the funding that is allocated to the voluntary sector for domestic violence training and funded by Nottinghamshire County Council. Members endorsed the proposed way forward.

Other Options Considered

- 14 Domestic violence services, including MARACs, have been subject to review in the last two years by Nottinghamshire County Council and recently by the Nottinghamshire Police Authority. In each case MARACs are sighted as the key method by which the highest risk victims of domestic violence are protected. This level of priority is also reflected in Government thinking, as demonstrated in the Home Office "Violence Against Women and Girls Action Plan" 2011.
- 15 In order to achieve greater efficiencies for partner agencies, the MARACs were restructured in 2011 to reduce the number of meetings by 33% from 6 to 4 per month with a smaller reduction of 25% in MARAC case loads. From October 2011 there have been 2 MARACs in the County:
- Nottinghamshire North covering Bassetlaw, Mansfield, Newark & Sherwood
 - Nottinghamshire South covering Ashfield, Broxtowe, Gedling, and Rushcliffe.
- 16 These services have previously been subject to a range of different funding arrangements, usually for only one or two years at a time. In considering how to improve commissioning arrangements for both funders and service providers, the provision of long term funding arrangements was strongly recommended by all parties as good practice to achieve quality services and promote sustainability. By ring-fencing these funds for domestic violence services for three years this can be achieved.
- 17 The option to continue the current historical arrangements for Domestic Violence Awareness Training is not considered to be desirable.

Reason/s for Recommendation/s

- 18 Nottinghamshire County Council is the key local partner for safeguarding children and vulnerable adults. It is for this reason that the County Council has led the work on MARACs in Nottinghamshire since they began in 2008. A broad spread of funding has been achieved from partners to match the County Council MARAC contribution, as all partners now recognise the importance of this type of focussed multi-agency intervention. The recommendations in this report provide an essential partnership contribution to this vital service. The agreement of three year funding promotes sustainable and quality service provision for the highest risk victims and their children.
- 19 The recommendations for commissioning the awareness training provide greater transparency and accountability and are designed to maintain good quality multi-agency Domestic Violence Awareness Training in Nottinghamshire in the current year and into the future.

Statutory and Policy Implications

- 20 This report has been compiled after consideration of implications in respect of finance, equal opportunities, human resources, crime and disorder, human rights, the safeguarding of children, sustainability and the environment and those using the service and where such implications are material they are described above. Appropriate consultation with service users and partner agencies was undertaken prior to the commissioning process and reported to Cabinet in October 2011. Services have been commissioned using the feedback gained.

RECOMMENDATION/S

- 21 It is recommended that the Committee:
- Approves the allocation of £120,000 from the Community Safety budget for 2012-13, 2013-14, 2014-15 to the Nottinghamshire Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conferences (MARACs) that support highest risk victims of domestic violence
 - Approves the allocation of £20,000 from the Community Safety budget for 2012-13, 2013-14 and 2014-15 to a commissioned provider for Domestic Violence Training, subject to the provider successfully meeting the targets set and community safety funding continuing to be available.

For any enquiries about this report please contact:

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Constitutional Comments (Linda McCarthy 1.5.2012)

The Community Safety Committee has delegated responsibility in relation to community safety. Therefore, the recommendations in the report fall within the remit of the Committee.

Financial Comments ([DD 8/05/12])

Adequate budget provision exists within the Safer Communities budget for 2012 -13 to fund the MARACs contribution. However, in later years this commitment must be taken into consideration before making further commitments.

Background Papers

Overview and Scrutiny Committee Report on Domestic Violence completed March 2011

27th July 2011 Cabinet Report on Domestic Violence Commissioning

9th November 2011 Cabinet Report on Domestic Violence Commissioning

Report on Domestic Violence Awareness Training to Grant Aid Members Reference Group 30 April 2011

Electoral Division(s) and Member(s) Affected

All Wards