

Report of	Meeting	Date
Chair and Vice Chair of Overview and Scrutiny Committee	Executive Cabinet	24 November 2011

FUNDING THE INDEPENDENT DOMESTIC VIOLENCE ADVOCACY (IDVA) SERVICE

PURPOSE OF REPORT

- To report on the Overview and Scrutiny Committee's scrutiny of the Independent Domestic Violence Advocacy Service for Chorley and South Ribble and seek Executive Cabinet's support in ensuring the continued delivery of the IDVA service beyond the likely expiry of the Area Based Grant in March 2012.

RECOMMENDATION(S)

- To request that the Executive Cabinet consider making provision for funding for the Independent Domestic Violence Advocacy Service for Chorley and South Ribble in the 2012/13 budget and that Chorley lead the way in seeking funding from the other key partners who benefit from the service, namely the Police, South Ribble Borough Council, Lancashire County Council, the PCT and CCH and other social landlords.
- That the Executive Cabinet consider a three year commitment to fund the service from March 2012 to March 2015 (with annual review) during the budget process, and that a similar commitment be sought from other partners through the Community Safety Partnership.

Confidential report Please bold as appropriate	Yes	No
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Key Decision? Please bold as appropriate	Yes	No
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REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATION(S)

(If the recommendations are accepted)

- To ensure that the IDVA service continues to be available to victims of domestic violence from across Chorley and South Ribble once the area based grant comes to an end in March 2012 and to encourage other partners to contribute towards the funding over the next three years.

ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED AND REJECTED

- If funding cannot be sourced, the IDVA service is likely to cease in the Chorley area leaving victims without the support network provided by the service – and this may well lead to an increase in the number of domestic violence cases.

CORPORATE PRIORITIES

6. This report relates to the following Strategic Objectives:

Strong Family Support	/	Education and Jobs	
Being Healthy		Pride in Quality Homes and Clean Neighbourhoods	
Safe Respectful Communities	/	Quality Community Services and Spaces	
Vibrant Local Economy		Thriving Town Centre, Local Attractions and Villages	
A Council that is a consistently Top Performing Organisation and Delivers Excellent Value for Money			

BACKGROUND TO THE IDVA REVIEW

7. The Overview and Scrutiny Committee is required to scrutinise the work of the Community Safety Partnership through at least one meeting a year. This year the Committee chose to scrutinise the IDVA service – to understand the value of the service to residents of Chorley and South Ribble and to look at future delivery of the service. The Committee received a detailed presentation about the service in October where the aims of the service had been explained. These were:

1. To increase confidence in the criminal justice system
2. To reduce repeat homelessness
3. To reduce levels of injuries sustained
4. To increase notification of children at risk
5. To decrease victimisation
6. To increase victim safety
7. To reduce the number of victims unwilling to support prosecution.

The cost of providing the IDVA service in its current form across Chorley and South Ribble, was a total of £47,000 per annum.

8. At the meeting on 7 November the Committee heard from a number of partners from the Community Safety Partnership around three key themes:

- What value did they put on the IDVA service in the context of their organisation?
- How would they plug the gap if the IDVA service ceased when the area based grant ended?
- Would their organisation be prepared to contribute to funding if other partners did?

9. The Committee heard from:

1. Acting Chief Superintendent Coulston-Herrmann;
2. Simon Clark and Councillor Eric Bell (Chorley);
3. Mark Gaffney and Councillor Peter Mullineaux (South Ribble);
4. Mel Ormesher (Community Safety and Criminal Justice Manager at LCC)
5. Mary Kiddy (NHS Central Lancashire).
6. Written responses were also received from CCH and New Progress Housing.

A summary of each partners comments is detailed below.

POLICE

10. The value of the IDVA service for the police was in the signposting it gave to victims of domestic violence to ensure they received the necessary help and support – in particular housing; childcare, money etc. where they had left the family home. If IDVA didn't provide this it was unlikely that another service would and it would therefore be down to the victim to find support. Inevitably this may mean the most vulnerable individuals and their families suffered.
11. In terms of future funding, the police were undertaking a review of the public protection unit with the aim of making savings. Because of the level of support the police provided to the MARACs (multi agency risk assessment conferences undertaken for all victims) then it was unlikely they would be able to contribute towards the IDVA service. Whilst loss of the IDVA service may ultimately increase the work of the public protection unit, it was felt that an approach to LCC was appropriate in terms of the benefits for adult social care and children's services.

CHORLEY COUNCIL

12. The value of IDVA was in the specialist help available to victims of domestic violence. In Chorley there were 490 incidents of domestic violence for the period April to July 2011 – an average of 4 cases a day. Whilst not all would be IDVA referrals, there was clearly a need for the service and it was an integral part of community safety support providing Specialist Domestic Violence Court services for victims. The service was oversubscribed and the loss of the service would inevitably put more people at risk. There was a clear link between repeat cases and the high incidence of murder or suicide.
13. In terms of contributing to future funding, this would be a Council budget decision as part of the annual budget process, however if all key partners looked to contribute towards funding the service it becomes an affordable amount and ultimately creates savings for all those partners. The service should have been mainstreamed rather than subject to annual funding and there was now an opportunity for partners to demonstrate their commitment to helping the victims of domestic violence in the borough.

SOUTH RIBBLE COUNCIL

14. The value of IDVA was in the support provided to victims and their families and the improved confidence victims felt having received that support. If each case costs an estimated £14,000 to deal with (approximate total of each agency's input) then the financial benefits of preventing repeat cases are clear. The service contributes to the whole safeguarding agenda and has particular benefits for adult social care and children's services.
15. The cost of the service is £47,000 a year which would be a manageable amount if divided amongst partners – but not just between Chorley and South Ribble Councils. Budgets are extremely tight at the moment. The Community Safety Partnership needs to seek financial support from a range of partners for the service to continue.

LANCASHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

16. The value of the IDVA service is hard to quantify as it is part of a whole system approach. Lancashire County Council is a major contributor to supporting victims of domestic violence and has worked with the police on seeking funding. The difficulty in mainstreaming the funding of IDVA is that it works across so many organisations. LCC are undertaking a major piece of work to look at how they deliver support for victims of domestic violence in different areas. IDVA's position isn't sustainable and LCC are looking at how they can provide

support for victims in a more sustainable way. The County Council cannot just consider funding for one part of the county but must look at the wider implications for the whole of their area. The review being undertaken will report to the next Community Safety Partnership meeting in January 2011.

NHS CENTRAL LANCASHIRE

17. The NHS supports victims of domestic abuse in many ways and whilst IDVA provides part of the care and support network – it isn't valued more than any other support service. Significant health resources go into helping victims – A & E, GP and hospital services, mental health services etc. and all these form part of safeguarding provision. In terms of financial support, all requests for funding need to be considered centrally and all projects/services requiring funding need to have been formally evaluated. There was an opportunity for IDVA to be evaluated through the National Institute of Clinical Excellence.

REGISTERED SOCIAL LANDLORDS

18. Comments about the IDVA service were sought from social landlords as the concentration of domestic violence cases in Chorley were in areas with large areas of social housing. Written comments from both CCH and New Progress Housing Associations detailed the provisions they make for victims of domestic abuse. Both housing associations said they would consider a request for a contribution to the future funding of the IDVA service although they gave no firm commitment.

CONCLUSIONS OF THE COMMITTEE

19. Having listened to the comments of each of the partners, Members of the Committee agreed that the IDVA service was highly valued not only in supporting victims of domestic abuse but also in preventing repeat cases. In doing so it was of benefit to all partners and would, in the long term, mean savings within each organisation.

There was no clear commitment on funding from partners but Members felt that one organisation should take the lead by making a financial commitment and then work with the other partners through the Community Safety Partnership to urge them to contribute and ensure the continuation of the IDVA service. The Committee felt Chorley Council should take that lead.

20. Whilst ideally the Committee wanted to see the service mainstreamed, they would like the Executive Cabinet to make a three year commitment to part fund the IDVA service subject to an annual review of the service.

IMPLICATIONS OF REPORT

21. This report has implications in the following areas and the relevant Directors' comments are included:

Finance	/	Customer Services	
Human Resources		Equality and Diversity	
Legal	/	Integrated Impact Assessment required?	
No significant implications in this area		Policy and Communications	

COMMENTS OF THE STATUTORY FINANCE OFFICER

22. At present the funding position is unsure in respect of the Area Based Grant, but clearly if there is a significant risk it will be reduced or removed altogether. The request for including a sum in the Council's budget will need to be considered against the Council's current priorities and the need to balance the Council's own budget. That said a partnership approach would be welcome and spreading the cost amongst beneficiary organisations would make the scheme more affordable and sustainable.

COMMENTS OF THE MONITORING OFFICER

23. The Monitoring Officer has no comments.

COUNCILLOR ADRIAN LOWE, CHAIR OF OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
COUNCILLOR DEBRA PLATT, VICE CHAIR OF OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

There are no background papers to this report.

Report Author	Ext	Date	Doc ID
Carol Russell	5196	8 November 2011	***