

<b>Approved By:</b>  Charles Garbett, Acting Chief Executive and Treasurer (s151 officer)	<b>Classification of Paper:</b>  Not Protectively Marked
<b>Report to PCC</b>	<b>Report reference number</b> PCC/000213
<b>Date of Decision</b>  <b>Date of Report:</b> 30 January 2013	<b>Area of County/Stakeholders affected</b> County wide / the Public
<b>Title of report: 2013/14 Victim Support contract extension for the provision of an Independent Domestic Violence Advisor (IDVA) service funded from the Community Safety Fund</b>	
<b>Report by:</b> Theron Newman, Interim Finance Officer	
<b>Enquiries to:</b> Theron Newman, Interim Finance Officer	

**1. Purpose of report**

- 1.1. To seek approval to extend the existing contract with Victim Support for the provision of an Independent Domestic Advisor (IDVA) service to high risk victims of domestic abuse across Essex (including both Southend-on-Sea and Thurrock Borough Councils) for one year, commencing 1<sup>st</sup> April 2013.
- 1.2. To seek approval to allocate funding of £222,841 from the PCC's Community Safety Fund (CSF) to support this contract in 2013/14 as set out in section 8 of the Police & Crime Plan Consultation.

**2. Recommendations**

- 2.1. To approve a one year extension of the current contract with Victim Support for the provision of an Independent Domestic Advisor service to high risk victims of domestic abuse across Essex (including both Southend-on-Sea and

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Thurrock Borough Councils) and associated funding allocation of £222,841 from the PCC's Community Safety Fund. A condition is placed on this award of grant that the CSF replaces the Home Office grants as highlighted in this report. This award may be amended in the light of any changes in the funding shown in paragraph 7.4.

### **3. Benefits of Proposal**

- 3.1 There has been a large increase in the reported levels of domestic abuse across Essex over the last three years, highlighted by several tragic and high profile cases in the County. This has resulted in several critical HMIC reports and recommendations which has led Essex Police to undertake a comprehensive review and overhaul of the policies, procedures, structures and practices relating to domestic abuse.
- 3.2 The extension of the current IDVA contract will ensure that reducing levels of domestic abuse and putting victims at the heart of the PCC's strategic priorities across Essex is given effect.
- 3.3 It is very unlikely that this service could be re-commissioned in the remaining two months before the existing contract expires on 31 March 2013. This would leave the PCC without any service provision to reduce the levels of domestic abuse and support high risk victims in the County which is one of the key priority areas of focus in the Police and Crime Plan.
- 3.4 Extension of the existing contract with Victim Support would also ensure continuity of service across Essex building on the effective working relationships between various agencies as well as retaining highly skilled staff to not only continue the current service delivery but to enhance it as the service seeks to expand.

### **4. Background and proposal**

- 4.1 Prior to 2010 there were local arrangements in place for providing support and advice to victims of domestic abuse across Essex. The Probation Service was the lead agency, employing three Independent Domestic Abuse Advisors. Funding came from the Performance Reward Grant (PRG) supplemented by contributions from Southend-on-Sea and Thurrock Borough Councils.
- 4.2 These arrangements proved inadequate to deal with the rising levels of domestic abuse in Essex and the loss of Performance Reward Grant funding. In 2009 a decision was made to tender for a new IDVA service that was fit for purpose and addressed issues around both service provision and funding.
- 4.3 The original advert was published on 20/11/09 with a closing date of 17/12/09 (extended to 8/1/10). However although ten potential service providers registered their interest and viewed the tender documents no responses were

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received. Victim Support advised in their opt out statement that 'onerous HR and financial obligations' associated with TUPE Regulations 2006, prevented them from bidding.

- 4.4 In order to progress the position the Probation Service agreed to continue to manage the existing part of the service and therefore the new additional service could be tendered without the TUPE element.
- 4.5 The IDVA service was awarded to Victim Support in 2010 following an EU competitive tendering exercise for a primary term of two years to the 31 March 2012 plus the option to extend for a further two years in 12 month periods. The estimated value of the contract was £210,000 and £300,000 for the primary and secondary contract periods respectively based on estimated usage and subject to external funding.
- 4.6 Victim Support was the only organisation out of seventeen who expressed an initial interest to submit a compliant tender bid for the IDVA service. They are a large national charity and the market leader in the field of providing a wide range of support mechanisms to victims and witnesses.
- 4.7 The service provided by the Independent Domestic Violence Advisors (IDVAs) to service users will assist them to get all the necessary support from partner agencies to enhance their safety and rebuild positive lives. The majority of the time the IDVAs work in partnership with the local authority, Police, Health Service, Probation Service and local third sector support services.
- 4.8 Within Essex the IDVA service provides specialist support to the highest risk victims of domestic abuse, particularly in supporting them through criminal and civil court cases and sign posting to other relevant agencies. The IDVAs play a key role in supporting the Accredited Specialist Domestic Violence Court for South West Essex and also play a key role within the Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conference (MARAC) which is operating across Essex. The IDVA service operates within a multi-agency framework to safeguard and support victims of domestic abuse.
- 4.9 The contract was delayed by six months and effectively commenced half way through the 2010/11 financial year. Following the end of the initial two year term the contract was extended for a third year in 2012/13. A decision now needs to be made whether or not to extend the contract for another year in 2013/14.
- 4.10 The IDVA contract supports 3.5 wte Independent Domestic Advisors and 0.5 wte admin post. An additional 2 wte IDVA posts are supported by Southend-on-Sea and Thurrock Borough Councils (1 IDVA each) by direct Home Office grants. Victim Support invoices both councils outside the main IDVA contract administered by Essex Police on behalf of the various agencies. Both Victim Support and the unitary Authorities regard the complete service provision as

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essentially a single contract and do not differentiate between the services provided by the separate funding streams.

- 4.11 Victim Support have started the staff consultation process with affected members of staff, as there is a statutory duty to consult with potentially affected staff for a minimum of 90 days. The current contract expires on the 31<sup>st</sup> March 2013 which means that timescales are very tight. If the PCC does not commit to funding the service in 2013/14 then there is a high risk that specialist and highly trained IDVA staff with practical experience and understanding of dealing with fragile victims of domestic abuse and linking with wider agencies in often reactive circumstances, would leave the service. Quality IDVA staff are difficult to recruit as the pool is relatively small.
- 4.12 Due to funding constraints the current IDVA contract has very narrow criteria before victims of domestic abuse can access the full range of services:
- Victims who are deemed to be of high risk of serious harm or homicide
  - AND the case is being continued through the criminal justice system
  - AND the perpetrator has been charged.
  - AND who are aged over 18
- 4.13 A recent report by the government funded agency Caada (Coordinated Action Against Domestic Abuse) evidences that between 1<sup>st</sup> July 2011 and 30<sup>th</sup> June 2012 2,640 cases were heard by Maracs (Multi Agency Risk Assessment Conferences) across Essex. The Essex IDVA service has responded to and supported 652 (25%) high risk clients.
- 4.14 It can be seen from the above figures that current budget constraints for the existing projects severely limit the number of clients who are able to access the service.
- 4.15 This report proposes that the IDVA contract be extended for the financial year 2013/14 in order that the PCC meets his statutory obligation to put victims of crime at the heart of his Police and Crime Plan and meeting his key priorities around reducing domestic abuse and supporting victims. Funding of £222,841 is sought from the Community Safety Fund in line with allocations contained in the Police and Crime Plan consultation as part of the PCC's wider responsibilities for crime and disorder reduction by ensuring effective partnership working.
- 4.16 There are particularly high levels of domestic abuse in Harlow (and Epping). Plans have been mooted by Essex County Council to extend the service provision, initially on a six month pilot, to address the issues among younger victims of domestic abuse in Harlow and Epping. The plan would seek 3.5 wte IDVA's ( 2.5 for Harlow and 1 for Epping). The current contract would need to be extended and evaluated prior to any increase in coverage and cost. However, this does suggest that there is ample scope over the coming

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years to increase the coverage (and resources) provided by the IDVA contract.

**5. Police and Crime Plan**

- 5.1. This proposal to extend the IDVA contract for a year supports the key priorities areas in the Police and Crime Plan around reducing levels of domestic abuse and supporting victims of crime.
- 5.2. It aligns with the PCC's approach to the allocation of the Community Safety Fund set out in the Police and Crime Plan which involves working closely with the Whole Essex Community Budgets Board to ensure that crime reduction and victim support initiatives are closely aligned with Community Budget initiatives.
- 5.3. It also accords with the PCC's approach set out in the Police and Crime Plan where there is a continuing need to support those existing services involved in tackling the causes and consequences of crime.

**6. Police Operational Implications**

- 6.1 There are no police operational implications. In fact acceptance of this proposal would ensure that the joint working with Essex Police around domestic abuse is continued.

**7. Financial Implications**

- 7.1 At the start of the IDVA contract in 2010 funding was placed into Essex Police by the Safer Essex Partnership which is a county partnership set up to address issues of crime, disorder, drugs and alcohol. Safer Essex also fulfils the function of a county Strategic Group with a defined statutory membership deriving from key partner agencies. It was agreed that this funding would be spent on upgrading the existing Independent Domestic Violence Adviser project at that time.
- 7.2 This contract was originally funded by the Safer Essex Partnership. As Safer Essex did not have fund holding capacity at the time and as a senior officer from Essex Police was leading on this project the management of the fund was given to Essex Police.
- 7.3 The IDVA contract is currently funded by a combination of funds from the Safer Essex Partnership, Home Office grant funding to Essex County Council (via Safeguarding Adults Board and Essex Police) and matched funding from the Home Office direct to Victim Support. The current 2012/13 annual cost of providing the IDVA service under the contract with Victim Support is £183,776 as shown in Table 1 below.

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- 7.4 Victim Support also receives additional funding for providing IDVA services from Southend-on-Sea and Thurrock Borough Councils paid for grants by the Home Office direct to both Southend-on-Sea and Thurrock Borough Councils. These grants will be paid directly to the PCC in 2013/14. The total annual cost of providing an IDVA service across Essex (including Southend-on-Sea and Thurrock) is £262,841 as set out in the Table 1 below.

**Table 1 Funding of IDVA Service**

<b>Organisation</b>	<b>2012/13 £</b>	<b>Transfer to PCC £</b>	<b>Other Funding £</b>
Essex County Council (via Essex Police)	80,000	80,000	
Southend-on-Sea Borough Council (via Essex Police)	38,000	38,000	
Thurrock Borough Council (via Essex Police)	35,287	35,287	
Essex County Council (Adult Social Care Unit via Essex Police)	20,000		20,000
Victim Support (Direct Home Office matched funding)	20,000		20,000
Brought Forward Overspends	(9,511)	(9,511)	
<b>Annual IDVA Contract Cost</b>	<b>183,776</b>	<b>143,776</b>	<b>40,000</b>
Southend-on-Sea Borough Council (Direct Home Office Grant)	38,818	38,818	
Thurrock Borough Council (Direct Home Office Grant)	40,247	40,247	
<b>Total value of IDVA service across Essex</b>	<b>262,841</b>	<b>222,841</b>	<b>40,000</b>

Total funding of £222,841 will be transferred to the PCC in 2013/14 from current funding sources to support the IDVA contract. This is based on the information available at the time of writing this report shown in Table 1 above. Funding from Essex County Council and the matched funding provided by the Home Office, both for £20,000, will continue until 2015.

- 7.5 The costs of the IDVA service since inception in 2010 is set out in Table 2 below:

**Table 2 Cost of IDVA Contract**

	<b>2010/11 £</b>	<b>2011/12 £</b>	<b>2012/13 £</b>	<b>2013/14 Estimate £</b>	<b>Total £</b>
Cost of IDVA Contract	103,528	169,364	183,776	183,776	640,444

The original estimated cost of the IDVA contract for the four year period was £510,000. This figure was adjusted at the beginning of the contract as there

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were initial set up costs and payments for two staff seconded from Thurrock Probation to Victim Support to avoid TUPE cost implications. Essex County Council have also agreed to fund a full time admin post at £24k per annum under a contract variation.

- 7.6 The PCC would fund the majority of the cost of the IDVA service across Essex in 2013/14 amounting to £222,841 with Essex County Council and the Home Office each contributing £20,000 until March 2015 costing £262,841 in total for the IDVA service.
- 7.7 Contract and service performance is reported at the bi-monthly Essex Domestic Abuse Strategy Group, a Safer Essex Partnership working group. Financial performance is not addressed at these meetings. Reporting against performance criteria contained in the contract is very limited as the procurement by Essex Police did not require the service to collect any performance indicators so limited indicators have been collected.
- 7.8 The PCC would set out clear outcomes and performance monitoring arrangements to ensure that the service delivers on his priorities to reduce levels of domestic abuse and support victims. The key mechanisms to evidence effective and efficient service outcomes will include:
- Robust structure for service delivery including management team
  - Detailed budgets for staffing and non pay
  - Numbers of high risk clients referred to the service
  - Numbers and % of all Marac cases in Essex referred to Victim Support
  - Numbers and % kept from harm after 3, 6, 12 months
  - % victim satisfaction based on quarterly surveys
  - Number of cases where there were repeat incidents after IDVA involvement
  - Number of high risk cases where IDVA decided Marac involvement was not required.
  - Quarterly Financial and Performance Monitoring Reports
  - Quarterly Finance & Performance Review meetings including strategic and emerging issues / opportunities / challenges
  - Quarterly invoice billing in arrears within a month of the end of each quarter
  - Six monthly Improvement Plans

## **8. Legal Implications**

- 8.1 Essex Police standard Terms and Conditions apply and there are no notable risks.

## **9. Staffing and other resource implications**

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- 9.1 There are no staffing issues. Staff delivering the IDVA contract are all employed directly by Victim Support or on secondment from other agencies.
- 9.2 There are potential resource implications for the PCC'S Office as the service and performance outcomes, and to a lesser extent, financial performance, will have to be regularly monitored to ensure effective and efficient delivery against the Police and Crime Plan priorities of reducing levels of domestic abuse and supporting victims.
- 9.3 These new functions of the PCC's office are a direct result of his ownership of the new Community Safety Fund and the related commissioning and monitoring mechanisms that need to be put in place. Some of these new functions could be absorbed by the office in its current configuration but is likely to need additional resources over time as the commissioning approach and associated monitoring develops.

**10. Equality and Diversity implications**

- 10.1 There are no equality and diversity implications.

**11. Background papers**

- 11.1 Contract Award Recommendation Report for the provision of a Domestic Advisor Service – Ref E056KK
- 11.2 Contract for the Provision of a Domestic Advisor Service



**Report Approval**

The report will be signed off by the Chief Executive and CFO and the PCC Solicitor where legal implications arise.

Chief Executive/M.O .....

Chief Financial Officer .....

PCC Legal Advisor ..... (As necessary)

<p><b>Decision</b></p> <p>I agree the recommendations to this report</p> <p>.....</p> <p><b>PCC/Deputy PCC</b></p> <p>I do not agree the recommendations to this report because</p> <p>.....</p> <p>.....</p> <p>.....</p> <p>.....</p> <p>.....</p> <p>.....</p> <p>.....</p> <p>.....</p> <p><b>PCC/Deputy PCC</b></p>
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**Publication**

**Reasons for non-publication** *(state 'None' if applicable)*

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Signed/Print name

Report for publication

**YES**

**NO**

If the report is not for publication, the Chief Executive will decide if and how the public can be informed of the decision.

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