

DECISION MAKER Leader of the Council	DATE 06.12.2021
TITLE Grant funding to the HER project to support the Independent Domestic Violence Advisor service	WARD (S) All
CHIEF OFFICER Director of Housing and Safer Communities	CABINET MEMBER Housing
DECISION CLASSIFICATION Non-key decision Subject to call-in Non-exempt	IS THE FINAL DECISION ON THE RECOMMENDATIONS IN THIS REPORT TO BE MADE AT THIS MEETING? Yes

1. Decision required

This report makes the following recommendations to the decision-maker:

- 1.1 To note the circumstances of this grant, in particular that an agreement was entered into on 30th June 2021 with the Greater London Authority (GLA) without compliance with the Council’s Constitution, for the provision of grant funding in relation to Domestic Abuse Services, for the period 1st April 2021 to 31st March 2022.
- 1.2 To award a one-off grant to HER Centre Limited (HER Centre) (company registration number 03451379) in the sum of £55,100 in compliance with the Council’s Constitution and the terms of the grant agreement.

Agreed/Not Agreed:—

Date: 06/12/21

Signed.....
Councillor Danny Thorpe, Leader of the Council

2. Links to the Royal Greenwich high level objectives

- 2.1 This report relates to the Council’s agreed high-level objectives as follows:

- *A safer Greenwich* - This decision will enable residents of the borough to live safely and receive targeted support when fleeing domestic abuse.
- *Economic prosperity for all* – The IDVA service also provides support to women fleeing domestic violence through a back to work programme and IT training, basic English, parenting skills and confidence building. This support helps in developing the resilience and economic independence in survivors and enables them to restart living their lives safely and independently.

3. **Purpose of Report and Executive Summary**

- 3.1 This report seeks approval to award payment for the IDVA service provided by the HER centre for families fleeing domestic violence.

4. **Introduction and Background**

- 4.1 The HER Centre is a women led charity which supports over 1000 women a year in Greenwich and its surrounding boroughs. Their aim is to improve the quality of life for women with free and confidential advocacy, counselling and advice to those experiencing domestic and sexual abuse. They also provide training to RBG front line staff and other agencies.
- 4.2 In 2020 RBG successfully received funding from the MHCLG having submitted a bid to fund the Domestic Abuse Improvement Project. The funding was for one year, which commenced in 2020 and ended in 2021. This funding was used to provide a grant to the HER project to fund an IDVA (Independent Domestic Violence Advisor) post. Award decision letter is Appendix 1. The Council also entered into a Service Level Agreement with the HER project, Appendix 2.
- 4.3 The project has been successful and the GLA and have now taken responsibility for funding the project for another year commencing April 2021 to March 2022. The GLA have provided funding in the sum of £55,100 to the Council.
- 4.4 The IDVA role is a frontline assessment service that is vital to ensure no woman (and her child/children) are turned away from the support they need. The aim of the Domestic Abuse Improvement Project is to build on the current strategy to improve the Housing department's response to domestic abuse survivors and to enhance our service delivery.

- 4.5 The IDVA is based in the Housing Inclusion Service (HIS) and provides targeted support to women and children residing in temporary accommodation. The project proactively assists those families who are unable to access generic or specialist refuges due to limited availability, complex needs of mother or children, or having a male child aged 12 or older.
- 4.6 The IDVA role delivers, risk assessments, safety planning, assists families in accessing universal services, legal advice, assists with gaining injunctions, addressing practical issues, arranging sanctuary safety measures, organises refuge referrals and helping women and their children access counselling to rebuild their lives. The role also organises referrals to social services if children are at risk and liaises with the Home Office for domestic abuse concessions, if an individual has NIL recourse status.
- 4.7 The project outcomes support victims and their children to;
- move forward with their lives having received the appropriate support from counselling, work skills training and resettlement into schools and the local community.
 - move-on into permanent safe accommodation, with greater support to sustain their independence.
- 4.8 The project has been successful and the Greater London Authority (GLA) have now taken responsibility for funding the project for another year, commencing 1st April 2021 to 31st March 2022. The GLA have provided funding in the sum of £55,100 for the Council. The project bid was signed off on 20th January 2020 with the approval of the Chief Executive, Debbie Warren. The GLA agreement was signed by Michael Bate, Corporate and Assistant Director of Finance, on 30th June 2021.
- 4.9 Upon receipt of the funding, no clear guidance was available to instruct that a report was deemed necessary to process this payment to the HER Centre. To ensure compliance with the Council's Constitution, the use of the correct procedures and report templates will be used to ensure a smooth sign off.

5. **Available Options**

- 5.1 Option 1 – To agree to award the grant of £55,100 to the HER project to continue funding the IDVA post. The post assists with gaining injunctions, arranging sanctuary safety measures and provides legal advice.
- 5.2 Option 2 – Do nothing. To refuse to award a further grant to the HER project would have a direct impact on the families fleeing domestic violence. Families would be exposed to more harm if the IDVA post was cancelled.

6. **Preferred Option – Agree Payment**

6.1 The preferred option is 5.1.

7. **Reasons for Recommendation**

7.1 The grant will enable the continuation of the IDVA post as agreed by the GLA.

7.2 The IDVA will continue to provide intensive support to 35 victims and their children who have been placed in temporary accommodation, as well as other new victims referred to the project.

7.3 It is expected that over 200 victims who present for housing support will receive assistance through the IDVA service.

8. **Consultation Results**

8.1 No consultation has been undertaken or considered necessary in relation to this report.

9. **Cross-Cutting Issues and Implications**

Issue	Implications	Sign-off
Legal including Human Rights Act	The Leader of the Council is requested to: 1. Note the circumstances of this grant, in particular that an agreement was entered into on 30th June 2021 with the GLA without compliance with the Council's Constitution, for the provision of grant funding in relation to Domestic Abuse Services, for the period 1st April 2021 to 31st March 2022. 2. Award a one-off grant to HER Centre Limited (HER Centre)	Mohammed Patel, Contracts Lawyer 26/11/2021

	<p>(company registration number 03451379) in the sum of £55,100 in compliance with the Council's Constitution and the terms of the grant agreement.</p> <p>Under the Leader's General Scheme of Delegations of Executive Functions 2021/22 as set out in Part 3 of the Council's Constitution – Responsibility for Functions, the Leader of the Council has authority to make this one-off grant which is in excess of £20,000.</p> <p>The decision-maker for this report is the Leader of the Council who is authorised to award the grant to HER Centre Limited.</p> <p>Human Rights Under the Human Rights Act 1998 local authorities have a duty to promote and protect human rights. The approval of this grant does not have legal implications under the Human Rights Act 1998.</p>	
<p>Finance and other resources including procurement implications</p>	<p>The report makes the recommendation to the decision maker: To approve payment of £55,100 to the Her Centre to continue funding the Independent Domestic Violence Advisor (IDVA) post for the contract period April 2021 to March 2022. The payment will be funded by a grant of £55,100 awarded by the GLA Housing and Land Directorate on 30/07/2021 and covering 01/04/2021 to 31/03/2022. This is a non-key decision and does not impact on any other budgets or resources.</p>	<p>Akosua Boachie Accountancy Business Change Manager 30/11/2021</p>

Equalities	<p>EIA required/not required</p> <p>We will continue to offer support and specialist accommodation for survivors of domestic violence and abuse, who are mainly women. We also plan to gain accreditation from the Albert Kennedy Trust for our services working with survivors of domestic abuse for those within the LGBTQ community to ensure we identify any gaps and improve our services.</p> <p>The Council received Domestic Abuse Housing Alliance accreditation in February 2021 and we will continue to monitor and improve our provision and our partnership with the HER Centre is integral to this work.</p>	Lavinia Parker, Strategy Officer. 13/10/21
Climate Change	The decision recommended through this paper has a remote or low relevance to the Greenwich Carbon Neutral Plan agreed by Cabinet on 18 November 2020	Lavinia Parker, Strategy Officer. 13/10/21
Community Safety	Working in partnership with the HER Centre, the IDVA post is the most effective way of addressing our obligations under section 17, Crime and Disorder Act 1998	Lavinia Parker, Strategy Officer. 13/10/21
Corporate Parenting	The children of families receiving help from the IDVA are not placed into care. Therefore, there is no impact on the Council's corporate parenting role.	Lavinia Parker, Strategy Officer. 13/10/21

10. **Report Appendices**

10.1 Appendix 1 - HER Centre invoice

10.2 Appendix 2 – Housing IDVA service level agreement

11. **Background Papers**

11.1 None.

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