

Brighton & Hove City Council

Equalities, Community Safety and Human Rights Committee

Agenda Item 8

Report title: Notification of Domestic Abuse Act 2021 New Burdens Funding Award

Date of meeting: 11 July 2023

Report of: Executive Director Housing Neighborhoods and Communities

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Ward(s) affected: All

For general release

1. Purpose of the report and policy context

1.1. Brighton and Hove City Council (BHCC) have been notified by the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC) that the city council has been awarded two further years New Burdens Funding to support local implementation of the Domestic Abuse Act 2021. The funding has been set at £620,128 for 2023/24 and £631,828 for 2024/25. This funding represents a slight uplift on the previous awards received for 2021/22 of £606,000 and £607,996 in 2022/23.

2. Recommendations

2.1 That Committee notes the Government allocation for Domestic Abuse Act New Burdens Funds of £620,128 for 2023/24 and £631,828 for 2024/25.

2.2 That Committee agrees to allocate the 2023/24 award to the services and administrative functions for a further year as set out in paragraphs **5.1, 5.2 and Table 1 of this report.**

2.3 That committee notes that a further report will be brought with recommendations for spend for the 2024/25 allocation.

3. Context and background information

3.1 The Domestic Abuse Act 2021 reached Royal Assent in April 2021. The Act placed a new statutory duty on tier one local authorities relating to support for survivors of domestic abuse and their children in relation to safe accommodation. This included:

- The requirement for local authorities to develop a local Domestic Abuse Strategy for the provision of accommodation-based support in its area.

BHCC with East Sussex and West Sussex commissioned the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner (OPCC) to develop the *Pan-Sussex Strategy for Domestic Abuse Accommodation and Support 2021-2024* published in January 2022. The strategy is underpinned by 6 strategic priorities which are set out in appendix 1.

- Development of a multi – agency Domestic Abuse Board to oversee the implementation of the strategy. BHCC is part of the Pan Sussex Domestic Abuse Board arrangements.
- The new duty for Local Authorities to provide support in safe accommodation for survivors of domestic abuse. BHCC has commissioned a range of additional domestic abuse provision and services to enable this duty to be discharged. The new services meet the definition of support contained in the *Statutory Guidance for Delivery of Support to Victims of Domestic Abuse Safe Accommodation Service* published by DLUHC in October 2021.

3.2 At the Tourism, Equalities and Culture Committee (TECC) meetings in March and June 2022, the Committee agreed that New Burdens funds be used to fund a range of new provision and services which had been identified in the Pan Sussex Strategy for Domestic Abuse Accommodation and Support 2021- 2024 as gaps in provision in the City. The services are detailed in tables 1.

3.3 The new services were commissioned in phases with the last round of commissioning undertaken in October 2022. All providers have now mobilised and are delivering services to a satisfactory level. However, due to the timescales of competitive commissioning processes, the contract awards are not aligned with the financial year. This consideration will be factored into budget considerations going forward.

4. **Analysis and consideration of alternative options**

4.1 The proposed budget spend is based on the findings of the Needs Assessment conducted for the development of the Strategy which identified provision gaps which were incorporated into recommendations for the City. An alternative option would be to consider undertaking regional commissioning of services but would be likely to entail further delay to providing support in safe accommodation. There would be a negative impact on those who now receive support from the services commissioned by BHCC.

5. **New Proposals**

5.1. It is proposed that an additional one-year funding is agreed for all the services detailed in Table 1. This will equate to a total of three years New Burdens funding for the services and follows on from the one-year contract extensions that were agreed at TECC in June 2022. The services listed have confirmed contract extensions at the allocated sums. Officers are satisfied that performance is satisfactory and that the services are delivering

their contractual obligations and demonstrate a high level of demand for services and that costs are reasonable.

- 5.2. It is proposed that a further report is brought back with spend proposals for the New Burdens award for 2024/25 pending needs assessment refresh in August 2023. This report will take into consideration whether the services listed in table 1 might be funded for a fourth year and whether the 2024/5 new burdens allocation could be carried over to the next financial years. Or if local trends suggest that there is a need to consider funding other provisions and to revise the service delivery based on emerging trends, performance, and demand for services. There is a sum of £32,162 to be allocated from the 23/24 award which committee previously delegated authority to the executive director Housing Neighbourhoods and Communities to allocate. This will be allocated during this financial year when the needs assessment has been completed.

Table 1: Domestic Abuse New Burdens Funded Provision.

Service Provision	Delivered by	Funding Allocated	Continue Funding	Additional Information
Community Engagement Officer	East Sussex Council	£32,000	Yes	Pan Sussex partnership role coordinating the voices of those with Lived Experience Board and managed by East Sussex Council.
Increased access to interpreters and BSL	BHCC VAWG Unit	£30,000	Yes	Administrated by BHCC VAWG Unit
Flexible Fund	BHCC VAWG Unit	£18,326	Yes	Administrated by BHCC VAWG Unit
Housing Independent Domestic Violence Advocate (IDVA)	RISE	£40,000	Yes	The post is co-located in BHCC Housing Options Team
Dispersed accommodation for LGBTQ clients experiencing domestic abuse.	RISE	£99,962	Yes	Currently funded until September 2023.
Sanctuary Scheme	RISE	£70,000	Yes	Funding staff salaries and £40,000 for hardware
Floating Support Service	RISE	£60,000	Yes	Floating Support, move on and resettlement support to work with families and individuals in independent accommodation.

Safe Accommodation Children and Young People Domestic Abuse Pathway. Community Programme for children	RISE	£20,712	Yes	Service works closely with BHCC Childrens Social Care and high level of referrals and client take up.
Safe Accommodation Children and Young People Domestic Abuse Pathway. Pilot Group work for young people using violence in personal relationships who are also at risk of losing their accommodation	Cranstoun	£40,000	Yes	Service provides one to one support to young people choosing abuse and has received a high level of referrals and is at working to service capacity.
Safe Accommodation Children and Young People Domestic Abuse Pathway; CYPDVA (Children and Young Person Domestic Abuse /VAWG Outreach/Caseworker/	Victim Support	£50,000	Yes	Service is working with young people affected by DA across BH and offers a range of support options. Referrals and client take up is satisfactory .
Safe Accommodation Pathway: Domestic Abuse. Black Asian Minority Ethnic (BAME) Capacity Building Programme	Stonewater	£60,000	Yes	Stonewater have recruited an experienced worker to the role and has been working with local partners to promote the Capacity Building programme supported by a series of introductory networking meetings. The staff member will deliver a VAWG Network event for BHCC on Harmful Practices in July.
Safe Accommodation LGBTQ+ Domestic Abuse Caseworker.	LGBT Switchboard	£40,000	Yes	Switchboard have recruited to the post and demand for the service has been high with high levels of client take up.

Safe Accommodation Multiple Complex Needs Casework Provision	RISE	£26,966	Yes	This post is collocated with the Changing Futures workstream. The Pan Sussex Strategy for Domestic Abuse Accommodation and Support 2021- 2024 identified a gap in provision for those with Multiple Complex Needs across all areas of Sussex
Total funds to allocate		£587,966		

6. Analysis and consideration of any alternative options.

6.1. The recommendations of the Pan Sussex Strategy were supported by a detailed needs assessment and the services cited in this report were commissioned by BHCC after consideration of the recommendations of the strategy. However, a review of the needs assessment will influence recommendations for the final New Burdens Award for 2024/25. This will be undertaken in August 2023 and will refresh the 2020 Needs Assessment conducted by the staff from the Office of Police and Crime Commissioner.

7. Community engagement and consultation

7.1. The Strategy was widely consulted on with the public consultation running until December 2021 before the Strategy being approved in January 2022. The needs assessment process engaged with a range of organisations. The needs assessment identified gaps in service provision to indicate where the money should be spent to ensure that BHCC meets its duties under the new Act. The project team engaged with people with lived experience as part of the work to complete the needs assessment.

8. Conclusion

8.1. The Council considered a wide range of options to meet the needs of victims and its duties under the terms of the Domestic Abuse Act. This report provides recommendations to continue to fund all the services that were agreed at Committee in 2022 for previous New Burdens Allocations. These recommendations meet the terms of the Act, strategic priorities of the Pan Sussex Strategy and the provisions commissioned meet current local needs. However, it is timely that a needs assessment refresh is required to meet the requirements of the Act and will update on previous iterations to coincide with the timespan of the current Strategy. A further paper will consider the findings of the needs assessment refresh when making recommendations for the New Burdens Allocation for 2024/25.

9. Financial implications

The council has been allocated Domestic Abuse Act New Burdens Funds of £620,128 for 2023/24 and £631,828 for 2024/25. This report proposes that the

grant for 2023/24 is spent as shown in Table 1 and paragraph 5.2 with £32,162 delegated to the Executive Director, Housing, Neighbourhoods & Communities,.

Name of finance officer consulted: Monica Brooks Date consulted
(30/06/23):

10. **Legal implications**

The funding must be spent in accordance with the Statutory Guidance and in particular will need to be spent on those in 'relevant' accommodation. Officers have satisfied themselves that the proposed services meet DLUHC's requirements.

Name of legal officer consulted: Liz Culbert Date consulted: 29/6/23

11. **Equalities implications**

11.1. Continuing to fund the current service offer funded via previous awards of New Burdens funding seeks to improve accessibility to services for a range of people with protected characteristics. Within both core services and any housing related offer equalities are actively considered to ensure services are available to all. Although it is recognised that Domestic Abuse disproportionately affects women and women with children. The findings of the needs assessment has informed the findings of Pan-Sussex Strategy for Domestic Abuse Accommodation and Support 2021-2024 which highlights equalities considerations for the region including those with other protected characteristics. A full equalities impact assessment was completed for BHCC prior to the publication of the final version of the strategy.