

**From:** Richard Smith, Corporate Director Adult Social Care and Health

**To:** Dan Watkins, Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care and Public Health

**Subject:** **PROPERTY SECURITY ELEMENT OF THE COUNTYWIDE SANCTUARY ACCESS FOR ELIGIBLE RESIDENTS (SAFER) SCHEME – CONTRACT AWARD**

**Decision Number** 23/00074

**Classification:** Unrestricted Report - Restricted Appendices (Exempt from publication by Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972, as contain commercially sensitive information)

**Past Pathway of report:** Adult Social Care Cabinet Committee – 13 September 2023

**Future Pathway of report:** Cabinet Member decision

**Electoral Division:** All

**Summary:** The report provides an overview and the outcome of the procurement process for the Property Security element of the countywide Sanctuary Access for Eligible Residents ('SAFER') Scheme which will ensure the council meets its new statutory duties under the Domestic Abuse Act 2021.

**Recommendations:** The Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care and Public Health is asked to:

- a) **AWARD** the contract, to the successful bidder identified as part of the procurement process for the provision of the Property Security element of the countywide SAFER Scheme for a maximum of four years (initial two-year contract, 1 December 2023 to 30 November 2025, with two, one-year optional extension periods, subject to robust contract monitoring, from 1 December 2025 – 30 November 2026 and 1 December 2026 – 30 November 2027);
- b) **DELEGATE** authority to the Corporate Director Adult Social Care and Health, after consultation with the Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care and Public Health and the Corporate Director Finance, subject to robust contract monitoring to agree the relevant contract extensions as required; and
- c) **DELEGATE** authority to the Corporate Director Adult Social Care and Health to take other relevant actions, including but not limited to finalising the terms of and entering into required contracts or other legal agreements, as necessary to implement the decision.

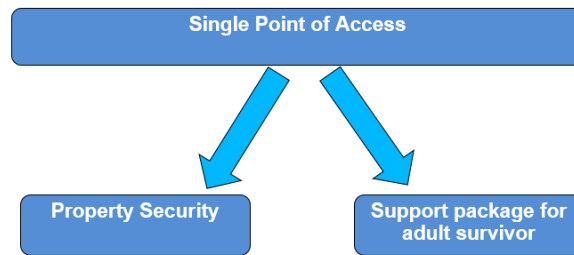
## **1. Introduction**

- 1.1 The Domestic Abuse Act 2021 introduced new statutory duties to Local Authorities to assess need and commission services, to support survivors of domestic abuse (adults and children) residing in 'safe accommodation'. This includes refuges, Sanctuary Schemes, move-on and dispersed accommodation.
- 1.2 Since 2021, the Department of Levelling Up Housing and Communities (DLUHC) has awarded £12.4m in new Grant funding to Kent County Council (KCC), to support implementation of these duties until 2025.
- 1.3 A Sanctuary Scheme is a property where security measures have been installed, enabling survivors to remain in their own homes safely if they chose to do so. It also incorporates an element of specialist domestic abuse support to the individuals residing there.

## **2. Background**

- 2.1 The 2021 countywide assessment of need for support within 'safe accommodation' found that there is not a geographically equitable Sanctuary Scheme offer across the county. It also evidenced that fewer private owner/occupiers are accessing refuge provision than expected and their tenure may be a barrier to fleeing domestic abuse and that people with a disability experience additional barriers to reporting and accessing support including in refuge.
- 2.2 Kent's SAFER Scheme, has been developed to address these findings whilst supporting the council in meeting its statutory duties and Priority 4 of KCC's Strategic Statement 2022-2026 – New Models of Care and Support. It will be funded in full by Domestic Abuse Act monies.
- 2.3 The countywide SAFER Scheme has been co-designed through extensive engagement with a range of stakeholders from Adult Social Care and Health, Children and Young People, Kent Community Safety Partnership, District, Borough and City councils, the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner, Kent Fire and Rescue, Integrated Care Board, other Local Authorities with similar successful schemes, the market and those who have experienced domestic abuse, ensuring that the service is shaped by people with the right expertise and experience.

2.4 The SAFER Scheme will be split into three service elements, shown in the diagram below.



2.5 Under the DA Act, a child who sees or hears, or experiences the effect of, the abuse, and is related to the adult survivor or perpetrator, is classed as a victim in their own right. The Children and Young People's 'Safe Accommodation Support Service' (SASS) will work in conjunction with and provide support to children residing in properties under the SAFER Scheme.

2.6 A procurement exercise has been undertaken to identify suitable suppliers for the Property Security element in line with decision 23/00022.

2.7 Individuals who have experienced domestic abuse informed the evaluation criteria. To achieve a successful SAFER Scheme, tendering providers were assessed against their capability to deliver the following:

- **Implementation:** Mobilisation of the Property Security element of the countywide SAFER Scheme, to ensure a full service go-live from 1 December 2023.
- **Service delivery:** Processes and procedures to manage risk, safeguarding, data protection and a suitably trained workforce.
- **Partnership working:** With key stakeholders and organisations such as Victim Support, Kent Integrated Domestic Abuse Service, Safe Accommodation Support Service, Kent Police, Kent Fire and Rescue, Housing and other Local Authorities.
- **Informed practice:** Ensuring the service meets the diverse needs of clients and implements trauma informed practice.

2.8 The outcome of the tender exercise and details of the preferred provider for the Property Security element of the countywide SAFER Scheme are detailed in exempt Appendix A (Exempt from publication by Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972, as it contains commercially sensitive information)

2.9 It is proposed that the contract award will be October 2023, with a mobilisation period between October and November 2023 and full service go-live from 1 December 2023.

2.10 The contract will be for a maximum of four years, 1 December 2023 to 30 November 2025 (initial two-year contract) with two, one-year optional extension periods, subject to robust contract monitoring from 1 December 2025 – 30 November 2026 and 1 December 2026 – 30 November 2027.

**3. Financial Implications**

3.1 The table below outlines the costs to KCC for the initial two years and extension options of the Property Security element of the SAFER Scheme, with the total contract value being £1,600,000.

	<b>KCC Domestic Abuse Act funding</b>
Initial two-year contract term	£800,000
Two, one-year optional extension periods	£800,000
Total (Initial two-year contract term PLUS Two, one-year optional extension periods)	£1,600,000

3.2 The above contract value will be funded in full by Domestic Abuse (DA) Act monies (awarded by the Department of Levelling Up Housing and Communities) and is within the councils approved budget.

3.3 Currently DA Act funding allocations have been confirmed until March 2025. Further funding is expected to be announced in early 2025 for future years.

3.4 To ensure a sustainable offer, engagement will commence with all stakeholders to seek ongoing funding for the Property Security measures and development of an integrated, partnership funded service from year three, if government grant funding does not continue.

**4. Legal Implications**

4.1 The change in legislation in 2021, means that the council now has statutory duties to provide support to those residing in ‘safe accommodation’. This includes adults and children. The Kent SAFER Scheme including the Property Security element will ensure the council meets its new duties under the DA Act.

4.2 A procurement exercise was undertaken to identify suitable suppliers in accordance with PCR 2015 Regulation 32(2)(c) and Procurement Policy Note 01/20.

4.3 The Strategic Commissioning Division used the standard contract Terms and Conditions. There will need to be resource allocated at the end point of the contract award for the contracts to be signed and sealed.

**5. Equalities implications**

5.1 An Equality Impact Assessment (EQIA) has been completed, given that the SAFER Scheme is proposed to be a countywide service available to all survivors of domestic abuse, the EQIA did not identify any potential adverse effects of the proposal. The EQIA is attached as Appendix 1.

5.2 This is a live document and will be developed further once the new service has been procured.

## 6. Data Protection Implications

- 6.1 The Data Protection Impact Assessment (DPIA) and draft Privacy Notice have been completed to ensure the Property Security element of the countywide SAFER Scheme will be compliant with the Data Protection Act 2018.
- 6.2 These documents will be updated once a provider is appointed to reflect their specific processing arrangements.

## 7. Conclusion

- 7.1 In summary, the award of the Property Security element of the countywide SAFER Scheme contract will ensure the council meets its new statutory duties under the Domestic Abuse Act 2021. The Scheme supports Priority 4 of KCC's Strategic Statement 2022-2026, New Models of Care and Support, in protecting the most vulnerable children and families from harm.
- 7.2 It is recommended that the contract is awarded to the recommended provider as detailed in exempt Appendix A (Exempt from publication by Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972, as it contains commercially sensitive information) who has been assessed as being best placed to achieve KCC's objectives for the Property Security element of the countywide SAFER Scheme.

## 8. Recommendations

- 8.1 Recommendations: The Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care and Public Health is asked to:
- a) **AWARD** the contract, to the successful bidder identified as part of the procurement process for the provision of the Property Security element of the countywide SAFER Scheme for a maximum of four years (initial two-year contract, 1 December 2023 to 30 November 2025, with two, one-year optional extension periods, subject to robust contract monitoring, from 1 December 2025 – 30 November 2026 and 1 December 2026 – 30 November 2027);
  - b) **DELEGATE** authority to the Corporate Director Adult Social Care and Health, after consultation with the Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care and Public Health and the Corporate Director Finance, subject to robust contract monitoring to agree the relevant contract extensions as required; and
  - c) **DELEGATE** authority to the Corporate Director Adult Social Care and Health to take other relevant actions, including but not limited to finalising the terms of and entering into required contracts or other legal agreements, as necessary to implement the decision.

**9. Background Documents**

[Decision - 23/00022 - Procurement of the Property Security Element of the Countywide Sanctuary Access for Eligible Residents \(SAFER\) Scheme](#)

**10. Report Author**

Rachel Westlake  
Senior Commissioner  
03000 103416  
[Rachel.westlake@kent.gov.uk](mailto:Rachel.westlake@kent.gov.uk)

**Relevant Director**

Richard Smith  
Corporate Director Adult Social Care and Health  
03000 416838  
[Richard.smith3@kent.gov.uk](mailto:Richard.smith3@kent.gov.uk)