

MINUTES OF THE CABINET MEMBER SIGNING MEETING HELD ON TUESDAY 25 JULY 2023, 10:15AM - 10:55AM

PRESENT: Councillor Lucia das Neves, Cabinet Member for Health, Social Care, and Wellbeing

In attendance: Sarah Hart, Senior Commissioner, Public Health, Bezuayehu Gubay, Strategist & Commissioner, Public Health, Kodi Sprott, Principal Committee Co-Ordinator and Nazyer Choudhury, Principal Committee Co-Ordinator.

1. FILMING AT MEETINGS

The Chair referred to the notice of filming at meetings and this information was noted.

2. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

There were no apologies for absence.

3. URGENT BUSINESS

There were no declarations of interest.

4. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were none.

5. DEPUTATIONS / PETITIONS / PRESENTATIONS / QUESTIONS

There were none.

6. REQUEST APPROVAL TO VARY THE TERM OF THE CONTRACT FOR THE PROVISION OF INTEGRATED HEALTH IMPROVEMENT/WELLNESS SERVICE AND EXTEND FOR FURTHER PERIOD OF UP TO 5 MONTHS

This report sought approval to vary the term of the existing contract for the provision of Integrated Health Improvement/Wellness Service delivered by Reed Wellbeing Limited to extend further period of five (5) months, commencing from 1 September 2023 at the cost of £229,166.50.

The aggregated total value of the contract will be £687,499.50 including the above proposed variation and extension.

The Cabinet Member stated that should would like an outline regarding recruitment around local people when the process reached the next stage.

It would also be useful to hear individual stories of progress made by patients such as the women referred from North Middlesex Hospital.

It would be ideal to have greater promotion on websites with more detail on the voluntary sector, possibly with promotion on social media. It may be possible to request the involvement of the Public Health Communications Officer.

The Cabinet Member queried how the work could be linked to the health inequalities champions work being initiated in public health. It was noted that the Director of Public Health had increased the financing available as it aligned with the prevention agenda in adult health.

The Cabinet Member for Health, Social Care, and Wellbeing RESOLVED

1. To grant approval to vary the term of contract for the Integrated Health Improvement/wellness Service provided by Reed Wellbeing Limited and extend for a further period of five (5) months, commencing from 1 September 2023 at the cost of £229,166.50. The aggregated total value of the contract would be £687,499.50 including the above proposed variation and extension.
2. To note that the recommendation was in accordance with Contract Standing Order (CSO) 10.02.1b (Cabinet may authorise an extension or variation to a contract valued over £500K and over) and in pursuant to the Regulation 72 of the Public Contracts Regulations 2015 (Modification of contracts during their term).
3. To note that the contract price for 5 months extension period referred to in paragraph 3.1 above was inclusive of 10% inflationary increase to accommodate price increases in medicines/nicotine replacement, room hire and staff salaries.

Reasons for Decision

Public health undertook a review of the service delivery model and recommended that it remains in the best interests of residents and the Council for this type of service to be contracted and for that to be done through a competitive procurement process. This was agreed by Commercial Board and the lead cabinet member in December 2022.

Considering that the implementation period is needed on this contract to ensure service is not disrupted and TUPE legislation is followed, the original plan was to start the tender process in February 2023 with an intention to award the contract to successful bidders in June or early July 2023. This would give a two month service implementation/handover period. However, unforeseen circumstances meant that delays have occurred in initiating the procurement processes. The impact of this was that if the contract was not extended, there would be a gap between the end of the current contract and the start of a new contract, resulting in a break in service delivery to residents. This would have a clinical impact in terms of the smoking cessation programme, especially the programme which reaches pregnant women from the most disadvantaged communities.

Furthermore, established networks between Primary Care Network, Hospitals and local organisations would be disrupted, and the relaunch of the service (under the new contract) would be costly. A break in service would also have legal implications in terms of the employment status of staff who were assigned to the contract. If the Council provided a bridging service to provide the service directly the provision of service directly albeit it temporarily may be captured by the TUPE regime the result of which was that it would provide employment protection to qualifying staff who transfer automatically by its operation to the new service provider i.e. the Council. This situation was onerous and should be occur without taking detailed legal advice.

Gaps in service would lead to service disruption for service users and residents especially those from economically disadvantaged groups. Such action would damage the reputation of the Council as the impact would be felt across the system.

The extension allowed smooth transition and mobilisation to the new service whilst continuing to provide the essential services to residents, who consider these services as an asset for the community.

The current provider was delivering the service effectively and was in agreement to continue delivering the service, should this be the decision that the Council made.

The variation of price was to accommodate inflationary price increases in medicines/nicotine replacement and room hire and to allow for salary increases for staff to reduce the impact of the cost-of-living crisis.

Alternative options considered

Do Nothing - The Council could choose not to extend the existing contract which ended in August. However, this would result in the disruption of the current service which would be damaging to service users. The service would need to close for new referrals immediately which causes risks in terms of residents that cannot wait for new programmes to start in September for example pregnant women wanting smoking cessation services. Closing of referrals causes loss of continuity in service provision and residents and partner agencies might assume there will be no further services. Finally, this could result in a reputational damage to the Council as GPs and other agencies referrals into the program are discontinued.

7. NEW ITEMS OF URGENT BUSINESS

There were none.

CHAIR: Cllr Lucia das Neves

Signed by Chair

Date26/7/2023.....