

# **MINUTES OF CABINET MEMBER SIGNING MEETING HELD ON TUESDAY 7 NOVEMBER 2023, 2:30PM - 2:35PM.**

**PRESENT:** Councillor Emily Arkell, Cabinet Member for Culture, Communities & Leisure

**In attendance:** Karen Bennett, Connected Communities Coach 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 by attendees.

## **2. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

There were no apologies for absence.

## **3. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest.

## **4. URGENT BUSINESS**

There were none.

## **5. DEPUTATIONS / PETITIONS / PRESENTATIONS / QUESTIONS**

There were none.

## **6. EXTENSION OF THE CONTRACT FOR THE PROVISION OF STRATEGIC PARTNER SERVICE FOR VOLUNTARY AND COMMUNITY SECTOR BUILDING PARTNER**

This report sought Cabinet Member approval to implement Contract Standing Order 10.02.1b, to vary and extend the current contract for the Strategic Partner for the Voluntary and Community Sector (VCS) with the Bridge Renewal Trust.

### **The Cabinet Member RESOLVED**

1. To approve in accordance with Contract Standing Order (CSO) 10.02.01(b), the variation and extension of the contract for the Strategic Partner for the Voluntary and Community Sector with the Bridge Renewal Trust, for a period of up to 6 months from 1 January 2024 to 30 June 2024, at a value of £83,400 if extended for the full six months.

2. The aggregated value of the contract from 1 February 2020 to 30 June 2024 was £736,700.

### **Reasons for decision**

The VCS Strategic Partner contract with the Bridge Renewal Trust ended on 31 December 2023. The service had been redesigned before undertaking a competitive tender process for a new service. The tender process was still in its early stages, with the supplier market engagement event held on 7 September 2023 and tender documents published on 25 September 2023. The contract extension for a period of up to 6 months was required to allow sufficient time to complete the tender process and ensure continuity of service to the VCS organisations in the intervening period.

The re-design of the new service was informed through engagement with the VCS, focused more strongly on capacity building and with clear and transparent accountability to both the Council and wider sector, ensuring equitable access to support and external funding opportunities. The new service specification reflects that the new service should be innovative, responsive, flexible and more strategically aligned as a VCS Capacity Building Partner service in Haringey.

The VCS Partner provided the sector with capacity building and fundraising support, networking and partnership development opportunities and runs the Volunteer Centre in Haringey which provided guidance on recruiting and managing volunteers. The service also acted as a medium for communication between the Council and the voluntary sector.

Further support for and development of partnership working with the voluntary and community sector in the borough was a key strategic priority for the Council and was incorporated throughout the Corporate Delivery Plan 2022/2024. Approval of this extension to cover the period until the new service begins, and to support and enable preparation for the new model, will support delivery of these strategic objectives.

The Bridge Renewal Trust's performance had been evaluated as good throughout the contract period, albeit the Council had identified changes that are required in the overall approach to be delivered through the new specification. Key Performance Indicators and methods of measurement are integrated within the service specification and were monitored through contract monitoring meetings and reports.

### **Alternative options considered**

In-house provision was considered and found not to be suitable for full delivery of this service for the proposed extension period due to the work that would be required to insource the service. There is also a need for an independent partner to provide representation to the sector, which already works collaboratively with Council's dedicated Voluntary & Community Sector Team.

Consideration was given to cease the contract in December 2023, in lieu of the commissioning process. However, given the Council's strategic objective to develop support for the voluntary and community sector, to cease the contract would have an adverse impact on delivery of strategic outcomes as well as on those organisations in the sector and therefore on the many residents who they support. Therefore, it is not deemed in the best interests of the voluntary and community sector or the Council to cease the contract.

**7. NEW ITEMS OF URGENT BUSINESS**

There were none.

**8. EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC**

RESOLVED

To exclude the press and public from the meeting as following item contained exempt information as defined in Section 100a of the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended by Section 12A of the Local Government Act 1985); paras 3 and 5, namely information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information) and information in respect of which a claim to legal professional privilege could be maintained in legal proceedings.

**9. NEW ITEMS OF EXEMPT URGENT BUSINESS**

There were none.

CABINET MEMBER: Councillor Emily Arkell

Signed by CABINET MEMBER .....

Date .....7 November 2023.....