

MINUTES OF THE CABINET MEMBER SIGNING HELD ON THURSDAY 1ST FEBRUARY 2024, 3:30PM – 3:45

PRESENT:

Councillors: Lucia das Neves

8. FILMING AT MEETINGS

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

9. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

There were no apologies for absence.

10. URGENT BUSINESS

There were no urgent business.

11. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

12. DEPUTATIONS/PETITIONS/QUESTIONS

There were none.

13. VARIATION TO EXTEND THE CONTRACT FOR THE PROVISION OF UNPAID CARERS SUPPORT SERVICE

This report sought retrospective approval to vary the term of the contract for the provision of unpaid carers support service delivered by Carers First to extend a further period of thirteen (13) months, effective from 1st September 2023 at a cost of £111,157.41. The aggregated total value of the contract would be up to £605,422.57 including the above proposed extension.

Cabinet Member asked and was reassured that this programme had good feedback from carers on support they currently received. The current offer included home visits and help completing forms which was valued by all but it was highlighted that where English would not be carers first language this was particularly helpful.

Future changes would be explored to the contract that would be made in collaboration with carers were also discussed. Cabinet Member noted that the contracts would be reviewed and refreshed in a year with new specifications. These would specifically look at the needs of younger carers that were underserved and those who found

daytime activities harder to access and would like a digital offer of support, alongside what was already available.

RESOLVED

The Cabinet Member for Health, Social Care, and Wellbeing to retrospectively approve, pursuant to Contract Standing Order 10.02.1 (b) and 16.2, the variation of the contract for the provision of an Unpaid Carers Support Service delivered by Carers First and extend for a further period of thirteen (13) months, effective from 1st September 2023 at the cost of £111,157.41. The aggregated total value of the contract would be £605,422.57 (excluding VAT) including the proposed extension.

Reasons for decision

The provision of Unpaid Carers Support Service was largely funded by the Better Care Fund (BCF). Services funded through the BCF were reviewed annually to ascertain whether or not there was business case for continuity of funding for the individual service/scheme. The BCF was now held by the NHS North Central London Integrated Care Board (ICB) and was responsible for allocating NHS budget and commissions services. ICBs were a key change in the Health and Care Act 2022 and have replaced Clinical Commissioning Groups. These changes came into effect on 1 July 2022. As a result of organisational changes, there had been delay in carrying out the BCF Plan review and confirming the funding for the unpaid carers support service.

There was insufficient time to carry out a meaningful options appraisal. A gap in service would lead to service disruption for unpaid carers. Such action would damage the reputation of the Council for not fulfilling its statutory requirement.

The current contract expired on 31st August 2023. The extension proposed in this report would allow for the timescales required to undertake a competitive procurement process to re-commission the service whilst ensuring continuity of vital service to vulnerable carers.

The performance of the service provider had been evaluated as good throughout the contract period.

Alternative options considered

Do nothing – this would leave the Council without a carers support service.

Procure the service through re-tendering – It would be possible to tender the current contract and seek a new and refreshed contract. However, given the expiration of the contract and as the implementation of the actions from commissioning peer review was awaited, extending the contract would enable a more efficient solution to maintain continuity of work so provision would meet carer requirements in the coming months while the new procurement process was undertaken.

14. NEW ITEMS OF URGENT BUSINESS

There were no new items of urgent business.

CABINET MEMBER: Councillor Lucia das Neves

Signed by Chair

Date