

**Report for:** Cabinet Member Signing

**Title:** Extension of the Contract for the Strategic Partner Service for the Voluntary and Community Sector (VCS)

**Report authorised by:** Jess Crowe – Director of Culture, Strategy and Engagement

**Lead Officer:** Maddie Watkins – Head of Housing Related Support

**Ward(s) affected:** All

**Report for Key/  
Non Key Decision:** Key Decision

## **1. Describe the issue under consideration**

1.1. This report seeks 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.

## **2. Cabinet Member Introduction** N/A

## **3. Recommendations**

3.1. For the Cabinet member for Culture, Communities & Leisure 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<sup>st</sup> January 2024 to 30<sup>th</sup> June 2024, at a value of £83,400 if extended for the full six months.

3.2. The aggregated value of the contract from 1<sup>st</sup> February 2020 to 30<sup>th</sup> June 2024 is £736,700.

## **4. Reasons for decision**

4.1. The VCS Strategic Partner contract with the Bridge Renewal Trust ends on 31st December 2023. The service has been redesigned before undertaking a competitive tender process for a new service. The tender process is still in its early stages, with the supplier market engagement event held on 7<sup>th</sup> September

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2023 and tender documents published on 25<sup>th</sup> September 2023. The contract extension for a period of up to 6 months is required to allow sufficient time to complete the tender process and ensure continuity of service to the VCS organisations in the intervening period.

- 4.2. 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 the 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.
- 4.3. The VCS Partner provides the sector with capacity building and fundraising support, networking and partnership development opportunities and runs the Volunteer Centre in Haringey which provides guidance on recruiting and managing volunteers. The service also acts as a medium for communication between the Council and the voluntary sector.
- 4.4. Further support for and development of partnership working with the voluntary and community sector in the borough is a key strategic priority for the Council and is 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.
- 4.5. The Bridge Renewal Trust's performance has been evaluated as good throughout the contract period, albeit the Council has 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 are monitored through contract monitoring meetings and reports.

## **5. Alternative options considered**

- 5.1. 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.
- 5.2. 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.

## 6. Background information

- 6.1. In February 2020, Haringey Council awarded a 14-month contract for the Voluntary Sector Strategic Partner service to the Bridge Renewal Trust until March 2021 for the value of £194,600, with provision to extend for 12 months from April 2021 until March 2022 at the value of £166,800 and then for 9 months from April 2022 until December 2022 at the value of £125,100. The aggregated value for this contract period was £486,500.
- 6.2. The contract was then extended for a further 12 months period from January 2023 to December 2023 to allow the completion of the redesign and tender process. Delay was due to ensuring that the new service design aligned with the requirements of the VCS and stakeholders.
- 6.3. Award of this extension for a further six months whilst the tender process is completed, will ensure a continuity of service for voluntary sector organisations in Haringey. The new model will align priorities, and develop the capacity, sustainability, independence and outcomes of the voluntary and community sector in the borough. This will also improve the sector's ability to partner with the Council on achieving strategic objectives.

## 7. Contribution to strategic outcomes

- 7.1. This contract supports delivery of several objectives within the Council's Corporate Delivery Plan (2022 – 2024). Partnership with the voluntary sector is integrated into several of the objectives.
- 7.2. The Corporate Delivery Plan provides commitments to the Resident experience, participation and collaboration (Theme 1). The objectives include:
  - *Enabling Community Collaboration - More residents participate and interact with community and peer-led activities and organisations. The council make this easier and more attractive to residents, where we can, recognising the role that civil society plays in community resilience and cohesion.*

- Positive Residents Experience - *All residents, businesses and other stakeholders can easily access services which are designed and operated in a resident-centric way. Co-production puts resident voice and experience at the heart of everything we do. Positive interactions with the council will support better relationships with the community, increasing mutual trust and confidence.*

## **8. Carbon and Climate Change**

The provision of this service contributes to Theme 2 - Responding to the climate emergency within the corporate plan – *Build community awareness and empowerment on carbon reduction and climate mitigation.*

## **9. Statutory Officers comments (Chief Finance Officer (including procurement), Assistant Director of Corporate Governance, Equalities)**

### **9.1 Finance**

9.1.1 The report is seeking approval for an extension of the Strategic Partner for the Voluntary and Community Sector (VCS) contract with the Bridge Renewal Trust. The extension will cover 6 months from 1 January 2024 to 30 June 2024, at a value of £83,400. The current contract with Bridge Renewal Trust expires at the end of December 2023.

9.1.2 The Public Health Grant provides funding for this extension, with an available budget of £167k in 2023-24. Expenditure for the current contract period, April 2023 to December 2023, will be £125k, leaving budget of £42k available to fund the first quarter of the proposed extension period, January 2023 to March 2023. The cost per quarter for the proposed extension is £42k, which is within the available remaining budget for this year. It is assumed that there will be Public Health Grant available in 2024-25 to fund the April 2024 to June 2024 period of the proposed contract extension.

### **9.2 Procurement**

9.2.1 The services described in this report fall under Schedule 3 of the Public Contract Regulations (PCR) 2015 and are subject to the Light -Touch Regime if above the threshold. The aggregated value of the contract including the proposed variation and extension is above threshold would normally require advertisement.

9.2.2 Regulation 72 (1) (e) permits changes to be made to awarded public contracts without conducting a fresh tender process, where the modifications

irrespective of their monetary value are not substantial within the meaning of paragraph 8.

9.2.3 The proposed variation and extension for 6 months does not meet the conditions for a substantial modification as outlined under Reg 72 (8).

9.2.4 The variation and extension of this contract is permitted under both the Reg 72 of PCR 2015 and the Council's Contract Standing Orders 10.02.1b and 16.02.

### **9.3 Legal**

9.3.1 The Head of Legal and Governance (Monitoring Officer) has been consulted in the preparation of this report.

9.3.2 The contract comes within the remit of Schedule 3 (Social and other Specific Services) of the Public Contracts Regulations 2015 (the Regulations) and is subject to the light touch regime. It is above the threshold where the modification rules set out in Reg 72 of the Regulations apply. Under Reg 72 (1) (e) a contract may be modified without need for a new procurement where the modifications are not substantial in accordance with criteria set out in Reg 72 (8) of the Regulations.

9.3.3 As the value of the contract including the extension is above £500,000 this would normally be approved by the Cabinet in accordance with CSO 10.02.1 b) (extension of contract valued at over £500,000). In-between meetings of the Cabinet, the Leader may take any decision reserved by Cabinet or allocate to the Cabinet Member with the relevant portfolio (CSO 16.02).

9.3.4 The award of the contract is a Key Decision and, as such, needs to comply with the Council's governance requirements in respect of Key Decisions including publication in the Forward Plan.

9.3.5 The Head of Legal and Governance (Monitoring Officer) confirms that there are no legal reasons preventing the Cabinet Member for Culture, Communities & Leisure from approving the recommendations in this report.

### **9.4 Equality**

9.4.1 The Council has a Public Sector Equality Duty under the Equality Act (2010) to have due regard to the need to:

- Eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation and any other conduct prohibited under the Act

- Advance equality of opportunity between people who share those protected characteristics and people who do not
- Foster good relations between people who share those characteristics and people who do not.

9.4.2 The three parts of the duty applies to the following protected characteristics: age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy/maternity, race, religion/faith, sex and sexual orientation. Marriage and civil partnership status applies to the first part of the duty.

9.4.3 The contract for the Strategic Partner requires the provider to offer the service to all Haringey based voluntary and community sector organisations who request advice and support. These organisations are working to support a range of groups of service users and residents, including those people who are disadvantaged and vulnerable. This decision to vary and extend the contract for an additional period of four months will enable this work to continue and is therefore likely to have a positive impact on VCS organisations which benefit from the service and therefore on those residents who they support.

## **10 Use of Appendices**

Not applicable.

## **11 Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985**

## **12 Background papers:**

Haringey Corporate Delivery Plan 2022 – 2024

<https://new.haringey.gov.uk/council-elections/council-policies-plans/corporate-delivery-plan>

12.1 This report contains no exempt information.