

Report for: Cabinet Meeting 16th January 2024

Title: Award of contract for Capacity Building Partner for the Voluntary and Community Sector

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

Lead Officer: Karen Bennett – Commissioning Officer
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Ward(s) affected: All

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

1. Describe the issue under consideration.

- 1.1. This report details the outcome of an open tender process and seeks approval to award the contract to the successful tenderer for the Provision of Capacity Building Partner for the Voluntary and Community Sector (VCS) in Haringey in accordance with Contract Standing Order (CSO) 9.07.1 (d)
- 1.2. The recommended provider submitted a strong bid that clearly demonstrated their expertise and commitment to providing the services required and meeting the service outcomes as specified.
- 1.3. Subject to approval, the contract shall be awarded for a period of 3 years commencing 1st April 2024 to 31st March 2027, with option to extend for further periods of up to 2 plus 2 years (i.e seven years in total).

2. Cabinet Member Introduction

- 2.1 The voluntary and charitable sector in Haringey plays a vital role across the Borough supporting residents and providing non statutory services to diverse communities.
- 2.2 It is vibrant and dynamic, comprising hundreds of organisations of different sizes and remits. The sector brings people together from different backgrounds to work together on common causes and interests, enhancing mutual aid and civic participation, including working directly with residents in communities, campaigning on issues of both local and national significance, advocating at individual and community level and strengthening community capacity and resilience.

- 2.3 As a council we are committed to supporting the sector so that it can continue to support residents and provide these services and to support a provider to provide advice and support to all Haringey based voluntary and community sector organisations who request and need it to enable them to operate.
- 2.4 We have redesigned the service specification to better meet the needs of the sector and this was informed through engagement with the sector and focuses 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 service specification reflects that the new service should be innovative, responsive, flexible, and more strategically aligned as a voluntary and charitable sector capacity building partner service in Haringey.
- 2.5 We have carried out a robust and thorough open tender process to award a new contract to a provider who submitted a strong bid outlining their experience, expertise and commitment to providing the services required and outcomes specified in the tender documents.
- 2.6 Delivery against the contract will be regularly monitored on a quarterly basis to ensure key performance indicators are met and service outcomes are delivered.
- 2.7 I am seeking your approval to award this contract for three years starting on the 1st April 2024.

3. Recommendations

For Cabinet to:

- 3.1 Approve the award of a contract to the successful tenderer, for the Provision of Capacity Building Partner for the Voluntary and Community Sector, in accordance with Contract Standing Order (CSO) 9.07.1(d). The successful bidder is identified under Appendix 1 - Part B (exempt information) of this report).
- 3.2 Approve the contract award for a period of three (3) years, commencing 1st April 2024 to 31st March 2027, with option to extend for further periods of up to 2 plus 2 years.
- 3.3 Note that there is the potential for additional investment from North Central London Integrated Care Board (NCL ICB). Any additional activities to be delivered as a result of this funding will be agreed with the provider by way of variation to the contract.
- 3.4 Note that the Director of Culture, Strategy and Engagement will approve any variation of contract resulting from any additional NCL ICB funding as stated above.

4. Reasons for decision

- 4.1 The Council is committed as part of the Haringey Deal to working more closely with residents, understanding the specific needs of different communities in more depth and granularity, and getting better at listening to voices that are often overlooked. The voluntary and community sector is a key partner in realising this ambition and as a Council we need to support the development and growth of the sector so that it effectively represents and supports all of our diverse communities.
- 4.2 Further support for and development of partnership working with the voluntary and community sector in the borough is therefore a key strategic priority for the Council and is incorporated throughout the Corporate Delivery Plan 2022 - 2024.
- 4.3 The current VCS strategic partner contract was originally let some years ago and does not reflect current Council priorities and ways of working under the Haringey Deal. The specification has therefore been re-designed. 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 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.
- 4.4 The decision to award a contract to the successful tenderer is based on the conclusion of a competitive procurement process and is made according to the outcome of the Most Economically Advantageous Tender.

5. **Alternative options considered.**

- 5.1 **Do Nothing** - The Council could elect not to commission this service. However, it has been concluded given the Council's strategic objective to develop support for the voluntary and community sector, to no longer commission the service would have an adverse impact on delivery of strategic outcomes as well as on those organisations in the sector and therefore on the many small organisations who they support. The option to do nothing was considered and rejected.
- 5.2 **In-house** – This provision was considered and found not to be suitable for full delivery of this service. There is a need for an independent partner to provide representation to the sector, which already works collaboratively with the Council's dedicated Voluntary & Community Sector Team. The need for a partner from within the VCS was expressed clearly in the engagement with the sector that informed this decision.
- 5.3 **Extend existing contracts** – Extension periods available within the existing contract have been exhausted and in addition the specification set out in the existing contract does not now match the Council's and sector's priorities.

6 Background information

6.1 There is a vibrant and dynamic Voluntary and Community Sector (VCS) in Haringey, comprising hundreds of organisations of different sizes and remits across the borough. Through their work, the VCS brings people together from different backgrounds around common causes and interests, enhancing mutual aid and civic participation, including working directly with residents in communities, campaigning on issues of both local and national significance, advocating at individual and community level and strengthening community capacity and resilience.

6.2 Haringey's VCS is a huge asset; with knowledge, expertise and passion to work creatively, independently, and innovatively to support residents in different ways. In Haringey the VCS Sector alongside the Council represents and supports:

- A diverse population, 38% of residents are from ethnic minority groups and 26% identify as "white other". 180+ languages are spoken and 30% of Haringey residents do not speak English as their main language – the 6th highest rate in London.
- Life expectancy in the borough is in line with the London average, though there are stark inequalities among different groups and the life expectancy for men in Haringey has fallen at a greater rate than for London overall (a fall of 1.1 years compared to 0.5 years)
- Deprivation levels are more heavily concentrated in the east of the borough and are considered in the 20% most deprived in the country, whilst wards in the west of the borough are amongst the wealthiest in the country.
- In Haringey, the percentage of employed people rose from 58.9% in 2011 to 60.1% in 2021, while across England it fell from 56.5% to 55.7%. During the same period, the regional percentage increased from 58.6% to 59.4%.
- GCSE attainment has improved comparative to England, but in London, there are notable attainment gaps. 4.4% of Haringey residents have no qualifications, which is lower than the London Average
- Wages in Haringey are lower than average, and there are a larger number of Job Seekers Allowance (JSA) and Employment Support Allowance (ESA) claimants than the London average.

6.3 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. Haringey's VCS will support delivery of the strategic priorities such as enabling community collaboration and encouraging more residents to participate and

interact with community and peer-led activities and organisations. Also, ensuring a positive resident experience where all residents, businesses and other stakeholders can easily access services which are designed and operated in a resident-centric way.

- 6.4** Prior to the procurement process, a 'virtual market engagement' event was held on 7th September 2023 to communicate the Council's commissioning intentions with potential providers, share information about the new service delivery model and offer opportunities to network and forge partnerships, where possible. The market engagement event indicated a niche market.
- 6.5** The procurement process was carried out under the "Light Touch Regime" in accordance with Part 2, Section 7 of Public Contracts Regulations 2015 and in line with the Council's Contract Standing Orders.
- 6.6** The tender process started on 25th September 2023 with publishing a contract notice in Find a Tender Service (FTS) and Contracts Finder. The tender was also published on Haringey's Procurement and Contract System (HPCS) Portal and organisations who had attended the Market Engagement event were informed of publication of contract notice.
- 6.7** The Invitation to Tender (ITT) and supporting documents were uploaded on HPCS (Haringey's e-tendering portal) where potential bidders were able to access the information, register and submit tenders electronically. By the closing date of 30th October 2023, 8 organisations had registered their interest on HPCS portal. (see Appendix 1 - Part B (exempt information) of this report).
- 6.8** Tender evaluations were carried out by a panel comprising of 5 evaluators from the Council's Adults, Health and Communities Directorate, Culture, Strategy and Engagement Directorate and a representative from North Central London integrated Care Board.
- 6.9** Tenders were evaluated on the basis of the Most Economically Advantageous Tender (MEAT) with a split of 60% quality (inclusive 10% social value) and 40% price. The tender evaluation criteria and weighting were set out in the tender documents. The bidder with the highest combined scores (price & quality) is recommended for contract award. Further information about the tender evaluation (such as name and contract value) is contained in Appendix 1 - Part B (exempt information) of the report.
- 6.10** Service commissioners will monitor the service throughout the duration of the contract. Monitoring will be carried out on a quarterly basis as outlined within the service specification and performance will be monitored against agreed

targets and outcomes. The Provider will be measured against the following outcomes:

- **Outcome 1:** A vibrant, inclusive and sustainable voluntary and community sector in Haringey
- **Outcome 2:** A strong and engaged partnership between the council and the sector, and between members within the sector, where organisations work together to deliver outcomes for residents
- **Outcome 3:** A skilled and knowledgeable sector, who have access to the resources and personnel they need to deliver activities and interventions for Haringey residents.
- **Outcome 4:** Delivery of well-coordinated community-led and strengths-based projects such as the Volunteer Centre and Navnet providing the latest information about activities/events/initiatives in Haringey to support Haringey Residents with their health and wellbeing outcomes.

6.11 Contract monitoring will be supported by a quarterly monitoring workbook which will be drawn up following contract award and form the basis for discussions during contract monitoring meetings. The workbook will be used to collect data to demonstrate compliance with the required key performance indicators including:

- Performance against agreed target of funding applications and support to adopt new methods of fundraising.
- Engagement with public-sector decision-making structures
- Survey of customer satisfaction
- Joint projects and partnerships brokered, resources and knowledge shared.

6.12 The provider will be expected to make the data collected available to the Council on a quarterly basis in the form of a comprehensive report at least two weeks prior to the Contract Meetings. The information submitted will be critically analysed to ensure compliance with the contract requirements as well as addressing the needs of the community.

6.13 The key deliverables of this contract will be assessed as follows:

- **Financial Stability:** The provider will deliver support to voluntary and community sector organisations, in 1:1 and group settings, to maximise income and secure financial sustainability, to develop robust business plans and to establish access to finance and governance advice and skills development opportunities that give confidence to funders and other partners.
- **Governance and Organisational Management:** The provider will work with the Council and the VCS to build the infrastructure and capacity of

organisations and their Boards to deliver against their core objectives and funding requirements in 1:1 and group setting style workshops.

- **Sustaining & Establishing New and Existing Organisations:** The provider will work with new and existing organisations to establish themselves as constituted bodies and to offer a range of services to meet local need. This can include supporting existing organisations to improve their service delivery as well as advice and guidance on how to implement cost cutting measures ensuring organisations are financially viable.
- **Inward and External Investment:** The provider will identify funding and grant application opportunities and share these with Haringey's voluntary sector in an open, fair and inclusive way. To this end the provider will help develop capacity within the voluntary and community sector to bid for new contracts, grants and make funding applications from whatever source or sources these may become available. The provider will work with the Council and other statutory partners to reduce reliance and dependency upon public sector funding as the singular or only source of revenue or grant funding available to the voluntary sector in Haringey.
- **Volunteering:** The provider will work with the Council and ICB to develop a strategic approach to volunteering as a means of building individual, community and organisational capacity. They will work with the Council to provide excellent, well-supported volunteer opportunities that meet the needs of the volunteer and ensure volunteering is resourced appropriately with necessary infrastructure to support volunteering at scale across the community.
- **Enabling New Partnerships/Consortia/Alliances:** to develop partnering potential by improving collaboration with new, and local organisations—while enhancing local leadership, capacity, and accountability in the VCS In pursuit of our shared development goals.
- **Communication, Training and Events:** The provider will develop, source, and deliver training, guidance, and toolkits tailored to the needs of the VCS. They will run events that supports engagement, collaboration meaningful discussions of interest and celebrates the sectors achievements as well as identify gaps in provision and accompanying action plans/training opportunities to resolve.
- **Coordination:** the provider will coordinate and streamline the VCS Capacity Building, volunteer network and Navnet's core activities
- **Research and Engagement Activity:** leading on research and engagement activities with the objective of receiving views, data, insights, and perspectives from the VCS and local communities to inform the council and ICB's strategic policies and implementation plans as well as to develop guidance, training and toolkits for the VCS sector.

6.14 Performance against the outcomes as described will be reviewed annually with the service provider. The provider will also be required to develop mechanisms for reporting performance against the outcomes to the wider sector as part of the service's commitment to clear accountability and transparency around its work in support of the voluntary and community sector. This will help ensure equity of access to resources and capacity building support and clarity around processes and decision-making, building trust and confidence across the whole sector and wider community.

7 Contribution to the Corporate Delivery Plan 2022-2024 High level Strategic outcomes

7.1 Awarding this contract supports delivery of several themes within the Council's Corporate Delivery Plan (2022 – 2024). Partnership with the voluntary sector is integrated into several of the objectives within Theme 1:

- Enabling Community Collaboration - More residents participate and interact with community and peer-led activities and organisations. The council will 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.

7.2 As such the Corporate Delivery Plan contributes significantly to Theme 4 Adults, Health, and welfare: Outcome 1 Healthy and Fulfilling Lives - All adults are able to live healthy and fulfilling lives, with dignity, staying active, safe, independent and connected in their communities. Outcome 2 Advice and Support - Low-income residents will receive accessible, non-stigmatising and holistic advice and support to reduce debt and address the underlying causes of financial hardship.

7.3 The contract award will contribute to the Council's commitment to generate social, economic, and environmental benefits to its residents due to the social value commitments of the winning bidder. Further information about the tender evaluation (such as name and contract value) is contained in Appendix 1 - Part B (exempt information) of the report.

8 Carbon and Climate Change

8.1 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 (Director of Finance (procurement), Head of Legal and Governance, Equalities)**

9.1 **Finance**

9.2 The maximum annual core funding available for this contract is £211,800 of which £166,800 is funded by Public Health Grant and £45,000 from the Better Care Fund (BCF). (Funding from BCF is subject to annual review). There is the potential for additional investment of up to £50,000 per annum from the ICB in the future, but this funding has not been confirmed. Agreement on the remainder of the funding will form part of discussions around Inequalities Fund Programme and additional Better Care Fund Plan investments, with the expectation that the majority of the remaining funding will be from these annual sources subject to review. If the NCL ICS or BCF funds are not renewed, 3 months minimum notice will be given to the provider and any activities associated will cease.

9.2 **Procurement**

9.2.1 The provision to which this report relates falls within Schedule 3 of the Public Contracts Regulations 2015 ('the Regulations'). A compliant open tender process was undertaken following the publication of a contract notice on requisite Government portals.

9.2.2 The proposed award to the successful tenderer is in accordance with the requirements of Contract Standing Order 9.07.1d

9.2.3 The procurement process provided best value; the tenderer submitted a bid within the Council's financial envelope. Moreover, additional benefits will be derived from social value contractual commitments outlined in the exempt appendix.

9.2.4 Commissioning will regularly monitor the contract on a quarterly basis to ensure key performance indicators are met and service outcomes are delivered. This should ensure that any challenges regarding service delivery can be met and resolved early on reducing the risk of service failure or poor performance.

9.3 **Head of Legal & Governance (Monitoring Officer)**

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

9.3.2 The services are classified as Schedule 3 services (social and other services) under the Public Contracts Regulations 2015 (the Regulations) and are subject to the light touch regime.

- 9.3.3 An open tender process was carried out in accordance with the Regulations and the Council's Contract Standing Orders.
- 9.3.4 The award of the contract will be a Key Decision and, as such, the Council needs to comply with its governance processes including publication in the Forward Plan.
- 9.3.5 Cabinet has power to approve the award of contract under CSO 9.07.1 (d) (contracts valued at £500,000 or more)
- 9.3.6 The Head of Legal and Governance (Monitoring Officer) confirms that there are no legal reasons preventing Cabinet 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. Although it is not enforced in legislation as a protected characteristic, Haringey Council treats socioeconomic status as a local protected characteristic.
- 9.4.3 The contract for the Capacity Building Partner for the VCS 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 award the contract for a period of 3 years 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.
- 9.4.4 As an organisation carrying out a public function on behalf of a public body, the provider will be obliged to have due regard for the need to achieve the three aims of the Public Sector Equality Duty as stated above.

10 Use of Appendices

Appendix 1 – Part B Exempt report (This report is not for publication as it contains information classified as exempt under Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 under the category (3) information in relation to financial or the business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information))

11 Background papers

[The Corporate Delivery Plan | Haringey Council](#)