

Report for: Cabinet Member Signing: Councillor Sarah Williams

Item number: 6

Title: Haringey Citizens Advice Bureaux – Contract for the provision of Information, Advice and Guidance Service Extension

Report authorised by : Sara Sutton - Corporate Director for Adult, Housing and Health

Lead Officer: Zahra Maye – 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 approval to vary and extend the contract with Haringey Citizens Advice Bureaux for the provision of Information Advice and Guidance Service, as permitted under Contract Standing Orders (CSO)s 18.03, 0.08 and 2.01(d).
- 1.2 Subject to approval being granted, the variation will be for a period of two years, starting from 1st April 2026 at an annual cost of £726,536. The aggregated value of the contract including the proposed variation and extension is £4,473,933.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1. For the Cabinet Member for Housing and Planning to:
- 2.2. Approve in accordance with CSOs 18.03 variation of contract and 2.01(d) (variation of contract by Cabinet) as permitted under CSO 0.08 (Cabinet Member decision) for the provision of Information Advice and Guidance Service for a period of two years from 1 April 2026 to 31 March 2028, at an annual value of £726,536 subject to funding.
- 2.3. In addition, delegated authority will be granted to the Corporate Director for Adult, Housing and Health to approve a further one-year extension from 1 April 2028 to 31 March 2029. This approach provides essential operational flexibility to accommodate any slippage in timelines while the Council undertakes a full competitive tender, ensuring uninterrupted support for residents throughout the transition.
- 2.4. The aggregated value of the contract is therefore, £4,473,933.

3. Reasons for decision

- 3.1. Haringey continues to face high levels of deprivation, homelessness risk, debt, and health inequalities, particularly among vulnerable groups such as disabled residents, migrants, and those with mental health needs.
- 3.2. The service provides early intervention to prevent crises such as eviction, unemployment, and hospitalisation, reducing reliance on statutory services and supporting residents to maximise income and sustain tenancies.
- 3.3. The Information, Advice and Guidance service contributes to key outcomes in the Council's Corporate Delivery Plan 2024 –2026, including preventing homelessness, improving health and wellbeing, and connecting residents with timely support. It also supports compliance with the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017.
- 3.4. By offering free, accessible advice on welfare benefits, debt management, and housing, the service helps reduce financial hardship, promote social inclusion, and improve life chances which support anti-poverty objectives.
- 3.5. The extension ensures continuity of a well-established partnership model co-funded by the Council and North Central London Integrated Care Board (NCL ICB), avoiding disruption to residents and cost-effectiveness.

4. Alternative options considered

4.1. Do Nothing:

- 4.2. The Council could elect not to extend the Information Advice and Guidance service as it is not statutorily required to do so. However, this would leave Haringey residents without access to timely, local and specialist information and advice on key areas of need and inequality in the borough. This would be highly likely to increase the human and financial pressure on key Council and statutory services, i.e. without access to advice and guidance there would be an increase in number of residents at risk of eviction, which would place further burden on statutory services such as Temporary Accommodation and would have a further detrimental impact on the residents affected. Therefore, the option of doing nothing was considered and rejected.

4.3. Insourcing:

- 4.4. Consideration was given to delivering the service in-house. This was deemed unsuitable because a core element of the service is the provision of independent advice, including support for residents seeking to review or appeal decisions made by the Council or its partners. Citizens Advice are also Financial Conduct Authority (FCA) regulated to deliver Debt Advice. Insourcing would compromise this independence and reduce trust in the service. This option was therefore rejected.

5. Background information

- 5.1. Haringey is experiencing a growing demand for services, driven by rising homelessness, increasing mental health challenges, and an aging population. According to the *Older Peoples Needs Assessment – Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA)*, the proportion of residents aged 65 and over is projected to rise by 40% by 2031, while approximately 10% of adults currently live with depression. Additional vulnerabilities such as fuel poverty, debt, and housing insecurity, disproportionately impact disabled residents, migrants, and individuals with mental health needs.
- 5.2. According to the latest Indices of Deprivation 2025 (IMD25) Haringey ranks third as the most deprived borough in London, with concentrated deprivation in the Northeast of Haringey, these factors highlight the urgent need for accessible, community-based advice and support services.
- 5.3. The Haringey Advice Partnership is made up of two organisations, Citizens Advice Haringey and Public Voice. Together the partnership delivers the Council's Information, Advice and Guidance Service with Citizens Advice Haringey being the lead organisation.
- 5.4. The service plays an important role in supporting health outcomes by offering:
 - Welfare, debt and financial advice
 - Housing and homelessness-prevention support
 - Benefits and income maximisation
 - Support for vulnerable groups (such as carers and people with long-term conditions) This provision enables early intervention and prevention of escalation around common issues which lead to the eviction, unemployment and hospitalisation of our residents, by providing targeted information, advice and guidance at key points in people's lives to prevent crises.
- 5.5. The service provides residents with access to high-quality advice on welfare benefits, debt management, housing, and employment opportunities, helping to reduce financial hardship and improve economic resilience. By supporting individuals to maximise income, manage debt effectively, and access training and employment pathways, the Information Advice and Guidance (IAG) contract directly contributes to tackling poverty and promoting social inclusion. This extension ensures continuity of support for vulnerable residents and aligns with the Council's commitment to reducing inequalities and improving life chances.
- 5.6. The original contract was awarded for 4 years from 1st April 2022 and is ending on 31st March 2026 with an option to further extend for further periods of up to three years.
- 5.7. In November 2024 the contract was renegotiated to deliver savings of 5% which is a saving of £38,239 per annum to the Council the renegotiated annual value is £726,536 per annum.

- 5.8.** Funding for this service is through a partnership between the Council's Adults, Housing and Health Directorate and North Central London, Integrated Care Board (NCL - ICB). NCL ICB contribute £133,000 to the annual funding for the service, of which £55,000 is from the Better Care Fund (BCF). This funding is offered on an annual basis and if it were no longer available, the successful provider is aware that the associated activities would cease.
- 5.9. Over the duration of the contract, the provider has absorbed cost pressures without passing these increases on to the Council. These include rising national insurance contributions, general inflationary pressures, and increases in operational overheads. Despite the absence of an inflationary uplift within the contract, the provider has continued to maintain service delivery at the agreed standard, effectively absorbing these additional financial burdens. This represents a meaningful contribution to cost containment and demonstrates Citizens Advice Haringey's commitment to sustaining stability and continuity for service users.
- 5.10. Discussions are also underway between Citizens Advice Haringey and the NCL ICB regarding the potential reintroduction of outreach support within GP surgeries. If agreed, this would represent a significant step forward in accessibility, enabling service users to receive advice and early support in settings they already engage with. Embedding homelessness prevention support within primary care aligns with best practice around early identification of risk, integrated care pathways, and reducing the need for crisis driven interventions.
- 5.11.** An evaluation of the service was conducted in October 2024 for the Information Advice & Guidance services to evaluate the effectiveness, efficiency, and impact of the Floating Support, Information, Advice & Guidance services provided to vulnerable individuals within Haringey. There was evidence for continued service delivery, and the evaluation highlighted the essential role these services play in meeting the complex needs of vulnerable residents. This was demonstrated through some of the case studies received in the evaluation.
- 5.12.** In addition to the structural and financial efficiencies above, the provider has set out a number of anticipated improvements to service delivery over the next year. These include strengthening links with partner agencies, expanding proactive outreach activities, and enhancing the quality of advice and advocacy delivered to residents. These developments demonstrate a commitment to continuous service improvement and ensure that the contract extension will bring added value for both the council and service users.
- 5.13. For the period 1 April 2024 to 31 December 2025, the service supported a total of 12,601 residents, an increase from the 11,003 residents supported in 2023/2024. Residents were assisted with a range of issues, including:
- 32.4% supported due to threatened eviction
 - 23.1% supported due to homelessness
 - 54.2% supported with tenancy related issues
- Additionally, residents received support with other challenges, such as disrepair, rent increases, and deposit related matters.

- 5.14. The service delivered at least £555,159 in measurable financial outcomes for Haringey residents. This total reflects Discretionary Housing Payments, cleared rent arrears, sustained tenancies, and successful benefit claims.
- 5.15. Half of all residents disclosed a disability or long-term health condition. Debt issues were addressed through Debt Relief Orders and other insolvency processes, with case studies demonstrating £17,454 and £12,657 written off in individual cases. The total debt written off during the 2024/2025 period amounted to £133,732.
- 5.16. Total income gained for residents over the 2024/2025 period was £2,254,078.
- 5.17. This provision enables early intervention and prevention of escalation around common issues which lead to the eviction, unemployment and hospitalisation of our residents, by providing targeted information, advice and guidance at key points in people's lives to prevent crises. This service plays an important role in maximising our resident's independence and helps prevent reliance and dependency on more intensive care and support, as well as on other statutory services.

6. Contribution to Strategic outcomes

- 6.1. The provision of floating support and information, advice and guidance services contribute significantly to the Council's strategic outcomes under the Corporate Delivery Plan 2024 – 2026, in particular:
- 6.2. Homes for the Future: outcome 5: Preventing and reducing homelessness and rough sleeping.
- 6.3. The services significantly contribute to the delivery of this outcome by providing support which enables individuals to manage their housing and manage finances, to support their housing. The service also provides advice and tenancy sustainment, supporting clients to respond to issues which may threaten the stability of their housing situation.
- 6.4. Adults, health and welfare: *outcome 1: A healthy and active population*
- 6.5. The services contribute to delivery of this outcome by supporting clients to stay healthy including by supporting access to healthcare, engagement in physical activity and access to good nutrition.
- 6.6. Adults, health and welfare: *outcome 3: Residents connected with the right support at the right time in their neighbourhoods.* The services contribute to delivery of this outcome by focusing on developing peer support and user-led social initiatives, with clients supported to build positive relationships and engage with their communities.
- 6.7. Adults, health and welfare: *outcome 5: Vulnerable adults are supported and thriving*

The services contribute to delivery of this outcome by providing support which enables individuals to manage their housing and relationship with their landlord, driving improvements in the quality of their housing.

- 6.8. The service supports the Council to meet its duties under the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017 to prevent homelessness and provide services giving information and advice on preventing homelessness.
- 6.9. The proposed extension of the Information, Advice and Guidance (IAG) contract is integral to delivering the Council's Anti-Poverty Strategy. The contract supports the strategy by:
 - 6.9.1. Providing free, accessible advice on welfare benefits, debt management, and housing to reduce financial hardship.
 - 6.9.2. Helps residents maximise income and access entitlements, improving economic stability.
 - 6.9.3. Supports employment and skills pathways, reducing barriers to work and increasing life chances.
 - 6.9.4. Targets vulnerable and low-income households, promoting social inclusion and resilience.
 - 6.9.5. Contributes to the Council's commitment to reducing inequalities and tackling poverty.

7. Carbon and Climate Change

7.1. Haringey Climate Change Action Plan March 2021 outlines the council's route for net zero carbon in Haringey. All HRS services and provision contribute to the Community Actions Objective Com1 – To increase education and awareness raising across the borough to residents and businesses.

7.1.1. Raising awareness of the impacts of climate change, and steps to mitigate, can encourage residents and businesses to engage with the issue and to enable behavioural change.

- 7.2. Housing Related Support team commission a wide variety of services which support vulnerable Haringey residents who have experience homelessness or are at risk of homelessness.
- 7.3. As a team we are committed to embedding educational awareness into the fabric of commissioning from the tender process to contract monitoring. We seek to deliver carbon literacy awareness training to our providers and stakeholder relating to carbon footprint within their own organisations i.e.:
 - 7.3.1. Ensuring providers have a carbon change policy
 - 7.3.2. Including drafting a provider's self-assessment.
- 7.4. We also seek to consult with our stakeholders in relation to benchmarking best practice. This in-turn will be fed into our annual audit procedure where HRS Commissioning would be able to monitor and evaluate year on year whether organisations are reducing their carbon footprint.

HRS would also seek to co-produce our own carbon plan with service users by consulting with them on how climate change is affecting them i.e. Summer SWEF, Climate anxiety etc.

7.5. Finally, we seek to embed climate change into our service specification ensuring that providers we have, commit to addressing climate change on a wider strategic level with the Commissioning Team.

8. Statutory Officers comments (Director of Finance (procurement), Head of Legal and Governance, Equalities)

8.1. Finance

8.1.1. This report seeks the approval to extend the Haringey Citizens Advice Bureaux – Contract for the provision of Information, Advice and Guidance Service for an additional two years; commencing from 1st April 2026.

8.1.2. The annual cost for this extension will be £726,536 and will be funded by various streams. Firstly, the NCL ICB has agreed to contribute £133,000 annually for the provision of this service. Additionally, there will be a further £55,000 contribution per year by the BCF. The remaining £538,536 will be funded by the Public Health Grant.

8.1.3. As the contract value falls within the budget of the agreed funding streams there is little financial implication to the council.

8.2. Strategic Procurement

8.2.1. The contract with Haringey Citizens Advice Bureau for the provision of Information, Advice and Guidance services was originally awarded following an open tender process, in full accordance with the requirements of the Public Contracts Regulations 2015.

8.2.2. Under the Regulations, any modification to an existing contract would typically require a new tender process unless the change meets the criteria set out under Regulation 72. In this case, the original tender documentation expressly included provision for extensions of up to three years, meaning the proposed extension is permissible within Regulation 72 parameters.

8.2.3. Furthermore, commissioning successfully negotiated a 5% reduction to the contract's annual value, now set at £726,536. As this variation represents less than 10% of the original contract value, it is not considered substantial and is therefore compliant with Regulation 72(5)

8.2.4. In line with Contract Standing Orders (CSOs) 18.03 (contract variation), 0.08 (Cabinet Member decision), and 2.01(d) (variation of contracts valued at £500k or

above by Cabinet), the request to extend and vary the contract may be duly approved.

8.3. Legal

- 8.3.1. The Director of Legal and Governance (Monitoring Officer) was consulted in the preparation of the report.
- 8.3.2. Pursuant to provisions of the Council's CSOs 18.02.2 and 2.01(d), Cabinet has power to approve the extension of a contract where the value of the extension is £500,000 or more and as such Cabinet has power to approve the recommendation sought in paragraph 3.2 of the report.
- 8.3.3. The extension sought is provided for in the contract to be extended and as such it is compliance with the provisions of the Public Contracts Regulations 2015.
- 8.3.4. Further to paragraph 9.3.3 above and pursuant to the Council's CSO 0.08, a decision reserved for Cabinet may be taken by a Cabinet Member with the agreement of the Leader and as such the recommendation seeking approval from Cabinet Member for Housing and Planning in paragraph 3 of the report is line with the Council's CSO so long as the Cabinet Member is taking the decisions with the agreement of the Leader.
- 8.3.5. The Director of Legal and Governance (Monitoring Officer) see no legal reasons preventing the approval of the recommendation in the report.

8.4. Equality

- 8.4.1 The Council has a public sector equality duty under the Equalities Act (2010) to have due regard to:
 - 8.4.1.1. 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.
 - 8.4.1.2. Advance equality of opportunity between people who share protected characteristics and people who do not.
 - 8.4.1.3. Foster good relations between people who share those characteristics and people who do not.
- 8.4.2. The three parts of the duty apply 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.
- 8.4.3. The proposed decision is for Cabinet to extend the current contract for the Provision of Information Advice and Guidance Services. The service will impact all residents experiencing difficulties in relation to housing, economic security, health and other issues who seek access to information and advice services in Haringey. The service is aimed to people of all backgrounds and ages, among whom disabled households, those from BAME groups, and lower

socioeconomic backgrounds are likely to be overrepresented. It also affects those at risk of homelessness, among whom women-headed households from BAME groups, lower socioeconomic backgrounds, and those with long-term health issues are overrepresented.

- 8.4.4.** The extension aims to provide support through the provision of information, advice and guidance in pursuit of a key strategic agenda of preventing homelessness and the escalation of health and care needs, recognising its prevalence in the borough and the devastating impact it has on individual residents, communities and society at large. It is anticipated that the decision will lead to improved outcomes for households at risk of homelessness, experiencing debt and unemployment or facing barriers to accessing health and other statutory services. Households from BAME or certain faith groups, single parent households, those experiencing poverty, and people with long-term health issues are most affected by these issues and over-represented in current services. The decision to extend therefore represents a measure to address a known inequality that disproportionately affects these groups.
- 8.4.5.** The organisation for this contract will be carrying out a public function on behalf of a public body and will be obliged to have due regard for the need to achieve the three aims of the Public Sector Equality Duty as stated above. Appropriate contract management arrangements will be established to ensure that the delivery of the Single Homeless Pathway services does not result in any preventable or disproportionate inequality. The Council will take steps to collect demographic data on service users to identify any inequalities in service provision that may arise and to inform future equalities analysis.
- 8.4.6.** The Council and the service provider shall take steps to collect demographic data about service users in order to identify any inequalities in service provision that may arise and to inform future equalities analysis.

9. Use of Appendices N/A