

Report for: Cabinet 2nd of April 2019

Title: Request to extend contract under Contract Standing Order (CSO) 10.02.1(b) for Housing Related Support – Information, Advice and Guidance Services

Report authorised by : Charlotte Pomery – Assistant Director for Commissioning

Lead Officer: Gill Taylor – Strategic Lead, Single Homelessness & Vulnerable Adults

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 extend the Council’s contract for the provision of Information, Advice and Guidance services, held by Haringey Citizen’s Advice Bureau, for one year from 3rd April 2019 to 2nd April 2020, as provided for under Clause 3.2 of the Contract and in accordance with the Council’s Contract Standing Order (CSO) 10.02.1(b).

2. Cabinet Member Introduction

2.1 The Council is committed to ensuring that residents who need information, advice and guidance have access to high quality services. The services within this contract help to prevent homelessness, manage debt, maximise income and benefits, provide employment support and legal advice and support the health and wellbeing of a wide range of Haringey residents.

2.2 The Information, Advice and Guidance contract is therefore strategically important, and it is important that the support offered by the service continues whilst a new service model is designed and commissioned. It is for this reason that I recommend the extension of the contract for a further year.

3. Recommendations

3.1 It is recommended that, in accordance with Contract Standing Order (CSO) 10.02.1(b), Cabinet approves the extension of the Information, Advice and Guidance (IAG) Contract with the Haringey Citizen’s Advice Bureau across all four lots of the existing contract.

3.2 That the contract across all four lots is extended for a period of one year from 3rd April 2019 to 2nd April 2020, to the total of £816,000.

3.3 Cabinet to approve the underwriting of a £55,000 contribution made to the IAG contract by the Better Care Fund, which as yet remains unconfirmed, due to administrative delays beyond the Council's control. This contingency is recommended to ensure the contract extension is promptly completed and service delivery is maintained, however it has been strongly indicated that this funding will continue into the final year of the contract. If necessary, the contribution will be secured from within the Council's Housing Related Support budgets.

4. Reasons for decision

4.1 It is in the Council's overall interest to agree to an extension of the current contract whilst a review of the contract is completed and recommendations are made for a redesign to the service. The contracts were awarded for a period of three years with an option to extend for a further one year until 2020 in order to facilitate this.

4.2 Performance has been evaluated as good throughout the contract period. Performance returns are completed and submitted on time and targets are met. There is a demonstrable need for IAG in Haringey and the service is evidently delivering positive outcomes for residents. It is proposed that in order to continue to best service Haringey residents, the contract extension period is used to explore the current and future IAG needs of service users, alongside a range of new Council and Clinical Commissioning Group priorities and strategies, including the integration of health and community services. This process will consider any changes to be made to the service and will result in recommendations which will be used to inform the recommissioning of the contracts.

4.3 Extending this contract with a value of £816,000, will result in a reduction of £50,000 against the original annual contract value. This saving is required in order to contribute to the Council's Medium Term Financial Strategy, providing good value and also ensuring that the quality of service delivery is maintained. The Council have stipulated that no more than 20% of the saving should be made from the portion of the contract delivered by the two smaller partners, Haringey Association for Independent Living (HAIL) and Public Voice.

5. Alternative options considered

5.1 Procurement of new contracts was considered, however this would not allow enough time to conduct a sufficient review of the service, or the necessary market engagement, to deliver best value and practice.

5.2 Ceasing the current contracts was considered, however this was deemed not to be in the best interests of Haringey residents or the Council. The decision to extend will ensure continuity of Information, Advice and Guidance in Haringey which contributes to the delivery of the Council's statutory responsibilities under a range of legislation.

6. Background information

- 6.1 The IAG contract commenced on 1st April 2016 for a period of three years to 31st March 2019, with an option to extend for up to one year.
- 6.2 The IAG service provided by Haringey Citizen's Advice Bureau delivers three key outcomes:
- Delivery of IAG** - Haringey residents are able to access information, advice and guidance at the time they need it.
- Building capacity** - having received information, advice and guidance from the provider, people feel equipped and knowledgeable to manage their needs better in future.
- Quality of information** - the information, advice and guidance is of high quality and those accessing the service feel their issue or query has been handled well and resolved.
- 6.3 Alongside Haringey Citizen's Advice Bureau as the lead organisation, two sub-contracting organisations contribute to service delivery by offering specific, tailored and locally based interventions within their areas of expertise: Public Voice and HAIL (Haringey Association for Independent Living). Together the three organisations form the Haringey Advice Partnership (HAP).
- 6.4 Public Voice have a focus on supporting the older community, identifying isolation and loneliness as a key concern for this community. They therefore run opportunities and activities to tackle isolations as well as link clients in to opportunities hosted elsewhere. Public Voice also run projects responding to digital inclusion, including volunteer led computer training which incorporates a strong peer support element. They also run workshops aimed at older people around a variety of wellbeing themes, most recently focusing on depression and nutrition, and information stalls to provide a flexible point of access to information.
- 6.5 HAIL work with those living with mental ill health. They run information stalls enabling access to information, advice and guidance as well as running workshops for their target client group on subjects including financial capability, mindfulness and Universal Credit. They run regular wellbeing sessions which include activities such as yoga. In addition, HAIL manages the website and social media for the HAP and have been successful in developing a strong brand and presence within Haringey over the three years of the contract.
- 6.6 The service provides access to quality Information, Advice and Guidance for all Haringey residents, as well as ensuring that up to date, locally-relevant information is available about a range of community, voluntary and peer-led initiatives. The service is responsive to the needs of local communities across all four lots of the contract, for North East, South East, Central and West Haringey. This minimises the need for residents to travel to access support and ensures information and advice is locally-relevant and easily accessible.
- 6.7 The service provides multiple access points and channels including:

- Drop in services
 - Telephone support
 - An email service
 - Flexibility of times and access points; including pop-up provision
 - A range of signposting and referral systems for specialist needs
 - A network of venues taking into account public transport, opening hours and Equality Act (2010) compliance
 - IAG services from local community locations, including children's centres, GP surgeries, libraries and other settings
- 6.8 As well as employing a service delivery model based on easy access to effective information and advice, the service also aims to build capacity in individuals, families and communities to access their own information, advice and guidance in the future where appropriate, using a range of channels and approaches.
- 6.9 The service provides information, advice and guidance on issues including housing, social care, finance and debt, welfare and benefits, health related services including wellbeing and staying well and employment. This provision enables early intervention and frequently results in preventing the escalation of issues. For example, the service frequently supports clients in dealing with cases of rent or Council Tax arrears. Without the service's intervention, arrears could result in eviction and therefore homelessness. Clearly this is a highly negative situation for the client which may then require a statutory response from the Council as well as other negative outcomes, including an impact on the client's health.
- 6.10 The cases which the service handles most frequently relate to benefits and tax credits, accounting for 30% of advice cases according to the annual report for year 2 of delivery. 16% of advice cases relate to debt and 17% to housing. It is noted that this data only accounts for a client's main presenting issue, and case studies show that the service is often very effectively responding to multiple overlapping issues beyond the initial presentation.
- 6.11 Service level data shows that 39% of clients receiving advice are aged 50+, and 45% aged between 30 and 50. 60% of clients identify as female and 40% are living with either a disability or long-term health condition, of which 11% identify as disabled. 42% of clients describe themselves as White, 37% as Black and 7% as Asian.
- 6.12 The provider has consistently delivered against all its targets throughout the contract period. The contract provided for a 'payment by results' component of up to 5% of the contract value to be determined at the end of each 12-month period, based on overall satisfaction with the service. The provider has successfully secured this element of the contract value every year during delivery.
- 6.13 In 2013, NHS Haringey Clinical Commissioning Group (HCCG) entered into a contract with Haringey Citizens Advice Bureau for Welfare Hubs, which

provided similar welfare and debt advice services to the IAG contract, but from GP surgeries. The contract value was £78,000 per year.

- 6.14 In January 2018, the Council varied the IAG contract by means of a delegated authority decision to include these Welfare Hub services, which the Haringey Clinical Commissioning Group funds entirely under the partners' joint commissioning arrangements. This variation is for the full value of the Welfare Hubs service, of £78,000 and took effect retrospectively from 1st July 2017.
- 6.15 This portion of the IAG service will continue during the one-year extension.
- 6.16 The contract has included a £55,000 contribution from the Better Care Fund (BCF), from within the Haringey Clinical Commissioning Group's budget, since its inception. This contribution was offered in recognition of the significant health and wellbeing outcomes that can be achieved through high quality, prevention focussed information, advice and guidance provision. In the final year this element of the service's potential will be the focus of service delivery.
- 6.17 As at February 2019, the continuation of the BCF contribution is unconfirmed. This is due to unforeseen delays in the administrative process beyond the Council's control, a result of a broader review and planning for the future of the Haringey Clinical Commissioning Group's budget, including the Better Care Fund. However there has been clear indication that the contribution will continue at the same value for the final year of the contract. In the interests of ensuring the contract extension is promptly completed, the Council has agreed to underwrite the risk that the BCF's £55,000 contribution will not materialise. If necessary, the contribution will be secured from within the Council's Housing Related Support budgets.
- 6.18 **Related previous decisions**
This decision to extend the Information, Advice and Guidance contract with Citizen's Advice Bureau is related to the Cabinet decision to award the original contract on 15th December 2015.

7. Contribution to strategic outcomes

- 7.1 The provision of Information, Advice and Guidance services contributes significantly to the Council's strategic outcomes under the draft Borough Plan 2019 – 2023:
- 7.2 Priority 1: Housing, outcome 2: *We will work together to prevent people from becoming homeless, and to reduce existing homelessness.*
The IAG service significantly contributes to delivery of this outcome by providing information 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.
- 7.3 Priority 2: People, outcome 9: *Strong communities where people look out for and care for one another.*
The Haringey Advice Partnership, led by the lead organisation is made up of organisations with strong foundations within communities in Haringey. Service

delivery frequently makes use of peer support in order to achieve positive outcomes. In addition, the services emphasise building capacity within clients, which can then contribute to clients going on to support others around them in responding to challenges they face.

- 7.4 Extending this contract with an annual value of £816,000 represents a £50,000 saving against the original contract value. This saving will make an important contribution to the requirements of the Council's Medium Term Financial Strategy, whilst also ensuring the quality of service delivery is maintained.

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

8. Finance

- 8.1 The £816,000 cost of the contract extension in the period from 3rd April 2019 to 2nd April 2020 will be met from existing resources within the Commissioning department.
- 8.2 The contract extension has been agreed at a cost which is £50,000 lower than the existing annual contract value. This £50,000 will either be a saving to the department or will offset the potential loss of income in the event that £55,000 BCF funding is not secured.

9. Procurement

- 9.1 The provision comes under schedule 3 of the Public Contract Regulations 2015. This requested contract modification would usually necessitate a further competitive process unless it meets one of the several requirements under s72 9.2. The inclusion of the extension or 'review clause' was provided for in the tender documents; the contract extension may therefore be granted without a further competitive process.
- 9.3 This request also meets the requirements of CSO 10.02 and the Procurement Code of Practice. The Contractor is providing a good, responsive, accessible service which demonstrates it meets set targets in a payment by results contract model. Almost 40% of service provision is utilised by older residents who are disabled or who have long term health related issues and require advice to help them stay out of debt and importantly continue to live in their own homes.
- 9.4 During the contract extension service will continue to monitor the contract to ensure it continues to meet service outcomes/targets and mitigate against any service delivery or performance risks.

10. Legal

- 10.1 The Assistant Director of Corporate Governance notes the contents of the report.

10.2 Pursuant to CSO 10.02.1(b), Cabinet may authorise the extension of a contract if the value of the contract is £500,000 or more and as such Cabinet has power to authorise the extension of the Contract in this Report.

10.3 The Assistant Director of Corporate Governance sees no legal reasons preventing the approval of the recommendations in the report.

11. Equality

11.1 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.

11.2 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.

11.3 The decision is to extend the existing contracts for the provision of Information, Advice and Guidance services. Extension of the contract is necessary to allow for review and recommissioning of services in the longer term.

11.4 Those most likely to be affected by the decision are service users and potential service users of information, advice and guidance services. The nature of the broad range of service delivery methods of these services means that the range of service users is also broad, with service engagement ranging from accessing information on a service website to longer term casework, for example appealing a disability benefit decision.

11.5 Information, Advice and Guidance services provide support to ensure that individuals are able to make informed choices on decisions that affect their lives and build resilience to prevent issues from deteriorating or reoccurring. Service level data from the existing service shows that service users reflect the demographic makeup of the borough of Haringey.

11.6 This decision to extend this contract will help ensure that the Council continues to address known inequalities that affect individuals with protected characteristics relating to age, sex, race, and disability. Accordingly, the decision represents progress to eliminate discrimination and advance equality of opportunity.

12. Use of Appendices

Not applicable.

13. Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985

13.1 Background papers:

Haringey Homelessness Strategy (2018)

<http://www.minutes.haringey.gov.uk/documents/s100152/Appendix1HomelessnessStrategyv24.pdf>

Award of contract for Information, Advice and Guidance, December 2015

<http://www.minutes.haringey.gov.uk/documents/s82604/Cabinet%20Report%20-%20IAG%20-%20Open.pdf>

13.2 This report contains no exempt information.