

REPORT TO: Executive Board
DATE: 21st January 2020
REPORTING OFFICER: Strategic Director, People
PORTFOLIO: Health & Wellbeing
SUBJECT: Age UK – Mid Mersey : Direct Award
WARD(S): Borough-wide

1.0 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

1.1 To seek a waiver in compliance with Procurement Standing Order 1.14.4 (v) of part 3, for the granting of a Direct Award for the delivery of a Wellbeing Model from Age UK – Mid Mersey from 1st April 2021 to 31st March 2024.

2.0 RECOMMENDATION: That Executive Board

- i) **Note the contents of the report and associated appendix; and**
- ii) **Approve a waiver in compliance with Procurement Standing Order 1.14.4 (v) of part 3.**

3.0 SUPPORTING INFORMATION

3.1 Age UK Mid-Mersey play a vital role in providing older people in Halton with the necessary support that helps promote their wellbeing and independence. Their focus is on supporting older people to continue to live fulfilling lives in their own homes and to enable older people to live in an environment that promotes personal safety, social engagement and activity, maximises wellbeing and reduces the ill effects of social isolation and the adverse impacts of ageing. Age UK – Mid Mersey are considered to be the ‘go to’ charity for older people in Halton.

3.2 Age UK Mid-Mersey has been providing information, participation, social inclusion, safe and well schemes and older people engagement in the Borough for a number of years and these have been funded via two contracts with the Council and additionally funded through the local and national Age UK charity.

3.3 The current 3 year contracts that we have with Age UK Mid-Mersey to deliver the above services are due to expire on 31st March 2021 and although we do not want to radically change the provision of services we commission from them, we do recognise that the services provided cannot remain static and must adapt as people’s needs change. The impact of the coronavirus pandemic has been a prime example of this.

3.4 As such, we are seeking approval to provide a Direct Award to Age UK – Mid Mersey, over the next 3 years, to provide their Wellbeing Model within the borough

which will:-

- Provide a single point of access and unified approach to Wellbeing via a robust screening tool for all clients that will identify the needs of the client in relation to *Loneliness & Isolation, Mental Health & Wellbeing, Safeguarding and Accessibility to services*;
- Identify risk indicators to allow proactive intervention/referrals to appropriate support;
- Provide a range of support based on client needs, for example; Social Inclusion, Helping Hand, Health & Wellbeing Activities, Digital buddies, Veteran support, Information and Advice (Warm Homes & Home Energy, Benefit Checks), Wellbeing Support, Volunteering Opportunities and Engagement Groups;
- Ensure clients are signposted to appropriate support that cannot be provided via Age UK Mid Mersey;
- Provide intelligence for partners and shared learning; and
- Allow effective consultations with older people, local stakeholders and Age UK National to address gaps in service/provision and to inform and shape service development across our sector. Allow collaborative working with partners to extend our reach and broaden our support.

As part of the contract, Age UK – Mid Mersey will work during the course of the contract to enhance their offer of support to include Digital Inclusion, Helping Hand, eHealth innovations and Loss and Bereavement Support.

Attached at **Appendix 1** are details of the Client Support Pathway and further details of how the Wellbeing Model would be delivered.

- 3.5 Due to the long standing presence that Age UK - Mid Mersey has had within the Borough, the reputation it has built up over the years and the well-established relationships that they have with health, social care and the local voluntary and community sector, rather than retendering for this contract, which could result in the Council foregoing the clear benefits that having well established networks etc. in place brings, it is recommended that the Council continue to commission services from Age UK – Mid Mersey in order to support positive outcomes for older people within the Borough.

The service staff have a sound local knowledge of the population, geography and voluntary and community sectors in Halton and have used this to help people achieve personalised outcomes.

- 3.6 To ensure that the service delivered is of the necessary quality, we have robust contract management arrangements in place, which consists of the quarterly provision of both quantitative and qualitative information, regular reporting through to Halton Borough Council's Adult Social Services Senior Management Team and half-yearly monitoring meetings with the provider.

- 3.7 A waiver in compliance of Procurement Standing Order 1.14.4 (v) of part 3 is sought to award Age UK – Mid Mersey a contract for a three-year period from 1st April 2021 to 31st March 2024.

4.0 **POLICY IMPLICATIONS**

4.1 Continuing this service supports the council in its ongoing development of out of hospital services with NHS Halton Clinical Commissioning Group and the wider health and social care sector.

5.0 **FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

5.1 Waiver in compliance with Procurement Standing Order 1.14.4 Non-Emergency Procedures (exceeding a value threshold of £100,000) on the basis that compliance with Standing Orders is not practicable because the Council's requirements can only be delivered by a particular supplier (1.14.4 (v)).

5.2 Awarding a contract to the existing provider would support continuity of provision for older people within the Borough.

5.3 The waiver would be effective for the period 1st April 2021 – 31st March 2024.

5.4 The total financial cost to the authority is £168,724 per annum. Total contract value over the three-year term is £506,172.

5.5 The Board will note that as part of awarding the last 3-year main contract to Age UK - Mid Mersey, the contract value for years 2 and 3 of the contract were reduced by 10% each year.

It is felt that no further funding reduction is currently achievable if an effective service is to continue to be provided to meet the required needs of older people within the Borough. Therefore, it is recommended that the yearly costs over the course of the direct award remain the same.

5.6 The cost of this contract can be met from within existing budget allocations.

6.0 **IMPLICATIONS FOR THE COUNCIL'S PRIORITIES**

6.1 **Children & Young People in Halton**

None identified.

6.2 **Employment, Learning & Skills in Halton**

Age UK Mid Mersey provides volunteering opportunities and associated training and development opportunities for residents of Halton.

6.3 **A Healthy Halton**

This service makes an important contribution to the health and social care system in Halton.

6.4 **A Safer Halton**

None identified.

6.5 **Halton's Urban Renewal**

None identified.

7.0 **RISK ANALYSIS**

7.1 This contract falls below the current EU Light Touch Regime threshold of £663,540 and subsequently the risk of challenge will be negligible.

7.2 The Service will continue to be monitored to ensure that the Council and Halton residents receive value for money.

8.0 **EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY ISSUES**

8.1 None identified.

9.0 **REASON(S) FOR DECISION**

9.1 Executive Board approval is required to direct award this contract.

10.0 **ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED AND REJECTED**

10.1 Retendering this contract which would result in the council foregoing the clear benefits that having well established networks and relationships in place brings in developing services and supporting Older People in the Borough.

11.0 **IMPLEMENTATION DATE**

11.1 1st April 2021

12.0 **LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS UNDER SECTION 100D OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972**

12.1 Not applicable.