

Report to:	EXECUTIVE CABINET
Date:	24 January 2024
Executive Member:	Councillor John Taylor – Executive Member Adult Social Care, Homelessness and Inclusivity
Reporting Officer:	Stephanie Butterworth, Director of Adult Services
Subject:	CONTRACT AWARD FOR THE PROVISION OF SUPPORT FOR OLDER PEOPLE
Report Summary:	<p>On 24 August 2022, approval was given by Executive Cabinet to extend the current contract for the period of 1 April 2020 to 31 March 2023 for a period of 12 months to allow for an options appraisal of the different procurement options available to be considered with the support of STAR Procurement.</p> <p>Following the appraisal and the completion of a soft market test process, this report seeks approval by Executive Cabinet to direct award the contract to the current provider namely; Age UK Tameside as detailed in the report.</p>
Recommendations:	That Executive Cabinet be recommended to approve the direct award of the contract for the period 1 April 2024 to 31 March 2027 with an option to extend for 12 months to the incumbent provider namely: Age UK Tameside.
Corporate Plan:	<p>The proposals align with the Living Well, Working Well and Aging Well programmes for action. The service also links into the Council's priorities: -</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Help people to live independent lifestyles supported by responsible communities. • Improve the health and wellbeing of residents. • Protect the most vulnerable.
Financial Implications: (Authorised by the statutory Section 151 Officer & Chief Finance Officer)	<p>The Provision of Support for Older People budget of £0.156m in 2023/24 is financed by the Council general fund.</p> <p>The Directorate are requesting approval for the direct award of the provision, for the 3 year period 1 April 2024 to 31 March 2027, to Age UK Tameside. The annual contract value for 2024/25 will be £0.151m plus inflation, the value of which will be included within the 2024/25 Council budget that is scheduled for approval at the Council meeting on 27 February 2024. The confirmed contract value must be contained within the existing budget allocation of £0.156m.</p> <p>Although the contract is proposed for a period of 3 years, appropriate break clauses will be included within any future contract arrangements to ensure that the commissioned service can be altered, should it be required, to mitigate any adverse financial impact on the Council.</p> <p>Any uplift in commissioned contract values due to inflation, demand or service configuration will need to be taken into account within the</p>

service specification to ensure that it is affordable within the available annual budget allocation for the contract duration.

It is essential that value for money is evaluated as part of the direct award process and that this is clearly evidenced and retained for section 151 officer assurance.

**Legal Implications:
(Authorised by the
Borough Solicitor)**

The report indicates that STAR procurement have been engaged to ensure that a lawful procurement process takes place. It is noted that a direct award is proposed. There is an exemption to make such an award within the constitution at Paragraph 9.3 g. of the Contract Procedure Rules whereby if the ASO can demonstrate that no genuine competition can be obtained in respect of the purchase of particular Supplies, Services or execution of Works then, if such is the case, an exemption may be granted.

Risk Management:

There will be a continued dialogue between commissioners and the provider to ensure that best value is delivered against the contract resource with a view to working towards service developments. These will be delivered through contract performance management.

Access to Information:

The background papers relating to this report can be inspected by contacting the report writer Nicola Carter:



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1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 On 24 August 2022 Executive Cabinet approved an extension to the existing contract for the provision of support to older people for the period 1 April 2020 to 31 March 2023 for a period of 12 months to 31 March 2024 to enable time for a review of the contract to take place and to undertake an appraisal of the different procurement options available.
- 1.2 The annual budget allocation for 2023/2024 for this contract is £0.151m however, an annual uplift may apply to the contract value following the setting of the Council's budget and taking into account national announcements and indicators.
- 1.3 A Soft Market Test commenced 21 July 2023 and closed 4 August 2023. This was completed fully in accordance with Tameside Metropolitan Borough Council Procurement Standing Orders and in conjunction with public procurement requirements via the CHEST (North West procurement portal).
- 1.4 The intention is to award a contract for a duration of three years commencing 1 April 2024 with an expiry date of 31 March 2027, with an option to extend for 12 months.

2. SUPPORT FOR OLDER PEOPLE TO STAY AT HOME

- 2.1 The current service is delivered by Age UK Tameside at their premises at 131 Katherine Street Ashton – under- Lyne, in the community and on the telephone.
- 2.2 The aim of the commissioned service is to support both the promotion of independence and maintenance of services and also the development of new initiatives in furtherance of agreed preventive principles. Central to this approach is reducing the development of a range of social problems, improving the quality of life for older people in Tameside and relieving pressure on statutory services.
- 2.3 The service comprises an Advice and Information Service, a Dementia Service, volunteering opportunities and a Community Support Service.
- 2.4 The Advice and Information Service provides a service to people requiring support on a range of issues. The service provides advice and information on the increasing range of care and support services to help people exercise choice and control.
- 2.5 The Dementia Service provides 'drop-in' sessions and 1:1 support to individuals and Carers living with Dementia or signs and symptoms. It provides access and opportunity for early intervention and brings together local services under one roof to provide advice on the range of practical and emotional support available in the Borough.
- 2.6 The Community Support service aims to support all vulnerable people, from all client groups, aged 50+, who may be at risk of isolation or are struggling to maintain daily living, to regain their independence, reconnect with the community, develop skills, have a safe discharge from hospital and regain confidence etc. in order to live the life that they wish.
- 2.7 The service delivers access to support, 50 weeks a year.
- 2.8 The Service will deliver an outcome model based on preventing or relieving sickness, disease or suffering in older people (whether emotional, mental or physical); promoting equality and diversity; promoting the human rights of older people in accordance with the universal declaration of human rights; assisting older people in need be it reason of ill-health, disability, financial hardship, social exclusion or other disadvantage.

3. DETAILS OF PROPOSED CONTRACTUAL ARRANGEMENTS

- 3.1 Tameside Adult Services in its role as lead commissioner is looking to award a three year contract, which is expected to commence on 1 April 2024 and expire on 31 March 2027.

4. PROCUREMENT APPROACH USED

- 4.1 A Soft Market Test commenced on 21 July 2023 and closed on 4 August 2023. The exercise was completed fully in accordance with Tameside Metropolitan Borough Council Procurement Standing Orders and in conjunction with public procurement requirements via the CHEST (the North West procurement portal).
- 4.2 The approach used two questionnaires. The questionnaires were separate to encourage applications from a wider range of providers.

The Community Support Questionnaire

This included eight quality questions exploring: experience of delivering buddying; befriending and other Community support (including support after discharge from hospital); outcomes focussed response to loss of independence or confidence; supporting people experiencing loss; bereavement and other life transitions; approaches to outreach; knowledge of and connection to the community and accessibility.

The Core Services Questionnaire

This included five quality questions exploring: provision of Advice and Information; provision of volunteering opportunities; supporting people living with Dementia/the signs and symptoms of cognitive decline and their carers.

5. EVALUATION METHOD AND OUTCOME

- 5.1 A previous Soft Market Test completed in 2020 confirmed Age UK Tameside as the only local provider able to deliver this service. In order to explore and potentially diversify the market a further Soft Market Test was conducted opening on 21 July 2023 and closing on 4 August 2023.
- 5.2 The Soft Market Test included a full specification of the service to be provided based on a maximum budget of £0.151m. The budget is based on the value for 2023/2024 – Standard contract terms and conditions allow for an annual uplift as determined by the Council which will be applied to the new contract value from April 2024.
- 5.3 Again, as in 2020, the exercise identified that there is no genuine competition in the market to deliver this service and that Age UK Tameside is the only local provider with the skills, infrastructure and capacity to deliver the requirements of the contract.
- 5.4 Following advice from STAR Procurement, it was agreed that an exemption request should be completed and permission is therefore sought from Executive Cabinet to direct award the above contract to the incumbent provider Age UK Tameside for the contract period of three years from 1 April 2024 to 31 March 2027 with an option to extend for 12 months.

6. CONCLUSION

- 6.1 A key aspect of continuing to partner with a nationally recognised brand in provision of support for older people is its accessibility; older people know the Age UK brand and readily approach for support, information and advice.
- 6.2 The support and advice offered to older people in Tameside by Age UK reduces demand into core services such as adult's social care and the hospital, and also mitigates other challenges such as financial difficulty, which is particularly important in the light of the current cost of living crisis.

7. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 7.1 As set out at the front of the report.