

## READING BOROUGH COUNCIL

### REPORT BY DIRECTOR OF ENVIRONMENT AND NEIGHBOURHOOD SERVICES

TO:	HOUSING, NEIGHBOURHOODS AND LEISURE COMMITTEE		
DATE:	19 NOVEMBER 2014	AGENDA ITEM:	12
TITLE:	TENDER FOR FLOATING SUPPORT SERVICE		
LEAD COUNCILLOR:	COUNCILLOR DAVIES	PORTFOLIO:	HOUSING
SERVICE:	HOUSING	WARDS:	BOROUGHWIDE
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#### 1. PURPOSE OF REPORT AND EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1 This report seeks authorisation to enter into a new contract for the Floating Support Service following the conclusion of the procurement process.
- 1.2 The purpose of the Floating Support Service is to reduce the number of vulnerable households that could become homeless in Reading, by assisting them to sustain their tenancies. Wherever possible and appropriate to do so, the service will enable residents to remain in their own homes and gain the skills required to sustain their tenancies effectively into the future.
- 1.3 An Equalities Impact Assessment has been carried out, and this is attached at Appendix 1.

#### 2. RECOMMENDED ACTION

- 2.1 That the Director of Environment and Neighbourhood Services, in consultation with the Lead Councillor for Housing and the Head of Finance and the Head of Legal and Democratic Services be authorised to award the contract for the provision of a Floating Support Service in Reading for a period of three years with an option to extend up to a maximum of three years, to the successful tenderer in accordance with the Council's Contract Procedure Rules.

#### 3. POLICY CONTEXT

- 3.1 In *Making Every Contact Count* (August 2012) the Government stressed that everyone who is at risk of homelessness should get help at the earliest possible stage to prevent them from losing their home. The Floating Support Service will complement and support the Council's Housing Services to help residents with support needs to remain in their own homes and reduce the need to access emergency or temporary accommodation.

- 3.2 In December 2012 Cabinet (Minute 86 refers) approved an extension of the contracts for floating support until 31 March 2015, with a further one year extension option if required.
- 3.3 In September 2014 a report via a Decision Book set out the decision to extend the current provision of floating support for up to 6 months from April 2015 to September 2015 whilst a procurement exercise was conducted.
- 3.4 In September 2014 Policy Committee (Minute 32 refers) approved a proposal to reduce costs through retendering floating support contracts for single homeless people as a part of wider savings and income proposals.

#### 4. THE PROPOSAL

##### 4.1 Current Position

4.1.1 The Council currently commissions housing-related floating support services from three external providers. The option for an extension to these contracts has been exercised from April 2014 for up to 6 months, ending on 30 September 2015. However, subject to the anticipated completion date of the retendering exercise these services will be decommissioned after the first three months of the extension period.

4.1.2 Floating support is delivered in residents' own homes and in the community. It is available to families and single people with any type of tenure, including owner-occupiers, private sector and social housing tenants and people living with friends or family. The purpose of the service is to help residents with support needs to sustain their accommodation through developing their capacity to live independently. This can include support to manage money and reduce debt, get help for drug and alcohol problems or access employment, education and training opportunities.

##### 4.2 Option Proposed

4.2.1 It is proposed that the new contract will be awarded to the winning tenderer in March 2015 at the completion of the tender evaluation process. This course of action will allow the minimum anticipated lead-in period for the implementation of the new contract arrangements. Delegated authority will therefore be required in order to award the contract within the required timeframe for the successful completion of the tender exercise. The anticipated contract start date would be 1 July 2015 for a period of three years, with an option to extend up to a maximum of three years, in accordance with the Council's Contract Procedure Rules.

4.2.2 The current contract arrangements have been extended up to the end of September 2015, although subject to the successful completion of the tendering exercise the target is to decommission the contracts at the end of June 2015. It is proposed that a detailed implementation plan will be agreed for the three months to June so that there is no disruption to the service. It is anticipated that the Transfer of Undertakings (Protection of Employment) Regulations 2006 (TUPE) are likely to apply to this contract.

#### 5. CONTRIBUTION TO STRATEGIC AIMS

5.1 This proposal will contribute to the strategic aim "*To promote equality, social inclusion and a safe and healthy environment for all*" by ensuring that a quality service is provided to vulnerable residents in Reading that is positively developed to meet the needs of service users.

## 6. COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND INFORMATION

- 6.1 The engagement and information activities undertaken for the development of this service began in 2011. Consultation with service users and providers led to the development of detailed service monitoring arrangements so that an understanding of customer needs and best practice for meeting those needs could be identified.
- 6.2 Specific consultation activities regarding floating support have been included as part of wider and on-going consultation on the Homelessness Strategy which has involved a number of events with internal and external stakeholders.
- 6.3 Stakeholders and all of the current providers were asked to contribute their ideas on how floating support should be focused and areas of improvement for, and achievement within, services.
- 6.4 This feedback has shaped the Council's requirements for floating support and for the tender evaluation process, for example the focus on:
- early intervention in the prevention of homelessness
  - improved access and referral arrangements
  - embedding partnership working in support provision
  - improving capacity of available resources by innovative service delivery, such as by providing support workshops.
- 6.5 In order to assist existing and new potential providers, a 'Market Engagement Event' was held in September 2014, to go through the Council's requirements and the timetable for the tender process. This meeting was attended by 26 organisations, including representatives of the three current external providers. A summary of the key areas from the Service Specification was shared, followed by an opportunity to ask questions and give comments.

## 7. EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

- 7.1 *Under the Equality Act 2010, Section 149, a public authority must, in the exercise of its functions, have due regard to the need to—*
- *eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under this Act;*
  - *advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it;*
  - *foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.*

The Equality duty is relevant to this decision. The Floating Support Service to Prevent Homelessness is a contract re-letting. Any changes to the service as a result of the re-letting and a new Service Specification must be assessed so that the impact of the proposed changes can be fully understood.

- 7.2 An Equality Impact Assessment has been completed and is attached at Appendix 1. The assessment found that whilst there may be a differential impact based on disability and age, this was assessed to be a positive one and there were no negative impacts identified.

## 8. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 8.1 It will be necessary to enter into a contract with the winning tenderer.
- 8.2 Whilst the current EU and UK procurement regulations do not require contracts for health and social services to be advertised in the Official Journal of the European

Union (OJEU) RBC in this case decided to publish a voluntary contract notice in OJEU (Part B Service). A two-stage restricted tendering procedure has been applied which is compliant with the Public Contract Regulations 2006 (as amended) and the Council's Contract Procedure Rules.

## 9. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

9.1 It is estimated that the total annual value of this contract is £396,276. The anticipated service start date is 1 July 2015 therefore the expenditure in 2015/16 is proportionally less.

	2015/16 £	2016/17 £	2017/18 £
Employee costs			
Other running costs - payments to service provider	297,207	396,276	396,276
Capital financings costs			
<b>Expenditure</b>	<b>297,207</b>	<b>396,276</b>	<b>396,276</b>
Income from: Fees and charges Grant funding (specify) Other income			
<b>Total Income</b>			
<b>Net Cost(+)/saving (-)</b>	<b>(+) 297,207</b>	<b>(+) 396,276</b>	<b>(+) 396,276</b>

## 9.2 Value for money

9.2.1 The re-let for the floating support contract will result in a reduction in cost, including through increasing the use of volunteers to maximise support hours, reducing hourly support costs and increasing group support where appropriate.

## 10. BACKGROUND PAPERS

- Cabinet Report "Contracts and Commissioning for Adult Social Care Services 2013-14", 3 December 2012
- Decision Book "Contract Extensions For Housing-Related Floating Support Services 2015", 12 September 2014
- Policy Committee Report "Savings and Income Proposals", 22 September 2014