

REPORT TO: CABINET

DATE: 13 SEPTEMBER 2018

TITLE: AWARD OF CONTRACT FOR ADVICE SERVICES

PORTFOLIO HOLDER: COUNCILLOR EUGENIE HARVEY, PORTFOLIO HOLDER FOR COMMUNITY AND WELLBEING

LEAD OFFICER: JANE GREER, HEAD OF COMMUNITY WELLBEING (01279) 446406

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This is a Key Decision
It is on the Forward Plan as Decision Number I008161
Call-in Procedures may apply
This decision will affect no ward specifically.

RECOMMENDED that:

- A** Contractor A is awarded the contract for delivery of Advice Services for a period of three years from 1 October 2018 at £90,000 per annum subject to paragraph 7 of the report.
- B** Delegated authority is given to the Head of Community Wellbeing, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Community and Wellbeing, to make the necessary contractual arrangements.

REASON FOR DECISION

- A** Proceeding on this basis will enable the Council to deliver its commitment to Harlow residents in terms of providing access to quality advice services.

BACKGROUND

1. The Council invited bids for the provision of Advice Services to be delivered to the residents of Harlow by a suitably experienced and qualified/certified/registered organisation.

2. Core Services will comprise one-to-one advice, casework and advocacy work for residents on money management and debt advice; housing and welfare benefits as a minimum requirement of the contract.
3. In addition to the Core Service, the Council invited organisations to identify a range of additional services that could be delivered to:
 - a) Alleviate the impact of welfare reform;
 - b) Deliver benefit take-up campaigns;
 - c) Provide relevant information leaflets and booklets;
 - d) Provide training and/or outreach work for voluntary and community sector groups on welfare rights and advice issues; and
 - e) Supply the Council with information and advice in relation to welfare rights and advice issues.

ISSUES/PROPOSALS

4. Two tenders were received by the deadline and these were evaluated on the basis of 100 percent quality against pre-determined criteria included in the invitation to tender document.
5. Contractor A submitted a bid that achieved a total quality score of 420 out of 500 and the unsuccessful bidder scored a total of 317.5 points.
6. The bid demonstrates that Contractor A is capable of delivering the Core Services as described in the project specification as well as a range of additional services as per paragraph 3 above.
7. Without prejudice to the Council's rights and subject to a full service review at 24 months calculated from the contract commencement date, the Council may, at its sole full discretion, grant an extension to the contract of not more than 12 months.
8. The Council will operate a 'balanced scorecard' approach to performance management and will work with Contractor A to develop performance measurements and targets across the range of services.
9. The Council will expect benchmarking to be implemented against performance and the provider will be required to submit this information quarterly, with meetings also to initially take place quarterly and six-monthly thereafter.
10. It is proposed that Contractor A is awarded the contract for a period of three years with effect from 1 October 2018 with a budget of £90,000 per annum.

IMPLICATIONS

Place (Includes Sustainability)

None specific.

Author: Jane Greer, Head of Community Wellbeing, on behalf of Graeme Bloomer, Head of Place

Finance (Includes ICT)

The implications are set out within the report with the cost of service being met from the Council's Discretionary Service Fund.

Author: Simon Freeman, Head of Finance

Housing

The continued access to advice supports tenants/residents in managing and maintaining their tenancies and provides an independent assessment to support the Council's income management process.

Author: Andrew Murray, Head of Housing

Community Wellbeing (Includes Equalities and Social Inclusion)

As contained within the report.

Author: Jane Greer, Head of Community Wellbeing

Governance (Includes HR)

The recommendation reflects the outcome of a detailed a robust exercise to identify an Advice Services provider. By following such procedures and awarding accordingly the Council is protected from challenge.

Author: Colleen O'Boyle, Interim Head of Governance

Appendices

None.

Background Papers

None.

Glossary of terms/abbreviations used

None.