

REPORT TO: CABINET

DATE: 28 JANUARY 2016

TITLE: SUPPORTED HOUSING OUT OF HOURS
EMERGENCY RESPONSE SERVICE

PORTFOLIO HOLDER: COUNCILLOR ROD TRUAN

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This is a Key Decision.
It is on the Forward Plan as Decision Number I004992.
This decision may be subject to Call-in procedures.
This decision will affect no ward specifically.

RECOMMENDED that the tender submitted by Contractor A is accepted for an out of hours emergency response services on the basis of Option 2 as specified in the report.

REASON FOR DECISION

- A** To provide an efficient and cost effective service that will continue to assist service users to remain and live independently in their own homes.

BACKGROUND

1. The Council's Supported Housing Service provides a housing-related support service to 16 Sheltered Housing Schemes and one Extra-Care Housing Scheme for which Harlow Council is the landlord, plus approximately 1,200 telecare emergency alarm systems installed in individual properties throughout the town.
2. The Service currently provides responsive out of hours, weekend and bank holiday housing related support, which assists service users to remain and live independently in their own homes.
3. There are many difficulties around service delivery and lone working. Staff feel very isolated, fearful of their safety and vulnerable having to go out

alone at night, even though the Council provides appropriate personal protection equipment and lone worker monitoring systems, staff continue to find this element of their role stressful and challenging, leading to an increase in work-related stress and increased absenteeism.

4. There are an increasing number of nights each month when there is no capacity to deliver the service through sickness or annual leave as other members of staff are unable to provide cover and carry out additional work.
5. There is no consistency in service provision due to the compensatory rest scheme which exists for Officers carrying out the out of hours service. Officers do not attend work the following morning if they are contacted after midnight as compensatory rest in actual hours is given on the next working day following any call-outs. This results in reduced resources during the day which adds to the pressure on staff and their ability to perform their duties.
6. Outsourcing the out of hours service will give greater stability when delivering the daytime services. It will remove the uncertainty around whether a member of staff will be in work the morning following an overnight standby shift, relieving the burden of their colleagues who have to carry out their role whilst they are not at work.
7. Friends, neighbours or next of kin will be required to attend any emergency call-outs between midnight and 8.30am. The emergency services will be called out in circumstances where there is no local support.
8. This report on the procurement process was presented to the Scrutiny Committee on 8 December 2015. The details of the Committee's consideration are given in the 'Communications from Committees' agenda item for this meeting.
9. The successful service provider will be expected to deliver a high quality customer focused service to the standard currently being delivered by the Supported Housing Team and in line with the Telecare Services Association accredited code of practice.
10. Tenants will continue to use their alarm system as they currently do and the call handling provider will process the calls to the appropriate responder, depending on the nature of the call. This could be emergency services, next of kin or the out of hours response provider.
11. A robust handover process is in place to ensure that any follow up actions or information are carried out and regular surveys will be carried out to ensure the service provision remains at the standard expected by the Council.

PROCUREMENT PROCESS

12. Tenders were initially invited on the basis of Option 3 shown below and no tenders were received by the deadline. Following discussions with service providers, it became clear that the market was not in a position to provide a full service and a further tendering exercise was undertaken against a revised specification.
13. Five organisations were invited to submit a tender based on the three options shown below and one compliant bid was received by the deadline of 19 October 2015.
14. The tender submitted by Contractor A has been evaluated against pre-determined criteria included in the invitation to tender documentation on the basis of 70% quality and 30% price. The qualitative assessment has been measured against a series of questions raised within the tender documents that cover the following themes:
 - a) Management structure, qualifications and experience
 - b) Business continuity
 - c) Employment opportunities and benefits to local community, Living Wage
 - d) Performance indicators
 - e) Helpdesk
 - f) Equalities issues
 - g) Training
 - h) Lone working
 - i) Disclosure and barring checks
 - j) Added value/enhancements to the services.
15. Contractor A scored highly and was awarded 430 quality points out of 500. All support workers will undergo disclosure and barring checks every three years and the organisation will become a Living Wage Employer in April 2016.
16. Tenderers were given the opportunity to price for one, or more than one of the following options:

Option	Hours of Working	Comments	Cost £'s Per Annum
1	Monday to Friday 5pm to 10pm Saturday, Sunday and Bank Holidays 8.30 am to 10pm	Option 1 provides a service up to 10pm. However, call volumes remain high until 12 midnight. This would realise a saving of £17,788 p.a. but would reduce the number of hours when a	£40,000

		response service is available.	
2	Monday to Friday 5pm to midnight Saturday, Sunday and Bank Holidays 8.30am to midnight	Option 2 provides the option of delivering the service when the call volumes are highest whilst remaining within the budget whilst making a saving of £7,788 p.a. Option 2 will offer a service that exceeds the services provided by neighbouring councils. From midnight until 8.30am, family members, friends, neighbours and the emergency services are able to provide assistance. Statistics confirm that call volumes during this period are extremely low.	£50,000
3	Option 3 provides a cost for the existing 24 hour services delivered to the current model. Total costs:	Further efficiency savings of £38,749 would need to be made to deliver this option.	£46,537.50 £50,000 <hr/> £96,537.50
4	No service provision	Not delivering the out of hours service would deliver a cost saving to the Council of £57,788 p.a.	

17. The out of hours response service is delivered at the sole discretion of the Council as it is not a statutory service. It is not provided by all local councils and neighbouring councils such as Epping and Uttlesford have opted not to deliver a response service.
18. The number of calls received reduces substantially after midnight, averaging three calls per month compared to 14 calls per month between the hours of 5pm and 12 midnight. Option 2 will provide the service users with cover from 8.30am until midnight.
19. Only one bid has been received, from Contractor A, despite two separate tendering exercises being undertaken. However, the Supported Housing Manager is confident that Contractor A is capable of delivering the services to the standard required by the Council. In addition, Contractor A is

currently working with the Council to deliver a successful extra care service for the frail elderly at Sumners Farm Close.

20. It is proposed that the contract will commence on Monday, 7 March 2016. The contract will be for an initial period of two years with an option to extend the contract, at the sole discretion of the Council, for up to two years.

IMPLICATIONS

Place Services (includes Sustainability)

None specific.

Author: **Graeme Bloomer, Head of Place**

Finance (Includes ICT)

The financial implications are set out in the report. If the recommendation is approved the cost of the new service will be delivered below the existing budget and will produce a saving for the Council.

Author: **Simon Freeman, Head of Finance**

Housing

The contract award will maintain the emergency response service and provide certainty with the support required to frail and elderly tenants, ensuring continuity of the service.

Author: **Andrew Murray, Head of Housing**

Community Wellbeing (includes Equalities and Social Inclusion)

None specific

Author: **Jane Greer, Head of Community Wellbeing**

Governance (includes HR)

The Council by following the procurement process will have reduced the possibility of a successful challenge to the decision to award the contract to the sole bidder.

Author: **Amanda Julian, Legal Services Manager on behalf of Brian Keane, Head of Governance**

Background Papers

None