

CABINET MEETING – 13th July 2023

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY SHEET – PART I

Title of Report: Procurement of a solution for the provision of community support services with the Voluntary and Community Sector.

Author(s): Executive Director of Health, Housing and Communities

Purpose of Report:

To seek cabinet approval to procure and establish a procurement solution to enable the engagement and commissioning of services by the Council from the voluntary and community sector.

Description of Decision:

Cabinet is recommended to authorise the Executive Director of Health, Housing and Communities in consultation with the Director of Finance, Leader of the Council and Portfolio Holder for Vibrant City, to procure a solution and award subsequent framework agreements for community-based services including crisis support.

Is the decision consistent with the Budget/Policy Framework? *Yes

If not, Council approval is required to change the Budget/Policy Framework

Suggested reason(s) for Decision:

The proposal aims to ensure that there is a compliant procurement process in place to maximise the work and services of the voluntary sector in Sunderland. The Council are committed to working with the VCS in many areas of activity that are needed to be delivered locally and a formal procurement arrangement will ensure that the Council can work with the VCS in a structured and compliant way.

Where the aggregate value of the intended procurement is estimated to be equal to or over £500,000 Cabinet approval is required prior to advertising the opportunity.

Alternative options to be considered and recommended to be rejected:

Not to have a procurement arrangement.

This was considered but rejected as there is a clear need, focus and commitment to delivering programmes and projects locally through the VCS. Therefore, a formal procurement solution is necessary.

Impacts analysed;

Equality **Privacy** **Sustainability** **Crime and Disorder**

Is the Decision consistent with the Council's co-operative values?	Yes
Is this a "Key Decision" as defined in the Constitution?	Yes
Is it included in the 28 day Notice of Decisions?	Yes

PROCUREMENT OF FRAMEWORK WITH THE VOLUNTARY AND COMMUNITY SECTOR

Report of Executive Director of Health, Housing and Communities

1.0 Purpose of the Report

- 1.1 To seek cabinet approval to procure and establish a solution to enable the engagement and commissioning of services from the voluntary and community sector (“VCS”).

2.0 Description of Decision (Recommendations)

- 2.1 Cabinet is recommended to authorise the Executive Director of Health, Housing and Communities in consultation with the Director of Finance, Leader of the Council and Portfolio Holder for Vibrant City, to procure a solution and award subsequent framework agreements for community-based services including crisis support.

3.0 Background

- 3.1 The VCS have in recent years supported the delivery of many local and community-based projects and activities. Through the pandemic the VCS were engaged to deliver many local services to support the Council in providing much needed services to residents.
- 3.2 The VCS have been instrumental to the success in local service delivery with things such as Covid Community Hubs, Household Support Fund grant assessment and provision and more recently the Warm and Welcoming spaces.
- 3.3 The VCS are fundamental to the future delivery of key services and programmes and many services for the Council as well as wider partners.
- 3.4 To ensure that there is a compliant procurement arrangement in place allowing the Council and wider partners to engage and commission services from the VCS, it is proposed to establish a procurement solution that will align to the future delivery needs of services from the VCS.
- 3.5 With the Sunderland Voluntary Alliance now being an independent organisation they will focus their work on supporting those organisations that need support due to lack of capacity so that they can progress with any future procurement opportunities.
- 3.6 We have with our partners recently run a “Big Breakfast” event which was hugely popular and very successful. During this meeting a session was held to inform the VCS of the intended procurement process and a detailed presentation was given by the Corporate Procurement Team. This session provided advice on the procurement portal, the registration process, the types of documents that would be used and needed, where to get help and advice and the timelines for future procurement processes.

4.0 Future Procurement Solution

- 4.1 The VCS provide an invaluable opportunity to deliver services within local communities to residents in many ways. The VCS have proven that they can deliver high quality services and make a huge difference to people's lives locally.
- 4.2 The Council and City Board partners have reflected on the local delivery of services and support for the future and agree that working collaboratively with the voluntary and community sector has and should continue to be delivered.
- 4.3 In terms of formal commissioning arrangements, it is proposed that the Council in collaboration with the Sunderland Voluntary Sector Alliance will undertake a procurement process to procure and award contracts for the provision of services including those below and any further procurement as deemed necessary to meet local community service delivery:
- Distribution of Housing Support Funding to residents and families
 - 'Links for Life' (known as social prescribing) Local Community Support Services
 - Community crisis support services.
- 4.4 The Sunderland Voluntary Sector Alliance has a vision to grow the voluntary and community sector in Sunderland, enabling the sector to secure long-term sustainable income, through external investment, formal commissioning arrangements, as well as social value. A range of support and advice will be offered and provided to the VCS to ensure that they can bid effectively in any procurement process.
- 4.5 It is therefore proposed that a fully compliant procurement arrangement aligned to local service and community needs is put in place and led by the Council's Corporate Procurement team.

5.0 Reasons for the Decision

- 5.1 The proposal aims to ensure that there is a compliant procurement process in place to maximise the work and services of the voluntary sector in Sunderland. The Council are committed to working with the VCS in many areas of activity that are needed to be delivered locally and a formal solution will ensure that the Council can work with the VCS in a structured and compliant way.

Where the aggregate value of the intended procurement is estimated to be equal to or over £500,000 Cabinet approval is required prior to advertising the opportunity.

6.0 Alternative Options

- 6.1 Not to have a procurement solution.
- 6.2 This was considered but rejected as there is a clear need, focus and commitment to delivering programmes and projects locally through the VCS. Therefore, a formal procurement arrangement is necessary.

7.0 Impact Analysis

- (a) **Equalities** – A strong VCS across the city will ensure wider and more accessible services and support for residents
- (b) **Privacy Impact Assessment (PIA)** – N/A
- (c) **Sustainability** – local accessible services and support points across the city with VCS partners with digitally supported programmes will reduce travel requirements and provide more electronic service access. Future development of community assets will take account of sustainability as part of any work or improvement programmes
- (d) **Reduction of Crime and Disorder – Community Cohesion / Social Inclusion** – N/A

8.0 Other Relevant Considerations / Consultations

- (a) **Co-operative Values** – linked to the community wealth strategy, working collaboratively with the voluntary and community sector, listening to lived experience and asset-based community development etc
- (b) **Financial Implications** – There are no additional costs of establishing the framework. The costs of any contracts will be funded from approved resources.
- (c) **Risk Analysis** – it is necessary and required to have a fully compliant procurement arrangement in place and therefor
- (d) **Employee Implications** – N/A
- (e) **Legal Implications** – The Council's Procurement Procedure Rules require that where the aggregate value of an intended procurement is estimated to be equal to or over £500,000 Cabinet approval is required prior to advertising the opportunity. Further cabinet approval will be required for any contracts procured using the procurement solution established pursuant to the authority granted in this report which have an individual value of £500,000 or more.

Any procurement undertaken to establish a solution in accordance with the authority granted by this report will be procured in accordance with the Council's own Procurement Procedure Rules and the Public Contract Regulations 2015 as appropriate.

- (f) **Policy Implications** – this proposal ensures that the Council has in place a compliant Procurement process in line with Council Policy and Procedures
- (g) **Health & Safety Considerations** – NA
- (h) **Procurement** – Corporate Procurement have been engaged with regards the application of the Public Contracts Regulations 2015 and the Council's own Procurement Procedure Rules.

