

**Record of
Executive
Decisions
published
02/Mar/2021**



Elaine Waugh
Assistant Director of Law and Governance

Civic Centre
Sunderland

2 March 2021

Record of Executive Decisions Published: 02/Mar/2021

Decision Taker:
Patrick Melia, Chief Executive

Appropriate Scrutiny Committee:
Scrutiny Coordinating Committee

Date decision in force:
10 March 2021

Date of decision:
2 March 2021

Title and author(s) of written report:

Proposed Urgent Temporary Extension of Existing Contracts for Essential Domestic Abuse and Violence Services – Joint report of the Director of Children's Services and the Executive Director of Neighbourhoods

Full description of decision:

- (i) To temporarily extend the existing contracts with Wearside Women in Need and Impact Family Services for the provision of a variety of essential domestic abuse and violence services for a period of 12 months from 1st April 2021 to 31st March 2022.
- (ii) To agree the spot purchase by Together for Children of trauma-informed counselling and therapeutic services given the previous contract has expired, and whilst a new specification for all services is developed.

Reasons for decision:

In December 2019 Cabinet were presented with a paper which recommended the extension of the existing contracts for core domestic abuse and violence services for a maximum period of 12 months up to 31 March 2021 to enable the development of a new service specification, that would incorporate the 2019 VAWG needs assessment priorities and partnership commissioning intentions. Cabinet agreed those recommendations and the contracts were extended until 31 March 2021, to allow the service model to be developed and a procurement process to be undertaken, thereby ensuring continuity of essential services.

The re-procurement exercise would put a single specification out to the market bringing together disparate services together whilst also encouraging innovation and service development.

The Covid-19 pandemic has significantly hampered progress in developing the new specification as both providers and commissioners have been fully deployed on Covid-19 business continuity. It is envisaged that due to the ongoing Covid-1 restrictions and the need to develop the development of the service model, to allow a procurement exercise, there is an urgent

requirement to extend the contracts that are currently commissioned by both Together for Children and Neighbourhoods for 12 months, until 31st March 2022.

The current contracts to be extended have an annual value of £578,424:

- Crisis Refuge Accommodation and Specialist Domestic Abuse Outreach Support including IDVA Provision (Neighbourhoods) Annual Value £334,424.
- Accredited Group Work and Early Help Support (Together for Children) Annual Value £95,000.
- Perpetrator Programme (Together for Children) Annual Value £89,000
- Trauma-informed Counselling and Therapeutic Services for Children and Young People spot purchase arrangements (Together for Children) Annual Value £60,00

The contracts will be extended based on the current terms and conditions within existing contracts and monitoring and oversight of the outcomes will continue as normal. There will be no change to the current price of the contracts.

Alternative options considered and rejected:

Not to extend contracts: This option is not recommended as the existing provision would cease leaving the Council with no service provision in place to meet its statutory obligations and it would result in the loss of the emergency refuge accommodation.

Contact Officer: Jill Colbert

Extension: 561 1356

Email: Jill.Colbert@togetherforchildren.org.uk

Is this a key decision: Yes

Does the Decision contain Confidential/Exempt Information: No

Declarations of Interest and Dispensations: None

Decision Record

(For use in the case of Decisions (including Key Decisions) made by Officers under Delegated Powers)

Name and job title of Delegated Officer with power under the constitution to make the decision:

Patrick Melia, Chief Executive

Directorate:

Together for Children and Neighbourhood Directorate

Paragraph of Constitution relied upon: Part 3 Section 4 Delegations to Chief Officers, para 4(f).

Where the decision maker is an officer authorised by the Delegated Officer to make the decision (an Authorised Officer) the name and job title of the Authorised Officer and paragraph of Directorate delegation scheme relied upon:

Not Applicable.

Date of decision:

In the case of a Key Decision, date of implementation (subject to "call-in"):

1st April 2021

Statement of decision made:

- (i) To temporarily extend the existing contracts with Wearside Women in Need and Impact Family Services for the provision of a variety of essential domestic abuse and violence services for a period of 12 months from 1st April 2021 to 31st March 2022.
- (ii) To agree the spot purchase by Together for Children of trauma-informed counselling and therapeutic services given the previous contract has expired, and whilst a new specification for all services is developed.

Where applicable, Report(s) considered (state the title and author of the report(s)) and list of background papers:

Not applicable

Reasons for the decision (including reference, where appropriate, to relevant impact assessments):

In December 2019 Cabinet were presented with a paper which recommended the extension of the existing contracts for core domestic abuse and violence services for a maximum period of 12 months up to 31 March 2021 to enable the development of a new service specification, that would incorporate the 2019 VAWG needs assessment priorities and partnership commissioning intentions. Cabinet agreed those recommendations and the contracts were extended until 31 March 2021, to allow the service model to be developed and a procurement process to be undertaken, thereby ensuring continuity of essential services.

The re-procurement exercise would put a single specification out to the market bringing together disparate services together whilst also encouraging innovation and service development.

The Covid-19 pandemic has significantly hampered progress in developing the new specification as both providers and commissioners have been fully deployed on Covid-19 business continuity. It is envisaged that due to the ongoing Covid-19 restrictions and the need to develop the development of the service model, to

allow a procurement exercise, there is an urgent requirement to extend the contracts that are currently commissioned by both Together for Children and Neighbourhoods for 12 months, until 31st March 2022.

The current contracts to be extended have an annual value of £578,424:

- Crisis Refuge Accommodation and Specialist Domestic Abuse Outreach Support including IDVA Provision (Neighbourhoods) Annual Value £334,424.
- Accredited Group Work and Early Help Support (Together for Children) Annual Value £95,000.
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- Trauma-informed Counselling and Therapeutic Services for Children and Young People spot purchase arrangements (Together for Children) Annual Value £60,00

The contracts will be extended based on the current terms and conditions within existing contracts and monitoring and oversight of the outcomes will continue as normal. There will be no change to the current price of the contracts.

Alternative options considered and rejected:

Not to extend contracts: This option is not recommended as the existing provision would cease leaving the Council will no service provision in place to meet its statutory obligations and it would result in the loss of the emergency refuge accommodation.

Members/Officers/others consulted:

Portfolio Holder, Cllr Kelly Chequer
Jill Colbert – Director of Children’s Services
Fiona Brown – Executive Director of Neighbourhood Services (DAS)
Ron Hamilton - Commissioning Specialist
Debbie Wilkinson - Commissioning Specialist
Issy Langley - Procurement Category Manager
Michelle Soppitt - Procurement Category Officer
Helen Monks - Service Manager, Children's Social Care, TfC
Susan Toulson - Service Manager, Early Help, TfC
Jonathan Rowson, Specialist Lead, Commercial Law

Where the decision was made under a specific express authorisation of Council, Cabinet, a Committee, Sub-Committee or Joint Committee, the name of any member who declared a conflict of interest in relation to the decision:

None

In respect of any declared conflict of interest, a note of any dispensation granted by the Council’s Head of Paid Service:

None

Is the decision a key decision as defined in the Constitution? Yes

If yes, on what basis?

Financial value


Does the decision contain Confidential / Exempt Information?

No

If applicable, ground on which information is confidential/exempt:

Have you provided Governance Services with a copy of this decision record and any reports, other documents or background papers considered: NO

NOTE: Do not forward documentation for publication if it contains exempt or confidential information. If in doubt, take advice from Law and Governance Services

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| <p>Signed: </p> <p>Name: Patrick Melia (Officer making decision)</p> <p>Dated: 2nd March 2021</p> | <p>Signed:</p> <p>(Portfolio Holder/Chairman of Committee)</p> <p>Name (print)</p> <p>Dated:</p> |
|---|--|

| | |
|--|--|
| <p>Counter Signed:</p> <p>Name (print).....</p> <p>Position:</p> <p>Dated:</p> | <p>For completion in respect of any decisions which have financial implications and regarding which consultation is required with the Executive Director of Corporate Services or his/her representative.</p> <p>Signed:</p> <p>(Executive Director of Corporate Services or his / her representative)</p> <p>Name (print).....</p> <p>Position:</p> <p>Dated:</p> |
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Notes:

[1] Officers are reminded to follow the procedure set out in the Guidance on the Making and Recording of Decisions by Officers, in order to ensure compliance with the law. This is particularly important in the case of “key decisions.”

[2] A “Key Decision” is an executive decision which is likely
(a) to result in the Council incurring expenditure which is, or the making of savings which are, significant having regard to the Council’s budget for the service or function to which the decision relates; or
(b) to be significant in terms of its effects on communities living or working in an area comprising two or more wards in the City.
For the purposes of (a) above, “significant” means expenditure of £250,000 or more in relation to capital expenditure or £100,000 or 1% of the relevant net revenue budget head, whichever is greater.

[3] A key decision will come into force and may be implemented on the expiry of five working days after publication, unless it is “called in”.

[4] It is a requirement of the Constitution that Chief Officers will consult the relevant portfolio holder and/or the Chairman of the relevant Committee prior to taking action where the action has policy or significant financial implications or where the portfolio holder or Chairman has given prior indication that he wishes to be consulted on the matter or type of matter. Ward members should also be consulted as appropriate.

PROPOSED URGENT TEMPORARY EXTENSION OF EXISTING CONTRACTS FOR ESSENTIAL DOMESTIC ABUSE AND VIOLENCE SERVICES

February 2021

JOINT REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF CHILDREN'S SERVICES AND THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF NEIGHBOURHOOD SERVICES

1. Purpose of the Report

To seek approval to the proposed urgent temporary extension of the Council's existing contracts for the provision of core domestic abuse and violence services ("the Services") for a period of one year.

2. Background and Proposal

- 2.1 In December 2019, Cabinet approved the extension of the existing contracts held by the Council for the Services for a period of 12 months up to 31 March 2021. The purpose of that extension was to enable the development by the Council, in collaboration with Together for Children Sunderland Ltd ("TfC"), of a new up to date and, where appropriate, integrated service specification for the Services, that would incorporate the 2019 VAWG needs assessment priorities and partnership commissioning intentions. As a consequence, the existing contracts (and the related contracts held by TfC) for the Services were initially extended until 31 March 2021, to allow a new service model to be developed and a procurement process to be then undertaken, whilst ensuring continuity of essential services in the meantime.
- 2.2 It is intended that the forthcoming procurement exercise will involve the issue of a single specification to the market by the Council and TfC (as the case may be) in order to bring together disparate services whilst also encouraging innovation and service development. However, the Covid-19 pandemic has significantly hampered progress in developing the new service model and specification (which requires prior consultation with the market) as both providers and commissioners have been fully deployed on Covid-19 business continuity.
- 2.3 As a consequence, due to the ongoing Covid-19 restrictions and the need to develop the new service model to enable a subsequent procurement exercise, there is an urgent requirement to further extend the existing contracts for the Services that are commissioned by both the Council and Together for Children for a further period of 12 months until 31st March 2022.
- 2.4 This decision to extend must be taken without delay given the need to provide the appropriate degree of certainty to the current providers and the potential lead in times if these crucial Services were otherwise to be decommissioned.
- 2.5 This further temporary extension will permit the new service model and specification for the Services to be developed and the subsequent re-procurement process to be undertaken.

- 2.6 The current Council contracts to be extended relate to Crisis Refuge Accommodation and Specialist Domestic Abuse Outreach Support including IDVA Provision and have an annual value of £334,424.
- 2.7 In parallel, it is proposed that TfC will authorise the temporary extension of their existing contracts for Accredited Group Work and Early Help Support (Annual Value £89,000) and Trauma-informed Counselling and Therapeutic Services for Children and Young People spot purchase arrangements (Annual Value £60,00) on the same basis.
- 2.8 The above contracts will be extended based on the current terms and conditions within existing contracts and monitoring and oversight of the outcomes will continue as normal. There will be no change to the current price of the contracts.
- 2.9 The requirement for the proposed urgent extension of the existing contracts has arisen due to unforeseen circumstances and the proposed variations are not considered to be substantial. The temporary extensions will also be on the same terms as the existing contracts and are time limited for one year only (to in order to facilitate the conclusion of the development of the new specification and the subsequent new procurement process for the Services). Further, the value of the existing Council contract(s) is substantially below the relevant threshold (for the light touch regime) within the Public Contracts Regulations 2015.

3. Reasons for the Decision

There is an urgent need to temporarily extend the existing contracts for the Services as a result of COVID-19 and the material adverse impact it has had on the ability to develop the new specification and progress the new re-procurement process for the Services.

4. Alternative Decisions

The alternative option is not to extend the existing contracts. However, this option is not recommended as the existing provision would cease leaving the Council will no service provision in place to meet its statutory obligations and it would result in the loss of the emergency refuge accommodation.

5. Recommendation

It is therefore recommended that the Chief Executive approves the temporary urgent extension of the Council's existing contract(s) for the Services for a period of 12 months from 1st April 2021 to 31st March 2022.