

CABINET MEETING – 8 JUNE 2023

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY SHEET – PART I

Title of Report:

Award of interim contracts for the provision of social care services to older persons and carers.

Author(s):

Report of the Director of Adult Services

Purpose of Report:

To seek Cabinet's approval for the award of interim contracts to AGE UK Sunderland and Sunderland Carers Centre for the provision of social care services to older persons and carers and related matters.

Description of Decision:

Cabinet is requested to:

- (i) Authorise the award of interim contracts to AGE UK Sunderland and Sunderland Carers Centre for a period of one year from 1st April 2023 to 31st March 2024 for such services and on such terms as set out in this report and such other terms as approved by the Director of Adult Services, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Healthy City and the Director of Finance; and
- (ii) Authorise the Director of Adult Services to, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Health City and the Director of Finance, to undertake a procurement process at a future date for the award of the replacement contract(s) for the services as described in this report to commence following the expiry of the contracts referred to in (i) above.

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:

There is an immediate requirement for the relevant services to continue to be delivered to older people and carers. The Council is required to provide the services and functions within these contracts as defined within the Care Act and supports the delivery of these services by the organisations described within this report.

<p>A lack of continued social care support would be detrimental for those older persons and carers within the City who require a locally based, accessible service.</p> <p>The funding for these services provided by the Council, TfC and ICB contributes to the delivery of the services as defined by the Care Act and benefits from the wider service provision of these organisations. Without these contracts, the organisations would either need to reduce capacity, or cease to deliver elements of the support offered. The Council would be in breach of its duties under the Care Act to deliver these services to older persons and carers.</p>	
<p>Alternative options to be considered and recommended to be rejected:</p> <p>There are no alternative options recommended. Given both organisations continuing involvement in the provision of these Services, it is considered that AGE UK Sunderland and Sunderland Carers Centre are the most appropriate providers of the Services during the interim period until a procurement process for the relevant services can be fully scoped, planned, undertaken and concluded.</p>	
<p>Impacts analysed;</p> <p> Equality <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Privacy <input type="checkbox"/> Sustainability <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Crime and Disorder <input type="checkbox"/> </p>	
<p>Is the Decision consistent with the Council's co-operative values? Yes/No</p>	
<p>Is this a "Key Decision" as defined in the Constitution?</p>	<p>Yes</p>
<p>Is it included in the 28 day Notice of Decisions?</p>	<p>Yes</p>

CABINET – 8 JUNE 2023

AWARD OF INTERIM CONTRACTS FOR THE PROVISION OF SOCIAL CARE SERVICES TO OLDER PERSONS AND CARERS

REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF ADULT SOCIAL CARE

1. Purpose of the Report

- 1.1 To seek Cabinet's approval for the award of interim contracts to AGE UK Sunderland and Sunderland Carers Centre for the provision of social care services to older persons and carers and related matter.

2. Description of Decision (Recommendations)

- 2.1 Cabinet is requested to:
 - (i) Authorise the award of interim contracts to AGE UK Sunderland and Sunderland Carers Centre for a period of one year for 1st April 2023 to 31st March 2023 for such services and on such terms as set out in this report and such other terms as approved by the Director of Adult Services, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Healthy City and the Director of Finance; and
 - (ii) Authorise the Director of Adult Services to, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Healthy City and the Director of Finance, to undertake a procurement process at a future date for the award of the replacement contract(s) for the services as described in this report to commence following the expiry of the contracts referred to in (i) above.

3. Introduction/Background

- 3.1 Age UK Sunderland are an independent charity based in Sunderland run by and for the people of Sunderland to support older people throughout the City. The Council have a strong relationship with Age UK who work as a key VCS partner with the Council, Health Services and the VCS Alliance in the delivery of key plans for the City including but not limited to the Health City Plan, Ageing Well Plans and Altogether Better Sunderland Programmes.
- 3.2 The Front Door programme was developed and designed in partnership between Adult Social Care, Sunderland Clinical Commissioning Group (now North East and North Cumbria Integrated Care Board) and Age UK in response to an ageing population with increasing needs who did not require statutory health or social care intervention but were presenting with increasing needs that required early and preventative intervention to minimise and delay the need for costly statutory interventions.
- 3.3 Carers Centre Sunderland has worked in partnership for many years with the Council and Health Services across the City in the delivery of advice, information, guidance and support for Carers of all ages across the City. Like Age UK the Carers Centre have strong relationships with key stakeholders including the Council and work as a key VCS partner contributing to the delivery of key plans and strategies for the benefit of residents within the City.

- 3.4 These relationships and delivery of services have historically and continue to be locally based with resident engagement in design, delivery and participation and both organisations remain responsive to change and support for statutory organisations across the City, often going beyond the remit of any service agreement.

4. Current Position

- 4.1 Age UK and Carers Centre have historically been funded for these Services by way of a grant. Following a review of the provision, it has been determined that the services are commissioned services and therefore should be subject to a procurement process.
- 4.2 Each organisation are funded for the delivery of these Services until 31 March 2023. The Council and ICB continue to support the important provision delivered by these organisations in order to offer early intervention and prevention approaches that support our residents to remain as well and independent as possible without the need for more costly statutory interventions. A lack of continued services for financial year 2023/2024 would be detrimental to those residents across the City and to the Local Authority and Health who are responsible for delivering these statutory services. The Local Authority and Health would need to meet the gap that would be left if these services were not provided.
- 4.2 The Council is therefore seeking approval to allow the services to be contracted for a one year period for 2023/2024 as follows:
- a) Age UK at a cost of ££572,098
b) Carers Centre at a cost of £752,860 (this includes ICB funding of £412,000 and TfC funding of £60,000 in which the council acts as lead commissioner).
- 4.3 Age UK are commissioned to deliver the front door service which is provision defined within the Care Act offering services and functions to support residents in the City.

Age UKS's FDS triage's calls to ensure people receive the right level of support at the right time, and that they are directed to the right service. Most service users are people aged 50 years and over.

The service operates a referral system for adults who:

- Are residents within the city of Sunderland
 - Have no formal health or social care package of support from statutory services or those who would not qualify for local authority social care
 - Require low level social and signposting support and practical information
 - Are caring for family, friends and neighbours.
- Following referrals customers are triaged and assessed to identify interventions that enable them to maintain their independence and access a range of services that address social isolation, financial concerns, transport,

shopping, social groups, as well as targeted support based on need established through an assessment.

Age UK are also fully engaged with the Social Prescribing offer in the City and are working with Adult Social Care to integrate early intervention and prevention services fully with statutory social care services to ensure a seamless provision and improve accessibility to health and social care services for those who struggle navigating pathways.

4.4 In the last quarterly monitoring report April 22 – December 22 Age UK provided support as follows:

- Supported 1,571 residents accessing the FDS
- Provided up to 6 weeks of support to 284 individuals, provided 6-12 weeks of support to 241 individuals, provided in excess of 12 weeks support to 247 individuals.
- Provided in excess of 8,000 support interventions
- Received 920 new referrals
- Made 8,900 contacts with residents
- Provided advocacy services to 393 individuals
- Achieved £208,148 in benefit claims for individuals
- 5,454 attendances at community support clubs
- Delivered in excess of 1,000 friendly face visits
- Delivered in excess of 100 trips via Dial a Driver
- Signposted over 600 people to other services
- Completed almost 400 onward referrals to other services

4.5 The Carers Centre are commissioned to deliver services for all age Carers across the City as defined within the Care Act providing a referral and assessment offer for both Adult and Child Carers. Funding from ICB £412,000, £60,000 TfC and Council £280,860 are received to support overall City's Carers services in with the Council acts as lead commissioner. The outcome of the assessment determines the support required for the Carer and their families. This includes the allocation of a personal budget for adult carers. Dependent upon the outcome of the assessment the following support is offered:

- Provision of early intervention and prevention activities that address immediate need and anticipate future needs.
- Provision of information, advice and guidance via a variety of methods.
- Provision of social support to minimise the impact of social isolation on Carers as a result of caring responsibilities and/or own health or frailty.
- Onward referrals of individuals and families to both other agencies including statutory and third sector who can offer help and support for Carers and their families. Provision of short-term low-level support to carer/family.
- Provision/support to access short breaks/activities for carers, including young carers.
- Provision of more targeted/long term support for complex, acute or multiple issues within a family or carer in partnership with other services across the city.

- Build resilience in families with Caring responsibilities through support, training, information, advice, guidance and early intervention across a range of areas including health, wellbeing, financial, employment, education and learning and social interaction and engagement.
 - Deliver services, support and information that build upon strengths within families and communities reducing the need for statutory interventions.
 - To empower and support carers to build aspirational as well as realistic short/medium/long-term outcomes.
 - Delivery of support and activity groups.
 - Targeted support to help carers and their families through all transition periods within their lives.
 - Provides advocacy and enables self-advocacy on a one to one and group basis to develop young carers confidence, self-esteem and ability to self-care.
 - Support the delivery of the Carers Strategy in the City.
- 4.6 The Carers Centre are also fully engaged with the Social Prescribing offer in the City and are working with Adult Social Care to integrate early intervention and prevention services fully with statutory social care services to ensure a seamless provision and improve accessibility to health and social care services for those who struggle navigating pathways.
- 4.7 In the last quarterly monitoring report April – Dec 22 the Carers Centre provided support as follows:
- Supported 4,313 Carers
 - Provided in excess of 2,500 hours of direct support to Carers
 - Received 744 new referrals
 - Made 11,621 contacts with Carers
 - Signposted 1,403 Carers to other services for support
 - 100% of Carers confirm they are satisfied or very satisfied with the service and would recommend it to fellow Carers.
- 4.8 Both organisations provide quarterly monitoring returns to the Council on how the funding has been spent and performance achieved against agreed targets and delivery, along with an annual update report detailing the work that they have completed and outcomes achieved. These reports as well as regular meetings with the services are used to identify good practice and performance as well as addressing any emerging issues that need to be considered. These monitoring arrangements will continue throughout the period of funding.
- 4.9 Arrangements have been put into place with the Council's Procurement Service to draft a procurement strategy that would move the arrangements for the provision of these services into a structured formal procurement arrangement, and this is expected to be completed for the financial year 2024/2025.

5. Reasons for the Decision

- 5.1 There is an immediate requirement for the relevant services to continue to be delivered to older people and carers. The Council is required to provide the

services and functions within these contracts as defined within the Care Act and supports the delivery of these services by the organisations described within this report. A lack of continued social care support would be detrimental for those older persons and carers within the City who require a locally based, accessible service.

The funding for these services provided by the Council, TfC and ICB contributes to the delivery of the services as defined by the Care Act and benefits from the wider service provision of these organisations. Without these contracts, the organisations would either need to reduce capacity, or cease to deliver elements of the support offered. The Council would be in breach of its duties under the Care Act to deliver these services to older persons and carers

6. Alternative Options

6.1 Alternative options to be considered and recommended to be rejected:

There are no alternative options recommended. Given both organisations continuing involvement in the provision of these Services, it is considered that AGE UK Sunderland and Sunderland Carers Centre are the most appropriate providers of the Services during the interim period until a procurement process for the relevant services can be fully scoped, planned, undertaken and concluded.

7. Other Relevant Considerations / Consultations

7.1 Co-operative Values: Sunderland City Council is a co-operative Council and will act ethically in all its actions whilst adhering to and actively promoting its cooperative values of self-help, self-responsibility, democracy, equality, equity and solidarity. These values will underpin our decision making and actions.

7.2 Financial Implications: The funding implications are outlined in the main body of the report and it is confirmed that funding is allocated within the Adult Social Care revenue budgets for these projects.

7.3 Legal Implications:

The proposals involve the direct award of interim contracts for the respective services delivered by Age UK Sunderland and Sunderland Carers Centre for a one-year period.

The value of the proposed one-year Age UK Sunderland contract is below the relevant financial threshold set out in the Public Contracts Regulations 2015 (PCR) (£663,540). The Council's internal Procurement Procedure Rules for under PCR threshold procurements permit Cabinet to approve the direct award of a services contract to a specific provider where the use of another provider at that point would cause significant inconvenience to the Council (Rule 5.5.2) and/or where the relevant skills and knowledge (including capability and resources) of the provider is of primary importance to the Council (Rule 5.5.4).

The value of the proposed one-year contract to Sunderland Carers Centre contract is above the PCR threshold.

However, it is recognised that there is an immediate need for these support services to be provided to the vulnerable groups in question and they cannot be left with a gap in the provision whilst a formal procurement process is fully scoped, prepared and undertaken. There are clear benefits to the direct appointment of both Age UK Sunderland and Sunderland Carers for the short-term period before the long-term contract for these respective services are subsequently competitively tendered in accordance with the Council's obligations under the PCR.

In respect to the interim one-year contracts, provisions will be included to ensure the proposed contract period with both organisations are time-limited and proportionate plus appropriate termination rights for the Council. In addition, the intention to award the contracts will be published in the Find a Tender service.